

TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE: ARE WE TICKING THE BOXES WHEN WE SHOULD BE JOINING THE DOTS?

In the past twenty years, it has become an international given that truth, justice, reparation and non-recurrence of abuses should be promoted in troubled states emerging from conflict. Few would disagree that we stand a better chance of breaking what are often recurrent cycles of violence if we address the grievances, power structures and prejudices that surround war crimes.

As a result, 'transitional justice' projects now play a central role in broader efforts to build peace, democracy and the rule of law. But

even in countries where huge international support has been given to prominent measures, progress towards accountability is frustratingly slow.

Impunity Watch, a research-for-policy group, was established to work out why this is, and to propose more effective strategies for combating impunity. Having recently completed in-depth studies of the situations in Guatemala and Serbia, we believe an examination of how the international community makes transitional justice strategy is timely.

These two reports, *Recognising the Past: Challenges in the Combat of Impunity in Guatemala* and *Dealing with Impunity in Serbia - Options and Obstacles*, examine the legacies of very different conflicts in very different countries, and evaluate the steps taken there to address them. In this respect, they highlight the tendency to emphasise one aspect of transitional justice at the expense of all others, and the consequences that has for achieving progress: in the former Yugoslavia, criminal prosecution in local and international courts has overshadowed all other areas, and only now are we seeing a serious truth-seeking initiative taking off; Guatemala shows a mirror image.

Impunity Watch invites you to join this panel discussion, where we will explore the extent to which post-conflict states and the international community understand the inter-relation of different measures, and how they reflect this in their transitional justice

strategies. Ultimately, we will ask if the stark gap between investment and results in many post-conflict states is the result of a 'checklist' approach to transitional justice, and what is needed to see more sensitive responses taken to individual situations.

Moderator:

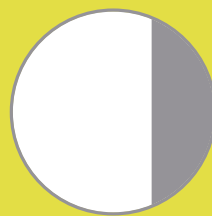
Harm Ede Botje, journalist of *Vrij Nederland*

Panellists

- Jelena Milic, Head of Centre for Euro-Atlantic Studies, Belgrade
- Mo Bleeker, Senior Advisor to the Foreign Ministry of Switzerland, Geneva
- Barbara Oomen, Associate Professor of Law at Roosevelt Academy, Middelburg

After the event you are invited for a drink to continue the discussion informally.

Café Dudok, Hofweg 1-a, The Hague, Tuesday, December 15th at 17.00.



Impunity Watch is an international non-profit group, seeking to promote accountability for past atrocities in countries emerging from a violent past. We produce research-based policy advice, monitor state compliance with legal obligations towards the victims of crimes and advocate for tailored policy solutions. Our aim is to assist national civil society groups to have a stronger voice in policy-making on accountability. Impunity Watch is based in the Netherlands and is currently running country programmes in Serbia and Guatemala, with new interventions planned in Burundi.