

Annual Report 2024



Contents:

About

Vision	3
Mission	3

Introduction

Our international and strategic work

Gathering and sharing knowledge with partners	5
Artificial intelligence and transitional justice	5
Bringing a trauma-sensitive approach to Syria	6
Challenges to women	7
Linking Syria and Colombia	8
Growing partnerships, coalitions and solidarity with victims' organisations	9
Iraq's first network of victim-led organisations	9
Creating a space to mourn, remember, and empower	9
Bravery under fire	11
Survivors in the spotlight	12
The power of photography	13

Creatives for Gaza	15
Victims and survivors at the heart of policymaking	16

Mobilising joint political action—connecting knowledge and demands from coalitions with policymakers	17
--	----

Movement against impunity in Guatemala	17
Supporting survivors' organisations in Syria	20
Youth shaping the future of justice in Africa	22
Connecting communities to policymaking in Congo	23

Fundraising and organisational developments: towards an inclusive and collective ecosystem

Gender transformation from the ground up	25
--	----

Donors

Where we work

Contact

About

We are an international non-profit organisation working with victims, survivors and communities affected by violence to transform deeply ingrained structures of impunity, deliver redress for grave human rights violations, and promote justice and peace.

For more than 15 years, we have been working in countries emerging from violent conflict. We have found that victims know best what is needed to achieve justice for themselves and their communities and prevent violence from recurring. Despite this, they are systematically excluded from peace and justice processes. Our role is to address this omission and ensure their demands are met.

“The joint work with victims, survivors and affected communities is at the heart of everything we do.”

Impunity Watch currently works in Guatemala, Iraq, Syria, Tunisia, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Western Balkans, with a global office in The Hague, The Netherlands.

We conduct research on themes relating to overcoming impunity, and build partnerships and coalitions to fight impunity and transform justice. These elements are key to our international advocacy efforts on mobilising joint political action for change.

We are committed to prioritising long-term engagements in our programming, operations and advocacy, and work at community, local, national, regional and international levels.

Vision: Our vision is that victims of serious human rights violations can shape the processes of justice to achieve redress and contribute to addressing the root causes of impunity. This will lead to root causes of impunity being addressed and justice and accountability becoming the norm.

Mission: We work together with victims, survivors and communities affected by human rights violations to transform justice by:



1. **Gathering and sharing knowledge** on the root causes of impunity and what justice means from a victim perspective.

Expanding our partnerships and working with coalitions of victims so that their collective voice and demands are strengthened.

2.



3. **Mobilising joint political action** with victims to ensure that justice processes are shaped by them, and policymakers act on their demands.



Introduction

2024 is a year that felt **larger than life** for Impunity Watch. We saw the rapid changes in the global context having a direct impact on our and our partners' work and our drive to end impunity.

Syria had topped impunity scores for decades, the result of unaccountable governance, conflict, violence and abuse of human rights. Then, in December, a **historic liberation** of the people from oppression and tyranny suddenly took place, at last bringing hope for systemic change. Meanwhile in Guatemala, the election of an anti-corruption government with popular and indigenous support, is working to combat efforts from others in power to undermine democracy.

On the negative side, survivors in Tunisia and Iraq faced a civic space under pressure, while in Burundi, human rights organisations reported political tensions and rights violations ahead of elections in 2025. In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), armed groups led a renewed escalation of the conflict in the east, fuelling the spectre of a regional war once again in the Great Lakes region and stalling DRC's efforts to make progress towards national accountability.

Against a global backdrop of increased systemic power imbalances, victims and survivors continue to demonstrate that solidarity and empathy is the only viable path to confront and dismantle the root causes of impunity.

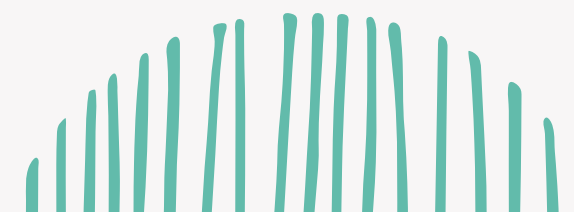


Our work is more urgent than ever because, together with victims and survivors, we know that we can contribute to meaningful and sustainable change.

At Impunity Watch, our drive for change is centred in tackling the root causes of impunity, including increased inequalities. We aimed to address these systemic issues, acting collaboratively to promote increased security, access to justice, and inclusive decision-making to victims and survivors. We worked to help reduce violence, poverty, gender inequality, corruption and racism.

We did this based on our 15 years' commitment to jointly work with victims, survivors and communities affected by serious human rights violations to act on some of the obstacles we consider to be key to overcoming impunity. These are victims and survivors' unaddressed needs, their exclusion from the pursuit of justice, and the lack of political will to end impunity. In 2024, we progressed one step closer to our vision of justice by advancing our **Strategic Objectives**. In doing so, we deepened our impact in the quest to end impunity, concretely contributing to the achievement of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development** and in particular to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 on Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.

In this annual report, we show examples of our efforts, enriched by partners' voices and perspectives on our collective work. The change we contributed to is framed here around Impunity Watch's three main strategic interventions which are based on over a decade long work to make a difference for victims: gathering and sharing knowledge with partners, growing partnerships, coalitions and solidarity with victims' organisations, and mobilising joint political action.



Our international and strategic work

Gathering and sharing knowledge with partners

Last year, we published high-level research, reports and policy briefs on crucial debates for the Transitional Justice field. And we continued to do that with our unique brokering knowledge approach, where we draw from victims' justice needs, local expertise, and lessons learned to support locally-developed strategies in shaping national, regional and international justice and accountability processes.

We also played a direct role in shaping and promoting the new UN Guidance Note on Transitional Justice, adopted in 2023, and focused on its effective implementation. At the global level, our active participation in high-level policy discussions, including regular engagement with the UN and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), reflects our recognised credibility and leadership in the field. Through our involvement in collaborative networks such as the Global Learning Hub for Transitional Justice and Reconciliation, Global Initiative for Truth, Justice and Reconciliation, the Global Initiative Against Impunity, and the Justice Action Coalition, we have amplified victim-centred priorities and influenced policy debates.

Artificial intelligence and transitional justice

One key milestone was a conversation that placed us on the forefront of using AI as an ally for peace and justice. This included promoting increased access to AI to groups traditionally marginalised as victims and survivors. At the same time our work showed how safeguarding respect for human rights within AI is key to a fairer and safer world.

We proactively addressed the potential impacts of AI on human rights, organising an [expert workshop](#) in partnership with the AI Futures Lab

at Delft University of Technology. This meeting bridged the gap between tech professionals, transitional justice practitioners, academics and researchers. This collaborative platform fostered dialogue on how AI can be ethically harnessed to enhance victim participation and advance human rights. The main takeaways were framed into a [ground-breaking report](#) that stressed the need for cross-sector partnerships on addressing complex issues at the intersection of technology and human rights.

HIGHLIGHT

Victims and survivors' views on AI

Our groundbreaking report established the importance of ensuring that victims and survivors' perspectives are guiding the ethical use of AI in transitional justice. We believe this report will be a vital resource for policymakers, practitioners and technology developers, guiding the responsible integration of AI in transitional justice contexts, such as informing reparations, preserving the memories of people and events, and guaranteeing that atrocities do not re-occur. The cross-

sectoral nature of this work is vital in determining the complex issues central to this dialogue. Follow-ups will include establishing targeted policy hubs, with a hub about reparations taking place in 2025. These hubs will guide our work and ensure that as AI develops, it is effectively and ethically integrated into transitional justice processes.



Learn more about
our AI & TJ work →



Explore the report
or summary →

Bringing a trauma-sensitive approach to Syria

Victims' associations advocating for justice and redress often work twofold on accompanying victims to recount their experiences and also on supporting their capacity strengthening in becoming advocates, which requires minimizing re-traumatisation and intentionally investing in their long-term resilience. Greater investment in their well-being and mental health is essential. For this reason, **Impunity Watch is incorporating a trauma-sensitive approach into its activities in Syria.**

One example has been the co-designing of policy work with partners on mental health in justice processes. We worked in collaboration with Syrian NGOs in the frontline of the plight of the missing. These NGOs included The Association of Detainees and the Missing in Sednaya Prison, and Women Now for Development (WND), as well as experts from the New York University's Center on International Cooperation.

POLICY BRIEF

Co-designing trauma-informed institutions

We published a policy brief, *'The Integration of Mental Health Approaches and Psychosocial Support in Syria'* and launched it via an online webinar. A meeting was held with the Independent Institution on Missing Persons (IIMP) Syria team to discuss the recommendations.

Our policy brief includes concrete and practical recommendations on how to integrate a mental health approach in the core structure of its work, in the development of strategies for supporting victims and families of the missing, as well as in providing

psychosocial support to staff. This allows the IIMP to set new standards on the issue for other international and national mechanisms.

The brief discusses preparatory measures to ensure that capacity and structures are put in place to create a trauma-informed approach in the implementation of the institution's mandate.



 Explore the policy brief →

“It’s crucial that victims of human rights violations are at the centre of our approach to understanding the implications of artificial intelligence for transitional justice.”

BERNARD DUHAIME: Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparations and guarantees of non-recurrence, speaking at our workshop on AI and human rights

Challenges to women

Syrian women and girls who were victims of human rights abuses under the previous regime suffer extra layers of violations compared to male victims, due to the social and economic inequalities in their community. This affects their participation in justice efforts.

Through our [gender-transformative approaches](#), we make it a priority to ensure that women are supported and equipped to claim space for their participation in justice and to advocate for justice approaches that address their needs. Simple steps such as providing childcare during activities can make a crucial difference.

In a video we co-designed with Women Now for Development (WND), we presented the narrative that [justice starts by healing from trauma in Syria](#) to a broader audience. Survivors spoke about the very specific challenges to women of the consequences of the disappearance of family members, as they face violence combined with care responsibilities, financial exploitation, earlier forms of gendered social injustice, a patriarchal legal system (e.g. women cannot transmit nationality to their children and have limited access to land and property rights).

VIDEO

Justice begins by
healing from trauma
in Syria →



“ Together, we positioned mental health not just as a support mechanism, but as a critical pillar of the justice process itself. ”

ANAS TELLO: Programme manager at WND

Linking Syria and Colombia

Hopes for increasing access to justice and participation in decision-making for victims and survivors in Syria are seen as key to rebuilding a peaceful country, where the population feels they can play an active part in political and social change. This mirrors what has happened in survivor-centred institutions and policies set up in Colombia. For this reason, Impunity Watch organised a study visit there for Syrian associations, part of the [Truth and Justice Charter](#), to share experiences with institutions such as the Colombian Search Unit for the Missing Persons (UBPD, in Spanish). Syrians learned about UBPD's work strategy centred on the role of victims, its innovative mobile units and its safeguarding mechanisms, as a specific law concerning victims.

The four day study visit, that took place in November last year was a comprehensive introduction to transitional justice in Colombia, and the delegation met with several victim and family associations. The Colombian experience has already been an inspiration for the creation of the Independent Institution on Missing Persons (IIMP) for Syria, its mandate and terms of reference.

“The educational experience in Colombia had a direct impact, especially in relation to the ideas we are currently working on to develop key policies for work inside Syria.”

YASMEEN ALMASHAAN: Representative of Syrian NGO Caesar Families, a participant in the study visit to Colombia



PHOTO CREDITS: Paul Wagner for The Syria Campaign

Growing partnerships, coalitions and solidarity with victims' organisations

Victims and survivors have long shown us that their power lies in organising themselves against multiple forms of violence and against those who control them without accountability. We continued to invest in network building and collective memorialisation to support dealing with the past to acknowledge events and victims, the dead, injured, and the disappeared, and the protection of human rights defenders. All of these were crucial strategies for increased security for individuals and groups, especially in volatile contexts in the Middle East and Africa.

Iraq's first network of victim-led organisations

In 2024, together with six local partner organisations, we supported the launch of Maseer, the first victim-led network in Iraq. All the partner groups are led by survivors and families of the forcibly disappeared, and all are aiming to advocate for their rights.

This was a major milestone and marks the first time these groups have formally united to work collectively for truth, justice, and reparation, guided by a victim-centred approach. The network is focused on developing a joint strategy, strengthening collective advocacy efforts, and building stronger connections among survivors and across communities affected by conflict-related violations across different regions.

Creating spaces to mourn, remember and empower

Creating spaces to mourn, remember, reflect and find community was a key objective for Impunity Watch in 2024, when we supported the building in

Southern Mosul of the first memorial dedicated solely to victims of enforced disappearances in Iraq. The monument area was transformed into a vibrant community garden where families – especially women and children of the missing – come together to support one another and build resilience.



This monument and community space, looking down from a hill in the village of Safina, is highly symbolic to Iraqis and was originally initiated and funded by Impunity Watch, in partnership with Al-Deera Organisation for Culture Development. Last year, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) built a small amphitheatre for community events next to the monument, and carried out structural renovations to enhance the site's accessibility and comfort. The new works added to the vision of the victims' communities, who imagined the site not only as a place of remembrance but also as a space for life, healing, and connection. Together, they serve as a powerful reminder of loss and justice – and equally, a space of life, where local residents find moments of joy, solidarity, and healing. There is a growing sense of ownership and increasing use by local families affected by those they love who have disappeared.

“Impunity Watch helped to create a safe space for victims' families to express their suffering and demands, enhancing their awareness of their rights and their ability to claim them. This motivated more families to engage in human rights and advocacy efforts.”

ALI ABBAS KHUDAIR: Sama Organisation for Psychological and Social Support, Iraqi NGO



Other remembrance initiatives in Tunisia have stood out as impactful strategies to counter an ongoing civic space being under pressure working on justice and human rights. In order to create a National Memory Catalogue with diverse narratives of the Tunisian history, victims and experts worked with support of Impunity Watch to foster awareness, dialogue and education in the country.

This idea emerged from a group of former Truth and Dignity Commission (TDC) members, aiming to gather stories related to Tunisia's history. The Catalogue would document victim's experiences and provide a platform for diverse narratives.

A retreat was held in August, where participants identified key stories, sources, and methodologies for collecting data. It also outlined the implementation phase, including archival research, interviews, and the use of digital tools for storing and presenting the data in both hard copy and digital formats. The catalogue was to be disseminated through various channels, with particular attention to engaging youth from diverse regions, with the goal of raising public awareness and historical understanding. As part of the digital approach, an interactive map was proposed for the website to visually represent the stories and their geographical origins.

Despite the tense political context at the time, the participants united different sides, strengthened interpersonal relationships and overcoming conflicts and unifying goals.

In June, our team in Tunisia organised another workshop bringing together victims and legal experts for strategising on alternatives to the ongoing challenges in transitional justice efforts in Tunisia. The calls for a monitoring mechanism to track regressions in the Specialized Criminal Chambers (SCCs) and the establishment of a victim-led coalition for coordination and advocacy on victims' rights and justice reforms informed our responses and shaped our program in 2025.

In the Western Balkans, we continue to support civil society-led initiatives and our partners, such as the Post-Conflict Research Center (PCRC), in processes of memorialisation and dialogues reflecting on 30 years since the Srebrenica genocide. These collective actions help all of society to deal with the past, [combat denialism and revisionism](#), and work towards accountability for human rights violations.

“ I found that training young activists on how to engage with memory, extract information, and build their capacities in listening techniques, conducting interviews, and ethical engagement played a major role in motivating youth to take an interest in such topics. ”

Independent expert in Transitional Justice, collaborating with Impunity Watch in Iraq

Bravery under fire

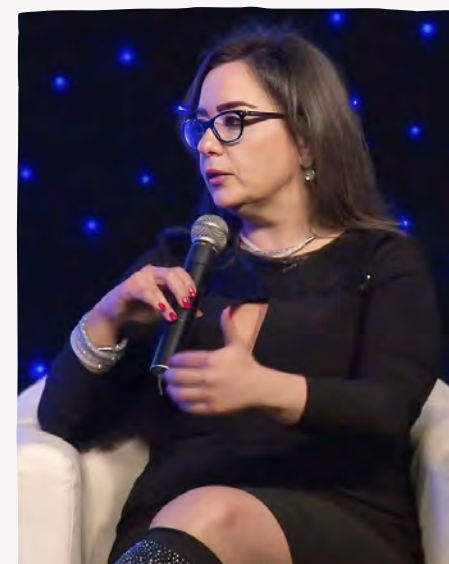
Under bomb fire in Lebanon, women survivors of gender-based violence were recognised by the [Anne-Marie Buhoro Award](#). The 2024 winner was [Ghida Anani](#), founder and director of ABAAD – the Resource Center for Gender Equality, a leading civil society organisation (CSO) in the country, advocating for gender equality, and engaging men, politicians and religious leaders to defy the patriarchal system in Lebanon.

ABAAD also runs shelters for women and runs campaigns that change public opinion and have resulted historically in gaining laws that are favourable to women. ABAAD's team members, in the height of conflict, have managed to operate shelters in bombed areas, while many have lost their own homes in the wave of attacks by Israel that started in October 2023 and continued throughout 2024 despite a fragile ceasefire in place.

Lebanese gender equality leader wins Anne-Marie Buhoro award 2024

“I’m very proud of our team’s work. The award shows that we, women, are a key part of the response for peace building.”

GHIDA ANANI: Founder and director of ABAAD



Impunity Watch is proud to back the Anne-Marie Buhoro award as part of the ongoing resource and expertise support we provide to INOVAS. The award was named to honour the memory of a Congolese human rights activist who dedicated her life to fighting sexual violence and promoting gender equality in the DRC. The country's violence crisis is going unnoticed by international public attention, but it's a context where we strengthened our victim-centered work in 2024.

Survivors in the spotlight

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Impunity Watch works in partnership with Africa Reconciled and The Network of Congolese Youth Associations (RACOJ, in French), among others we developed innovative, community led advocacy that successfully lobbied the Congolese Ministry of Human Rights to integrate victim demands from three provinces (Ituri, South Kivu, and North Kivu) into national policy in the arena of justice. We collaborated with victims to increase and strengthen coalitions and national momentum for transitional justice.

In 2024, we amplified this work in The Netherlands by [hosting a strategic talk](#) with Congolese survivors and diaspora. Afrikadag ('Africa Day' in Dutch) saw over 750+ people and 40 partner organisations gather in November in Amsterdam connected around the theme **"Getting Rights Right"**. The largest event in the Netherlands focused on Africa-Europe co-operation, Afrikadag provides a platform for African voices and fosters key goals of public engagement, raising awareness, and creating dialogue between policymakers, politicians, and the general public.

According to the co-organisers of Afrikadag, Foundation Max van der Stoel, Impunity Watch's talk was highly appreciated by the audience as it was said to **"highlight gaps in public understanding of transitional justice, underscoring the importance of continued dialogue and follow-up discussions on how to turn these conversations into concrete action."**

HIGHLIGHT

Survivors speak up from Congo

At Afrikadag 2024, Impunity Watch and Cordaid ran a highly popular session: 'People Power Building Justice in Africa: Survivors Speak Up from Congo'

Survivors Speak Up from Congo'
The attendees at our event highlighted the impact of survivor testimony.



 [Read more about the event →](#)

“Victims are the reason why transitional justice comes to life. They are the ones who have lived atrocities and abuses in the flesh. That’s why far from being confined in a simple witness role, they are key players and express and speak out and are the voice of the community.”

DIAYY KUBUYA: Secretary of the North Kivu coalition of victim groups

The power of photography

At the same time as the DRC talk in Amsterdam, we organised a photo exhibition with portraits from Burundi, drawing attention to the power of artistic and cultural traditions to confront the country's past, and tackle socio-cultural injustices. The images were part of the photobook *'Portraits of the past and present: preserving memories through photography and storytelling'*, containing the personal stories of 22 elderly Burundians.

The photobook was produced in collaboration with RWEZE, a collective of young women photographers and launched earlier in the year in Bujumbura. Together, we uncovered untold stories of violence, hope, resilience, and of heroism since colonial times, with the men and women who shared their stories coming from diverse ethnic backgrounds and all aged over 60. The project also preserved pieces of history that might otherwise have been lost.

“It was our first time photographing people who had lived through quite sad stories and from all social categories. In Burundi, we’re not really used to talking openly about what happened during the years of crisis.”

DANIELLA IRADUKUNDA: Photographer with the RWEZE collective



PHOTO CREDITS: Foundation Max Van Der Stoel, Impunity Watch





Among the elderly Burundians that shared their personal stories, Lazare Sagara's contribution to this project was also important for another reason: from the Batwa community, the invitation to publicly share his experiences was unique for members of his marginalised community.

Our commitment to ensuring the most marginalised are not forgotten in Burundi's efforts to deal with the past was therefore further reinforced in 2024 as we expanded our partnerships with the Association for the Support of Batwa Youth in Development (ASJBD, in French). We organised knowledge-sharing and skills-building workshops with ASJBD to enable members to actively participate in memory, justice, and reconciliation processes, thus promoting a more inclusive and equitable society.

"This is the first organisation that really provides consistent help for our association. This support is seen as a significant shift in our ability to address justice issues", recalled Pascal Niyungeko, leader of ASJBD. Strengthened by their participation in these efforts, ASJBD initiated community projects aimed at stimulating dialogue about the past within Batwa communities and reaching across ethnic divides to engage other communities in dialogues that will, in the long-term, contribute to breaking down entrenched discrimination, promoting mutual understanding and a more robust social fabric at the community level.

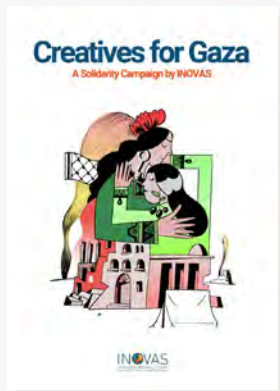
“ I was very collaborative because I felt there was a need to tell the truth about what happened in my country. It was my humble contribution to help young people be resistant and resilient in the face of manipulative politicians. ”

LAZARE SAGARA: member of the Batwa community portrayed in the photobook

Creatives for Gaza

More than a year after the continued genocidal violence of Israel against the Palestinian people, the international community's response remains marked by double standards, failing to contribute to a ceasefire, let alone addressing its root causes. During the year, international law rulings by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC) called States on their responsibility to prevent genocide, stated the illegality of the occupation and announced arrest warrants for Israeli and Hamas' leadership perpetrating international crimes. In a continued expression of our solidarity with the Palestinian people, we supported a powerful campaign by INOVAS to amplify the voices of the victims in Gaza and to honor their humanity, strength, and steadfastness ("sumoud", in Arabic).

INOVAS invited artists worldwide to respond to the question, **"What does solidarity with the people of Gaza mean to you?"** The result is the collection of artworks presented in a visual booklet – available in [English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#), and [Arabic](#).



ART CREDITS: Othman Selmi

“ To the victims of Gaza—to the lives lost, the homes destroyed, and the dreams shattered. May your pain never be forgotten, and may your hope ignite a brighter, more just tomorrow. — ”

The Creatives for Gaza initiative not only provides a platform for artists to show their solidarity but also reminds us that humanity cannot turn a blind eye to suffering. It is a call to acknowledge the strength of those who endure, who resist, and who inspire through their determination and creativity.



Victims and survivors at the heart of policymaking

This past year, we strengthened our goal of creating responsive, inclusive and representative decision making, bringing the participation of victims and survivors to the fore, especially in our policy work. We supported [INOVAS](#) (the International Network of Victims and Survivors of Serious Human Rights Abuses) to produce a first-of-a-kind, victim-centred [Guidelines for Victim Participation in Justice Processes](#). We provided expert support, and strategised together at their retreat in Greece on advocacy actions around the adoption of the guidelines.

INOVAS's commitment to standing with victims and amplifying their voices is especially demonstrated in its work in advocacy and awareness raising, and this is one example. In this instance, the exchange of experiences between different victim groups has shown itself to be a powerful tool for increasing solidarity and learning from each other. Sharing practical strategies for advocacy, mobilisation, and narrative building has strengthened the collective capacity of victims and survivors.



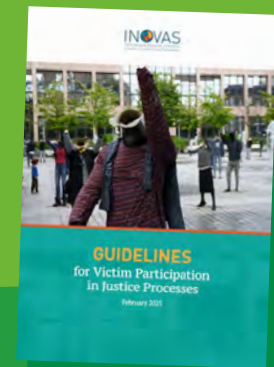
HIGHLIGHT

INOVAS Guidelines for victim participation in justice processes

These INOVAS guidelines are the first of their kind to be crafted by victims and survivors, highlighting the tremendous importance of such work. It also demonstrates a commitment to ensuring that victim perspectives are seriously considered in policy development.

These guidelines reflect the voices of victims and survivors'

associations in Latin America, the Middle East and North Africa, Asia and Africa. They are intended for use by all actors working in the justice field, and are available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic.



 [Explore the guidelines →](#)

VIDEO

INOVAS members highlight what policymakers and the international community can do to support victim participation in justice processes →



This video was showcased at the Belgian Mission to the United Nations in New York in February 2025.



Mobilising joint political action – connecting knowledge and demands from coalitions with policymakers

In 2024, we progressed with our core strategy that underlies our vision of victim-centred justice, the intervention to mobilise political action. We did this by targeting and engaging strategically with key decision-makers who can build political capital at the international level, specifically the UN, the European Union and the African Union.

We also played a direct role in shaping and promoting the [new UN Guidance Note on Transitional Justice](#), adopted in 2023, and focused on its effective implementation. At the global level, our active participation in high-level policy discussions, including regular engagement with the UN and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), reflects our recognised credibility and leadership in the field.

Through our involvement in collaborative networks such as the Global Learning Hub for Transitional Justice and Reconciliation, Global Initiative for Truth, Justice and Reconciliation, the Global Initiative Against Impunity, and the Justice Action Coalition, we have amplified victim-centred priorities and influenced policy debates.

We also advanced our work on political action that focused on **impunity and double standards**. This is an issue driven by global power dynamics, which persistently obstruct the pursuit of justice, allowing powerful actors to evade accountability and exclude victims and survivors from key decision-making. All of this erodes trust in justice processes and limits their influence.



After a mapping exercise in 2023, Impunity Watch and the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy organised a workshop in Nairobi, Kenya, focused specifically on victim participation and double standards. Participants, representing diverse perspectives from the DRC, Kenya, Lebanon, the Sahel, Sudan and Syria, collaboratively developed [concrete recommendations that provide a practical framework for dismantling double standards](#) through enhanced victim engagement and influence,

addressing disparities at global, regional, and local levels. In the future, we will continue this work by prioritising thematic discussions and peer-to-peer exchanges to build alliances in the face of impunity.

Movement against impunity in Guatemala

At national level in Guatemala and regional levels in the Americas, Impunity Watch supported three important justice processes where international pressure is crucial for fighting impunity by reducing corruption and increasing the responsiveness of national political systems. This involved the [participation of victims during the visits of the UN Human Rights Commissioner, Volker Turk](#), and the delegation of the Inter American Commission on Human Rights Commissioners, the observation of the [election of courts](#) in coordination with victims and national and international actors, and the dialogue of victims with the Guatemalan government to create a National Plan of Reparation of Victims.

“Impunity Watch’s contribution has helped us adapt our policy proposals to the legal framework and relate them to the international agreements and conventions that bind the State.”

JUAN PÉREZ: From the national platform of victims of the internal armed conflict, our long standing partner in Guatemala

Mayra Rodriguez also described Impunity Watch's work as playing "a key role in driving the court election process, conducting observation and contributing to a detailed mapping of court candidates, researching their backgrounds, and publicising them. This work has been crucial in enabling citizens to identify any relevant facts that might have prevented certain candidates from running, allowing them to present challenges. Furthermore, Impunity Watch has provided guidance and information to citizens, ensuring they are well-informed so they can actively participate in the commissioner voting process, promoting better profiles for the courts."

We published a [report](#) which was widely disseminated alongside summary videos of the [results of the process](#) and [lessons learned](#) included in the report. Many newspapers and media quoted our report, including the official newspaper of the region, [Diario de Centroamerica](#).

We coordinated with international organisations and promoted the creation of a panel of international experts to observe the election of courts – the first time an international civil society group had observed this process. This was an important initiative to inform the international community about the process and any irregularities. This panel published a [report](#) which highlighted the role of civil society and indigenous authorities in the process and established important recommendations to reform the justice system.

At an international level we supported the participation of indigenous authorities in international spaces in Geneva to share the situation of Guatemala's justice system and the important role indigenous people were playing in the defence of democracy and transition with the new government. Maya Kiche leader and ex-president of the Council of Communal Mayors of the 48 cantons of Totonicapán [Luis Pacheco](#), who



led the defence of democracy in 2023, [participated in the Human Rights Council](#) and met with Special Rapporteurs; and Maya Ixil leader Mayor of Nebaj and Feliciana Herrera, the indigenous mayor of Nebah and a relative of victims of the Ixil genocide, [participated in the 17th sessions of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#).

“ The work Impunity Watch does in coordination and observance, including inviting international delegations to accompany the processes, is invaluable. I want to highlight the crucial work done to open spaces for dialogue with the diplomatic corps. These initiatives can significantly contribute to the defense of democracy and ensure a more transparent and fair process. ”

MAYRA RODRIGUEZ: From the Alliance for Reforms (AxR, in Spanish)

The visit of the HR High Commissioner [Volker Türk](#) and the delegation of the [IACHR Commissioners](#), saw Impunity Watch supporting victims and civil society organisations as they engaged with these key stakeholders, helping them prepare their arguments and petitions. We participated by providing information about the situation, the visits, as well as the conclusions and recommendations that resulted from them.

Regarding the election of judges, we coordinated with [the National Platform of Victims, indigenous authorities, the Alliance for the Reforms](#), and the Alliance of Women and Indigenous Women for Justice. We gave counsel on how to observe the process, how to present motions of opposition, and on a communicational level, how to establish public statements in key moments of the process. Juan Pérez recognised this contribution, *“Sharing data and graphics in the presentations was very useful for leaders to better understand the situation and advance their strategy”*.



Our work with the National Platform of Victims in Guatemala, our historical partner in the country, has been highlighted in the [UN High Commissioner of Human Rights' annual report of good practices on transitional justice's processes](#), in the context of sustaining peace and sustainable development. The Truth and Justice Charter is also mentioned in this document, while INOVAS was highlighted at the 58th session of the Human Rights Council. This reflects Impunity Watch's ability to influence at a global level.

The report on good practices states: *“Victims and survivors’ groups approached accountability in a strategic way, creating coalitions as the National Platform of Organisations of Victims of the Internal Armed Conflict, and allied with civil society organisations, legal expert teams and international NGOs. The victim-centred approach involved community work to promote victim support and network collaboration. They rendered visible sexual and gender-based violence by collecting testimonies and empowering survivors through leadership roles. Their strategic litigation included political and communications strategies to make the cases known nationally and internationally.”*

Supporting survivors' organisations in Syria

To support and amplify Syrian victim organisations' demands on the international agenda, last year we offered policy guidance and strategic advice to them, facilitating their engagement and coordination with the [Independent Institution on Missing Persons in Syria](#) (IIMP) and other justice mechanisms, including UN Member States, and international organisations such as the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM), International Commission of Inquiry on Syria; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR); and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).



PHOTO CREDITS: Paul Wagner for The Syria Campaign

Initiatives included lobbying trips, meetings and side-events, and took place with the support of the Netherlands, Switzerland, Belgium, Luxembourg and other states.

One side event, in April, was titled 'Finding Answers: Syrian Families Engage with the Independent Institution for Missing Persons in Syria (IIMP)'. It featured a panel discussion on the needs of the IIMP during its inception period, including ways to enhance victim participation in its work, the establishment of a robust referral system to assist families while supporting search efforts, and the cooperation expected from states, civil society and other relevant international institutions. Established by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) after many years of advocacy from the families of the missing and disappeared, the IIMP became the highest hope of the victims as they demanded greater accountability in Syria.

In March, Impunity Watch organised an advocacy trip to New York City involving a delegation of representatives of the Truth and Justice Charter (TJC) as well as Impunity Watch staff. The delegation met with a number of UN member states regarding the IIMP. They highlighted the need for providing the necessary support and resources to ensure that it began its operations effectively. The delegation advocated for leadership sensitive to victims demands and bottom up initiatives. We also co-organised a side-event at the Belgian mission to the UN. The TJC delegation participated in the panel discussion during the event, which focused on the next steps for the IIMP and the need for continued support.

Ultimately, the endeavours of victims' associations and Syrian civil society actors have proven fruitful in creating opportunities and achieving results to advance the demands of survivors, victims, and their families. Their recent accomplishments in influencing the UN and the international community underscore how victims, through collective action, can drive justice initiatives and influence policy.

After the fall of the Assad authoritarian regime in December 2024, this is a vital and exciting time for our policy work to have an impact. Now victims organisations have a unique opportunity to hold the Syrian State to their promise and shape the transitional justice process. They are well placed to engage actively with the [new authorities and the IIMP](#), contributing their expertise and ensuring that victim-centred justice remains at the heart of the transitional process.

Our continued support to the work of victims' organisations like the Caesar Families Association, acting swiftly in emergencies to support newly released detainees and preparing to engage with the new authorities after the fall of the Assad regime is essential to strengthen victims' efforts in engaging, coordinating dialogue, and pressuring the new authorities to address justice needs.



PHOTO CREDITS: Paul Wagner for The Syria Campaign



Much work is left to be done in Syria. While some families were reunited with their loved ones or finally learned their fate during the historic changes of last year, more than 112,000 individuals remain forcibly disappeared, according to a [report](#) by the Syrian Network for Human Rights (SNHR). Moreover, the uncoordinated opening of detention facilities, combined with the influx of desperate family members searching for missing relatives, created chaotic conditions. Records and potential evidence were either taken or destroyed. In response, families and Syrian civil society organisations immediately called on the new government to secure detention facilities, preserve records, and protect burial sites.

The opening of these facilities has also brought to light new evidence of the horrors and systematic torture perpetrated by the Assad regime.

Youth shaping the future of justice in Africa

On the African continent, we continued our work for youth engagement in justice processes, including the African Union's transitional justice policy (AUTJP). We provided technical, financial, and thematic assistance to the launch of a continent-wide platform for youth and transitional justice; we opened space for youth voices and perspectives at key African policy spaces including the [African Transitional Justice Forum in Mauritius](#), a series of stakeholder meetings among the international diplomatic corps in Addis Ababa, policy workshops organised with the [Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation](#) (CSV), and policy engagements with African Union member states.

Our support to the capacity strengthening and training of participants during the AU's fourth annual *African Youth for Transitional Justice Programme* led to the formation of the **African Youth Platform for Transitional Justice** which now serves as a continental platform for youth to influence transitional justice initiatives on the continent. A task force of ten members representing North, East, West, Central and Southern Africa was elected, which began consulting with members to agree on a common position and vision for the Platform.

With the same objective in mind to mobilise youth participation, we launched two continent-wide initiatives at the end of 2024: a partnership with the **Youth Organisation for Research and Justice Advocacy (YORJA)** to develop a youth-friendly version of the AUTJP, and a consultative process to develop guidance around masculinities and justice.



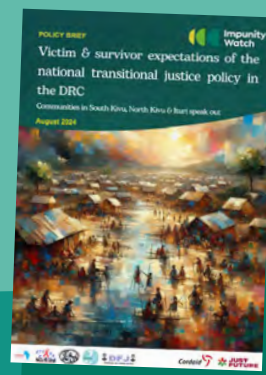
PHOTO CREDITS: YORJA

POLICY BRIEF

Victim and survivor expectations of the national transitional justice policy in the DRC

The policy brief highlights the hopes and expectations of victim communities on key themes such as: truth-seeking, criminal prosecutions,

reparations, guarantees of non-recurrence, and memorialisation.



Explore the
policy brief →

Connecting communities to policymaking in Congo

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), we are working towards the goal of identifying the real causes of crimes to proceed with restoring peace by connecting communities to national policymaking. We believe that for justice to meaningfully and sustainably address the legacy of human rights violations, ownership of the process must be held by all communities affected by conflict and violence in the country.

We published research amplifying the voices and justice demands of more than 770 people in the country's three eastern provinces of Ituri, North Kivu, and South Kivu. The findings are a critical contribution to the ongoing development of a national transitional justice policy since popular consultations failed to hear the populations in these three provinces most affected by violence.

The research, *'Victim and survivor expectations of the national transitional justice policy in the DRC: Communities in South Kivu, North Kivu & Ituri speak out'* presents the priorities of victim communities around justice mechanisms, analysing the policy implications on key issues including the restoration of peace and stability, the dangers and the potential of memorialisation, and the contribution of mental health and psychological services and witness protection to truth-seeking.

“ *Victims want peace to be restored so that truth-seeking can be undertaken without problem. Peace remains the priority of everything, because without peace it is difficult to carry out investigations... [and] with each passing day we continue to record more cases of war crimes and serious human rights violations.* **”**

INTERVIEW: Civil society actor, from Ituri in the DRC



Fundraising and organisational developments: towards an inclusive and collective ecosystem

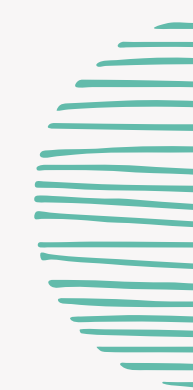
Throughout the year, our response to ending impunity focused on the root causes of inequalities. We strived to address systemic issues by acting collaboratively and creating spaces and resources to sustain partnerships that would help move towards a justice ecosystem that fosters security, access to justice and inclusive decision-making to victims and survivors.

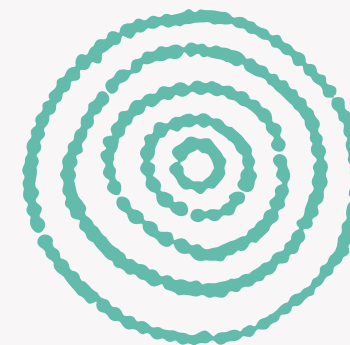
We witnessed the impact of shifting domestic and geopolitical priorities reflected in a changing funding landscape. This had profound consequences on support for civil society and international commitments to human rights, justice, and the rule of law. With key focuses on programmatic and organisational priorities, we have laid the groundwork for responding to immediate funding challenges, as well as building long-term sustainability through more strategic resource mobilisation and relationship building.

We fostered partnerships as a way to join forces and contribute to an inclusive and collective justice system. Being based in The Hague, in the cradle of International Justice in Europe, we felt more than ever the responsibility of being part of an active civil society and contributing to a transformative justice ecosystem. With intention and purpose, we continued to contribute to those spaces by learning from victims as we shared knowledge and experience facilitating space for victims and inclusive processes.

A global changing landscape encompassed narratives and funding, and we witnessed the impact of shifting domestic and geopolitical priorities. This had profound consequences on support for civil society and international commitments to human rights, justice, and the rule of law. With key focuses on programmatic and organisational priorities, we have started to lay the groundwork for responding to immediate funding challenges, which will follow Impunity Watch in the years to come.

The goal is to build long-term sustainability through more strategic resource mobilisation and relationship building, as well as reflecting on our impact and added value in the fight against impunity.





Gender transformation from the ground up

One main area where we have focused our efforts has been strengthening our [gender transformative approaches in justice processes](#) in our programmatic work. Examples include [strengthening women's leadership](#) to increase their political capital in Burundian society, as well as [transforming masculinities](#) to prevent future violence in the country.

In the past year, we have also grown our internal capacity with a Gender Working Group to engage in gender development, implementation, and monitoring across all pillars of our work. We have also kickstarted global and regional trainings in the Hague and Burundi, with others planned for the Middle East and Guatemala later in 2025-2026, to discuss root causes and structural barriers of gender inequality and impunity, and develop concrete actions to address these.

We are also deepening our research, policy, and advocacy engagement on the issue of [militarised masculinities](#), which has been identified by many victims' groups as a root cause of impunity, gender inequality, and violence. To further investigate this concept and connect its implications with high-level decision-makers, we have started developing a series of papers on this topic. In the coming year, we will continue to strengthen our work on militarised masculinities and gender transformative approaches through events, research, and capacity building.

Donors

We are very grateful for the continued funding support from partners, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belgium, the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the US State Department, Wellspring Philanthropic Fund, the Open Society Foundations, and the European Commission.

These achievements provide recognition of our reputation and expertise on transitional justice and victim-centred approaches. They are a testament to the relevance and effectiveness of our work.



Impunity Watch's audited financial figures for 2024, including income, expenditure and results, are available in our Financial Report 2024. Our continued process of due diligence allowed us also to address two integrity incidents on financial matters last year.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands



Belgium
partner in development



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra



Wellspring
Philanthropic Fund

OPEN SOCIETY
FOUNDATIONS



European
Commission

Thank you!

Where we work



Contact

Impunity Watch
Alexanderveld 5
2585 DB, The Hague
The Netherlands

tel: (+31) 6 22 36 71 99
info@impunitywatch.org
impunitywatch.org

FIND US ON:



© 2025 All rights reserved

COVER PHOTOS: Impunity Watch and Paul Wagner
for The Syria Campaign