



JUSTICE RAPID RESPONSE

Ensuring that the
worst crimes known
to humanity are
investigated promptly
and professionally

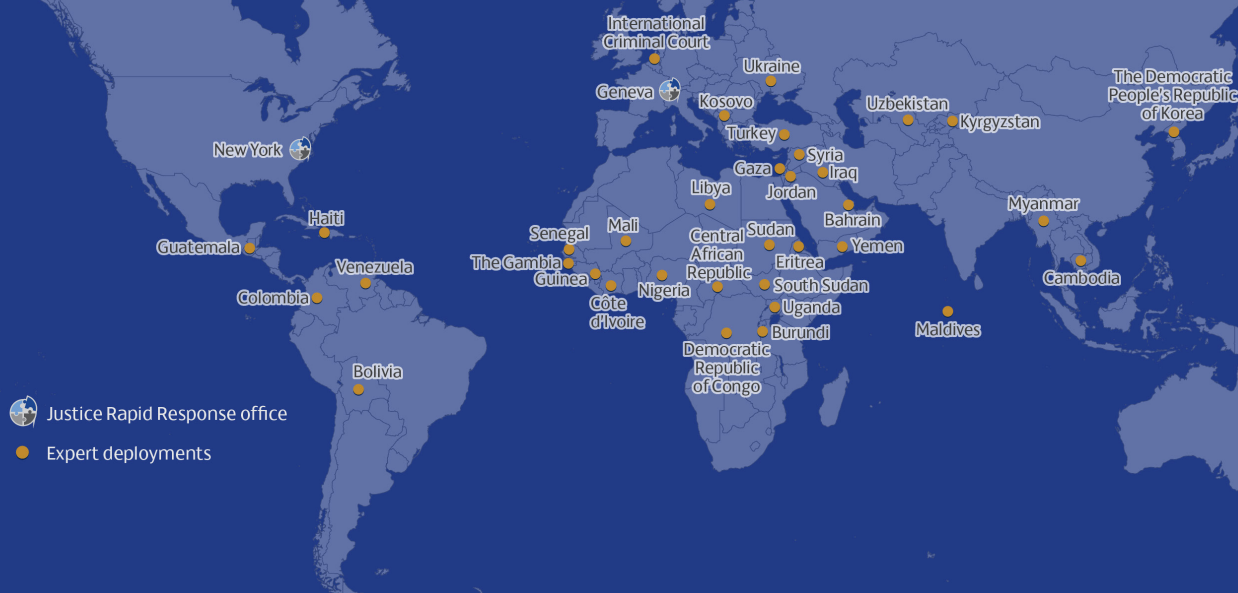
PLACING CHILD RIGHTS AT THE HEART OF INVESTIGATIONS



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

RAPIDLY DEPLOYING EXPERTS WORLDWIDE

Past and current investigations where Justice Rapid Response experts have been deployed



*Justice Rapid Response has also supported a number of confidential inquiries that do not appear in this map.

“Our belief is that only when impunity for mass atrocities ends can we bring justice and dignity to victims, survivors, and their communities”

NINA SUOMALAINEN



Cover photo by Bassam Khabieh

A boy sits on a tire in front of a mosque's bullet-riddled facade on the first day of the Eid al-Adha holy day in Douma, Syria on 4 October 2014. Syrian photographer Bassam Khabieh – author of *Witnesses to War: The Children of Syria* – presented his work documenting the suffering of children at an event held by Justice Rapid Response and Save the Children in December 2021. Mr. Khabieh has spent years capturing the suffering and resilience of Syria's children and youth – who still do not have access to justice – amid the ongoing conflict.

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FOREWORD

THE QUEST
FOR JUSTICE

Ambassador Monique van Daalen

The Kingdom of the Netherlands
Chairperson, Justice Rapid Response



Nina Suomalainen

Executive Director
Justice Rapid Response

The year 2021 was an exciting and highly productive one at Justice Rapid Response as it marked another record year in deployments, new partnerships, and milestone convictions born from long-term investigation support. The interests of survivors and victims are at the heart of everything we do and so – even as the COVID-19 pandemic continued – Justice Rapid Response and its partners worked relentlessly against impunity.

While nearly half of its deployments were focused on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), the organization also focused on the importance of giving child rights expertise a central role at the outset of all investigations. We did this by recruiting and deploying child rights experts, by reinforcing our work with Save the Children, and through two high-level events raising awareness on the issue with the international community.

Our strategy on integrating SGBV expertise into the planning stages of investigations continued to influence the focus of a host of international justice processes. And after nearly a decade providing support for investigations into sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) allegations, Justice Rapid Response put together the investigation team that supported an independent commission investigating SEA allegations following the World Health Organization (WHO) response to the tenth Ebola epidemic in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The WHO has since committed to delivering an action plan with member states.

Justice processes are often frustratingly slow and opaque for survivors. In the quest for justice for the Yazidis, 2021 was remarkable as it saw five former members of the Islamic State charged in Germany for war crimes and crimes against humanity. Justice Rapid Response is proud to have supported the organization Yazda in enabling the identification of key witnesses and victims in all these cases.

We continued to strive for excellence for the benefit of our partners, be they civil society organizations, national or international justice processes. We also welcomed the opportunity to work with new multilateral partners such as the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, which resulted in judicial reform commitments in Bolivia. Furthermore, new donor states and foundations also put their trust in us.

The year 2022 will see new leadership at Justice Rapid Response as the end of the Executive Director mandate approaches. We have both been inspired by the hard work and commitment of Justice Rapid Response and its partners in bringing the highest levels of investigation to international justice. We know that Justice Rapid Response's staff, experts and partners will keep up this determination and passion in their mission, and we will be keenly watching all that they continue to achieve for survivors and victims worldwide.



700+
rapidly
deployable
experts



110+
nationalities



100
languages



45%
from the
Global South



60%
women

DEPLOYING THE ROSTER IN 2021

In 2021, demand for expertise in the field of international justice remained strong as Justice Rapid Response experienced a spike in requests from potential partner organizations. Justice Rapid Response received a record 111 inquiries for expertise, up from 78 in 2020. In turn, the number of times experts were deployed also broke new records in 2021 with 87 deployments, up from 75 over the course of the previous year. This was in part attributed to the fact that Justice Rapid Response deployed expertise to a large investigation by an independent commission into sexual exploitation and abuse allegations stemming from the World Health Organization's response to the tenth Ebola epidemic in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In total, Justice Rapid Response responded to requests from 12 new partner organizations in 2021, thereby expanding its reach into a host of new country contexts and areas of expertise, including financial investigation and satellite imagery analysis.

Justice Rapid Response also marked a significant moment in its history in 2021, as it reached its five-hundredth deployment. Investigating continued according to a hybrid model amid the pandemic, with 66 per cent of deployments conducted remotely, supporting 20 different country contexts.

Of all the deployments in 2021, almost half (49 per cent) were focused on sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and 13 per cent were focused on child rights.

EXPERTISE ON THE ROSTER 2021

Child Rights	5%
Forensic Sciences	12%
Human Rights	12%
Investigations	18%
Justice Administration	2%
Prosecutions/Analysis	11%
Legal Advisory	22%
Military	4%
Security	1%
Technology	2%
Witness/Victim Support	4%
Other	7%

In addition to their listed professions, many of the experts on the Justice Rapid Response roster are also specialized in sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).



A child sits amid ruins in Taiz City, Yemen. (©Akram Alrasny)

CHILD RIGHTS

TURNING POLICY INTO ACTION

In 2021, Justice Rapid Response continued to draw attention to the importance of putting child rights at the heart of investigations through the deployment of child rights experts, recruitment of new experts to the roster, as well as through focused events and partnerships aiming to put policy work into practice. Through its events, Justice Rapid Response brought together child rights experts, Save the Children, the ICC Prosecutor, the Oak Foundation, and several states' representatives, to exchange commitments and best practices in the investigation of crimes affecting children (events further elaborated on in the Outreach and Communications section of this report).

In 2021, Justice Rapid Response deployed child rights experts to Libya, Colombia, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Iraq and Syria. At the international level, Justice Rapid Response deployed seven child rights experts to provide a child rights perspective to investigations into conflict situations. Experts were deployed to the Independent Fact-Finding Mission on Libya, the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, the UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria, the Sri Lanka accountability project, as well as UNICEF offices in Europe, Central Asia and Sudan.

This support helped to draw attention to violations specifically against children, and in turn their needs for protection and justice. For instance, the Fact-Finding Mission on Libya's official report – released 1 October 2021 – dedicates an entire section to violations affecting children. It uncovers the recruitment and use of children by parties to the conflict in Libya and the arbitrary detention of children. A Justice Rapid Response child rights expert deployed to the Fact-Finding Mission in 2020 was subsequently deployed again in 2021 to ensure the continuity of this focus.

This Fact-Finding Mission investigated the fate of children held in detention with adults – including children of parents associated with the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) – where children are subjected to the same harsh conditions of detention as adults. They reportedly suffer beatings, torture, and have an increased risk of being sexually abused in de-

tention. Several children have also been held for prolonged periods without charge or trial.

After the report was released, there was a call from civil society for accountability at the International Criminal Court (ICC) level, with several official communications to the Court drawing directly on the findings of the Fact-Finding Mission.

At the national level, Justice Rapid Response also contributed to the fight against impunity for crimes affecting children. One example of this took place in Colombia, where the armed conflict has resulted in the forced recruitment of more than 8,000 children and youth. In 2021, Justice Rapid Response deployed a child rights investigator to support the work of Colombia's Special Jurisdiction for Peace (known as the JEP) in developing guidelines for the investigation of crimes affecting children. These guidelines will orient the JEP's Investigations and Accusations Unit in investigating crimes affecting children throughout its mandate.

The Justice Rapid Response expert made several recommendations to the JEP about applying a child rights approach to its restorative justice framework. The investigator also worked with the JEP's Investigations and Accusation Unit to organize consultations with victims of child recruitment on the development of the guidelines. Victims gave feedback on what type of reparations measures they would consider impactful and how the criminal procedure should be conducted in order to restore their rights.



Including children means documenting their story of conflict, their experiences and possible violations they have suffered. It also involves giving children a role in justice processes, while ensuring their protection.”

**AMBASSADOR MARC PECSTEEN
DE BUYTSWERVE**

*Permanent Representative of Belgium
to the UN in Geneva*





A woman stands in line to receive food donations along with other people displaced by the conflict in the town of Shire, Tigray region, Ethiopia on 15 March 2021. (©REUTERS/Baz Ratner)

SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

UNCOVERING THE MAGNITUDE OF VIOLATIONS

By the end of 2021, Justice Rapid Response was supporting, or had been requested to deploy gender experts to, almost all currently active UN-mandated human rights investigations, helping to maintain a focus on uncovering sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

Justice Rapid Response expertise helped to highlight the magnitude of violations against women, girls, men and boys in Ethiopia's Tigray region conflict. A Justice Rapid Response expert deployed to the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and the UN Human Rights Office joint investigation documented multiple gang rape incidents against women, and cases of men and boys subjected to SGBV. The investigation team highlighted how the incidents of rape were likely much higher than outlined, due to the stigma and trauma attached to sexual violence.

SGBV findings from the UN Human Rights Office's ongoing investigation into repression in Belarus were also made possible by expertise from Justice Rapid Response. In an oral address to the Human Rights Council on the human rights situation in Belarus, High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet referred to allegations of gender-based violence in detention. This included sexual violence committed by law enforcement officers, threats of sexual assault, sexual harassment against women and men, as

well as threats of removing children from their mothers.

In 2021, the UN Human Rights Office also requested gender expertise from Justice Rapid Response to join the Sri Lanka Accountability Mechanism, the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, and the recently mandated International Commission of Human Rights Experts to investigate allegations of violations in Ethiopia.

Justice Rapid Response continued to advance the issue of gender persecution in the sphere of international justice. It commissioned a research paper on gender persecution as an international crime that was published in the [Northwestern Journal of Human Rights in June 2021](#). The Justice Rapid Response expert who authored the paper had participated in a panel event the organization held on the sidelines of the Assembly of States Parties in 2020, raising awareness about the crime of gender persecution. Subsequently, in September 2021, the expert was appointed by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court as the Special Advisor on Gender Persecution, where they will be advising his office on the investigation and prosecution of the crime against humanity of persecution on the grounds of gender.

[FEATURE]

TACKLING SEXUAL EXPLOITATION & ABUSE

In 2021, Justice Rapid Response managed the investigation team of the Independent Commission appointed to investigate allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) during the World Health Organization (WHO) response to the tenth Ebola epidemic in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

This investigation built upon nearly a decade of experience providing expertise support for conducting impartial and independent investigations in response to SEA allegations.

Sexual exploitation and abuse gravely undermine the integrity, credibility and efficiency of humanitarian and development efforts, as well as of international justice. While investigative journalism and growing activism have helped uncover acts of abuse and power in humanitarian settings in recent years, the international community has only begun to understand and address the nature, forms, and repercussions of SEA. Swift, credible and impartial investigations of SEA allegations are a crucial aspect of ensuring justice for this form of sexual violence and deterring future incidents. Through its experts, Justice Rapid Response has the capacity to recommend remedies and prevention efforts for abuses.

To date, Justice Rapid Response has deployed more than 30 experts to 13 SEA investi-

gation missions. Nine of these SEA missions focused on Sub-Saharan Africa, three focused on the Middle East and North Africa region, and one was deployed to an international organization operating worldwide.

Prior to 2021, Justice Rapid Response's contributions have only been made public for two missions. In 2013, the organization deployed two experts to an independent external review panel commissioned by the International Criminal Court (ICC) following allegations of the sexual assault of four individuals under the ICC's protection programme by a former ICC staff member in the DRC. In 2018, Justice Rapid Response deployed a sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) expert to support the World Bank's Inspection Panel, after allegations of SGBV by a contractor's employees emerged during a World Bank-financed road project in the DRC. The expert conducted document reviews, interviewed World Bank staff, and travelled with the Inspec-

tion Panel to the DRC in January 2018 to interview survivors.

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Children

There are currently no widely adopted standard procedures in SEA investigations affecting children, even though they are especially vulnerable to SEA in circumstances of conflict, instability, and displacement worldwide. In 2021, Justice Rapid Response partnered with the Oak Foundation to improve accountability for acts of SEA against children. The aim of this partnership is to better define and systematize best practices

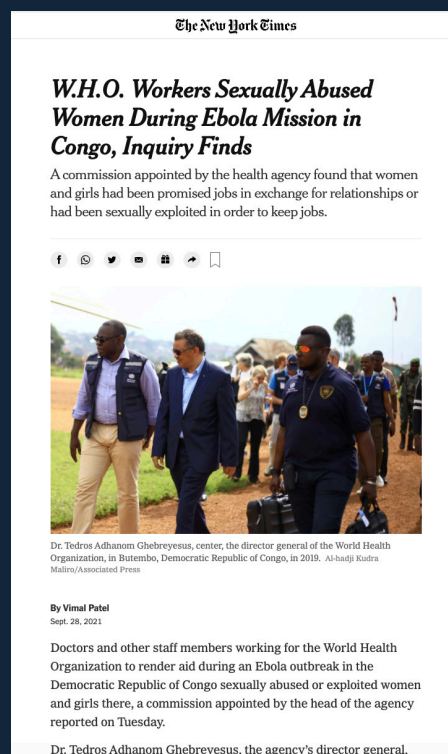
in the field of investigations of SEA against children, based on Justice Rapid Response's vast internal knowledge stemming from a decade of practical experience. By deploying professional investigators who ascertain the facts and advise on corrective measures and prevention, Justice Rapid Response experts set a precedent and offer a model for how such situations should be handled, and how to protect witnesses, potential victims, as well as alleged perpetrators, according to international standards. A research paper on this topic will be published by 2022, seeking to contribute to tackling impunity for SEA against children and to promote deterrence.

ROSTER EXPERTS TASKED WITH WHO SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE INVESTIGATION

In 2021, Justice Rapid Response put together the investigation team that supported an Independent Commission investigating allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) amid the World Health Organization (WHO) response to the tenth Ebola epidemic in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

The Independent Commission released a report with the investigation's findings on 28 September 2021, highlighting the scale of SEA incidents during the Ebola epidemic, coupled with a failure to report at the institutional level or to provide support to survivors. In the report, the Independent Commission underscored the urgent need for alleged victims to receive medical and other care to deal with the consequences of the harm they suffered. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus announced measures to address the report's findings at a press conference that drew widespread media attention.

As a result of the report, WHO



committed with member states to providing a comprehensive management action plan to further investigate those responsible for sexual ex-

ploitation and abuse, as well as for the failure to activate investigation procedures or to provide support and services to the victims.

The WHO had announced in October 2020 that it was establishing the Independent Commission to investigate allegations of SEA carried out during its response to the Ebola epidemic that took place in the DRC between 2018 and 2020. After an open bidding process, Justice Rapid Response was selected by the Independent Commission as a contractor for the provision of investigation expertise, based on its experience investigating allegations of SEA.

Under its terms of reference for a six-month contract period, Justice Rapid Response gathered a team of 17 experts to conduct five field missions in the DRC to interview survivors and witnesses. The investigative team delivered progress and final reports, including case investigation reports with recommendations for action, to the Independent Commission.

IMPACT CASES



A member of the security forces faces supporters of former Bolivian president Evo Morales during clashes in La Paz, Bolivia on 15 November 2019. (©REUTERS/Marco Bello)

INVESTIGATION INTO VIOLENCE SPURS APOLOGY IN BOLIVIA

Justice Rapid Response experts contributed to an investigation into 2019 post-electoral violence in Bolivia. The resulting independent report found that gross human rights violations and other acts of violence were committed by security forces, as well as by civilians. It received broad support from both the government and civil society organizations and sparked an apology from the country's president.

Bolivia and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) had jointly established the Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts on Bolivia (GIEI) to investigate violence and human rights violations that took place during the post-election crisis in 2019. The GIEI outlined in its report, released on 17 August 2021 and completed with the support of Justice Rapid Response experts, that violations including systematic torture, summary executions and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) were carried out from 1 September to 31 December 2019,

leaving 37 people dead and around 800 injured.

In response to the report, Bolivian President Luis Arce apologized to the victims and their families, and committed to implementing the GIEI's recommendations, including more detailed investigations and reparations, as well as judicial reform. The report not only highlighted SGBV, but also violations carried out based on ethnicity, specifically targeting indigenous communities. It revealed that the violence at the hands of both security forces and civilians is symptomatic of a deeply divided society in a context of impunity.

Justice Rapid Response deployed an expert in SGBV, who helped to bring to the forefront gendered crimes. The organization also deployed an expert to help build the GIEI Bolivia's capacity to conduct satellite imagery searches, as well as a military advisor to provide insight on protocols, weaponry, ammunitions, and rank structures related to the military and police units operating in the areas under investigation.

A FLURRY OF CONVICTIONS IN YAZIDI CASES

In 2021, major milestones were marked in the quest for justice for atrocities carried out by the so-called Islamic State (or ISIL) against the Yazidi minority in Iraq and Syria. In total, throughout the year, five defendants on trial in Germany – under the principle of universal jurisdiction – were found guilty of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity. The expertise in gathering evidence provided by Justice Rapid Response to the civil society organization Yazda in Iraq enabled the identification of key witnesses and victims in all these cases.

Yazda had helped prosecutors in Germany to locate a deceased Yazidi girl's mother, who in turn became a witness in the cases of a wife and husband known under German privacy laws as "Jennifer W." and "Taha A.J.". The five-year-old girl and her mother had been enslaved by Jennifer W. and Taha A.J. in Iraq. When the girl fell ill, Taha A.J. is said to have chained her outside in 45-degree heat as punishment and let her die.

The conviction of Taha A.J. in November 2021

marked a legal milestone for the Yazidis as it was the first time a court recognized the crime of genocide against this minority. Taha A.J. was convicted by a German court for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes for the enslavement and abuse of Yazidis. In October 2021, Jennifer W. was convicted by a separate court in Germany of aiding and abetting crimes against humanity, as well as aiding and abetting war crimes.

Yazda had also identified witnesses and plaintiffs in the cases of "Omama A.", "Nurten J." and "Sarah O." who were all convicted by courts in Germany in 2021. Omama A. was convicted for a second time for aiding and abetting crimes against humanity. Nurten J. was convicted of committing war crimes and aiding and abetting crimes against humanity, while Sarah O. was convicted for aiding and abetting rape, as well as for enslavement and religious persecution and gender-based persecution as crimes against humanity.



Taha A.J. – convicted for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes for the enslavement and abuse of Yazidis – covers his face as he talks to his lawyers in a courtroom in Frankfurt, Germany on 30 November 2021. (©Frank Rumpenhorst/Pool via REUTERS)

SAFEGUARDING WITNESSES IN HISTORIC FARC CASE

In April 2021, in an unprecedented decision by Colombia's Special Jurisdiction for Peace (known as the JEP), eight former FARC commanders were charged for the crime of taking hostages. The FARC commanders later acknowledged their responsibility, paving the way for a restorative justice process. The decision in the case, known as Case 001, resulted in the first ever charging decision for the JEP and is a milestone for uncovering the truth about the kidnappings and many other crimes allegedly committed by the FARC.

Justice Rapid Response made significant contributions to this historic decision with the support of a witness protection expert who provided recommendations for procedural protection during hearings. The expert designed a code system to hide victims' identities from the media and the general public, dramatically improving the security of those participating in voluntary hearings. The decision marked a turning point for victims who had waited for several years for their voices to be heard.

SPECIAL FOCUS « TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE: THE GREAT COLOMBIAN CHALLENGE »

WHY COLOMBIA IS A PIONEER IN RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

20 MAY 2021 | BY MARY DE LA LIBERTAD DIAZ MARQUEZ, FOR JUSTICEINFO.NET

In an innovative journey of transitional justice already well underway, Colombia is putting restorative justice to a test. It's still a question to what extent this approach is embraced so that not only victims and perpetrators but all of society can take steps towards peace and reconciliation. Colombian lawyer Mary de Libertad Diaz Marquez recalls that, above all, one of the main objectives is to provide victims and perpetrators with the conditions to repair the broken relationships between them and their communities.

SHARE    REPUBLISH 



In northern Colombia, Kankuamo Indians, accompanied by a judge of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) and two psychologists, gather their testimonies on extrajudicial executions in the so-called '03' JEP case. © Jurisdicción Especial para la Paz

Justiceinfo.net

ADDRESSING SGBV AGAINST JOURNALISTS IN COLOMBIA

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights in 2021 issued a historic ruling that examined the use of sexual violence as a form of silencing a female journalist in the context of the Colombian armed conflict. In addition to declaring Colombia's responsibility for the violation of the rights of Colombian journalist Jineth Bedoya Lima – who was kidnapped and sexually assaulted while on assignment – the Court ordered a series of reparation measures. These included ordering Colombia to investigate, prosecute and punish all those responsible for the crimes committed against Ms. Bedoya Lima and to carry out a comprehensive policy for the protection of journalists, as well as to create a fund for women journalist victims of gender-based violence.

Justice Rapid Response was able to play a

small part in Ms. Bedoya Lima's 20-year battle for justice by supporting the Centre for Justice and International Law and Fundación para la Libertad de Prensa as they brought this case before the Inter-American system. Justice Rapid Response deployed an SGBV prosecutions expert who was asked to submit an expert report and appear before the Court. This person shared expertise on the application of international due diligence standards in the investigation and prosecution of conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. The expert focused on the prevalence and specific use of gender-based violence against women journalists. Recommendations from the expert were included in this historic decision, which will reach states in the region beyond Colombia.



A survivor of the Yahya Jammeh regime embraces a counsel after a Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations Commission hearing in Eassau, Gambia on 4 December 2019. (©REUTERS/Christophe Van Der Perre)

REPORT IN THE GAMBIA PAVES THE WAY FOR PROSECUTIONS

The Gambia's Truth, Reconciliation, and Reparations Commission (TRRC) presented its final report to Gambian President Adama Barrow on 25 November 2021. The final report of the TRRC, a three-year transitional justice mechanism to which Justice Rapid Response has contributed several experts, included recommendations for investigations and prosecutions of gross human rights violations and crimes against humanity that took place during former president Yahya Jammeh's more than two decades in power.

The TRRC found that these abuses had resulted in the death of at least 240 people and recommended that individuals involved in perpetrating these killings and other abuses be held accountable for their crimes.

In response to the report, President Barrow committed that his government will address the recommendations within six months in a white paper. Justice Rapid Response is ready to support this process and the broader implementation of the recommendations from the final TRRC report.

The collaboration of Justice Rapid Response experts with the TRRC since 2018 contributed to this report being released and to the identification of those bearing the most responsibility for crimes committed during the Jammeh era. Justice Rapid Response sent a forensic anthropologist, as well as sexual and gender-based violence and gender experts, legal advisors and investigators on 10 separate deployments to The Gambia.

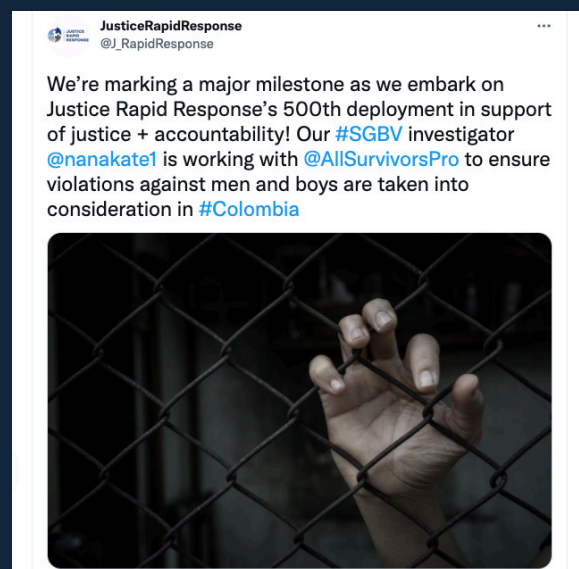
UNCOVERING THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE ROHINGYA GENOCIDE

The year 2021 saw significant advances in the search for evidence of genocidal intent in social media amid the quest for justice for Myanmar's Rohingya minority. On 22 September 2021, following a request from The Gambia, a US judge ordered Facebook to disclose materials relating to the perpetration of ethnic hatred against the Rohingya. This decision follows the case that was brought before the International Court of Justice in 2019 by the West African country. The Gambia's lawsuit alleges that Myanmar violated the Genocide Convention citing evidence from the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar's final report. To prove genocidal intent, in June 2020, The Gambia asked a US District Court to order Facebook to reveal information about "suspended or terminated" accounts of Myanmar officials and institutions.

As an additional consequence of the Fact-Finding Mission's report and Facebook's role, in December 2021 several Rohingya refugees in the United States and the United Kingdom sued Facebook for \$150 billion. They alleged that the company allowed hate speech against them to flourish on its social media platform, which was followed by large-scale violence against the ethnic Muslim minority in Myanmar.

Justice Rapid Response deployed seven experts to that Fact-Finding Mission, which was active from 2017 until September 2019. These experts helped the Fact-Finding Mission to flag high levels of sexual violence in the conflict, as well as to identify the role of Myanmar's military, including its economic interests and international commercial links.

The Human Rights Council had set up the Fact-Finding Mission to establish the facts of the most recent human rights violations by military forces in Myanmar. Since August 2017 more than 740,000 people have been forced to flee from Myanmar to Bangladesh, where around 160,000 Rohingya refugees were already living, having suffered persecution in their country dating back to the 1970s. After the end of the mandate of the Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, the Human Rights Council established an Independent Investigative Mechanism on Myanmar to collect, consolidate, preserve and analyse evidence of the most serious international crimes and violations of international law committed in Myanmar since 2011. Justice Rapid Response continues to support the accountability efforts on Myanmar and has so far deployed four experts to this mechanism.



“UN Women is proud to partner with Justice Rapid Response – in fact, our partnership will turn ten years old in 2022. We know that Justice Rapid Response is committed to putting sexual and gender-based violence at the front and centre of their work, whether it's in support of civil society organizations like Mwatana, or national or international accountability processes.”

PAIVI KANNISTO

Chief of Peace, Security and Humanitarian Action at UN Women

AT A GLANCE: MISSION CONTEXTS

GUATEMALA

Justice Rapid Response is contributing to strengthening the investigation strategy and the litigation capacity of Guatemala's Public Prosecutor's Office to investigate and prosecute crimes that occurred during the country's internal armed conflict. It is estimated that more than 200,000 people were arbitrarily executed or forcibly disappeared during the civil war between 1960 and 1996. Around 83 per cent of these victims were reportedly members of the indigenous Maya population¹.

As a result of a peace agreement in 1996, the Public Prosecutor's Office (Ministerio Público) created the Internal Armed Conflict Unit for the investigation and prosecution of crimes including war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Justice Rapid Response has been supporting this unit – including on high profile complex cases – since 2015, and in 2021 continued to provide support with the deployment of a prosecutions expert and a psychosocial expert.

GUATEMALA'S 'DIARIO MILITAR' CASE: DESPERATE TIMES CALL FOR PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES

5 JULY 2021 | BY TATIANA CHEMALI, FOR JUSTICEINFO.NET

It has taken more than 20 years for proceedings to begin in the 'Diario Militar' – or death-squad diary – case following Guatemala's internal armed conflict. While the recent arrest of senior and mid-level officials marks a promising step forward for the families of the 183 victims, the justice process is already imperilled, says Justice Rapid Response's national programme officer Tatiana Chemali. She proposes urgent measures to protect those involved in the case.



¹ <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/pdfs/guatemala2016-en.pdf>

VENEZUELA

The Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court announced in late 2021 the opening of an investigation into possible crimes against humanity in Venezuela. This followed the work of the UN's Fact-Finding Mission, to which Justice Rapid Response contributed expertise.

From February 2020 to May 2021, Justice Rapid Response deployed an SGBV investigator specializing in gender to support the Fact-Finding Mission, which had been established by the Human Rights Council to assess alleged human rights violations committed in Venezuela since 2014. In its initial report in 2020, the Fact-Finding Mission found that Venezuelan authorities and armed pro-government groups engaged in violations that amount to crimes against humanity, citing in particular systemic sexual violence against protestors and individuals held in detention centres. After the release of this report, the Fact-Finding Mission's mandate was extended, now explicitly including a gender perspective. Based on the work of the Justice Rapid Response expert, in September 2021, the Fact-Finding Mission published a paper that included new information about SGBV against men and women perpetrated by civilian and military intelligence officials.

JusticeRapidResponse
@J_RapidResponse

For the 1st time, we hosted a dialogue between national justice practitioners on investigating int'l crimes, including #SGBV. @JEP_Colombia @MPguatemala exchanged on common challenges re participation of victims, including SGBV survivors. Read more here: bit.ly/3voB6yc



COLOMBIA

It is estimated that nearly nine million victims lost their lives to mass violence over the past 50 years in Colombia. The 2016 peace agreement led to the creation of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (or JEP), which has the daunting task of satisfying victims' right to justice, offering truth to the public and contributing to the reparation of victims. At the same time, the JEP strives to apply a responsible justice approach that will contribute to the achievement of a stable and lasting peace.

Justice Rapid Response has been collaborating with the JEP since the beginning of its operations in 2019. In 2021, Justice Rapid Response intensified this support in key areas of the JEP's work, including in the areas of child rights investigations, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) crimes analysis and SGBV prosecutions. While Justice Rapid Response initially focused its support on the development of the JEP's working tools including the Victim Participation Manual, databases, standard operating procedures and guidelines, its support in 2021 centred increasingly on specific cases under the JEP's mandate. These are known as 'macro-cases' as they address criminality broadly rather than focusing on individual cases. Justice Rapid Response also deployed expertise to the Procuraduría General de la Nación, the ombudsman office representing victims' interests, including before the JEP.

YEMEN

The armed conflict in Yemen has taken a severe toll on civilians in a context of almost total impunity. All parties to the conflict are reported to have committed violations of International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law, yet so far none of the state parties to the conflict have carried out credible investigations into alleged violations carried out by their nationals and armed forces. Despite an escalation of the conflict, in October 2021 the mandate of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen was ended. Created by the Human Rights Council in 2017, this was the only international, impartial and investigative mechanism on Yemen.

Against this backdrop, Justice Rapid Response has been working with the Mwatana Organization for Human Rights to promote justice and accountability for victims of international crimes and serious human rights violations perpetrated in Yemen. The aim of this partnership is to strengthen the capacity of Mwatana to document and report on international crimes and serious human rights violations committed in Yemen, as well as to identify judicial and investigative bodies that could use evidence collected by Mwatana and other actors. In 2021, Justice Rapid Response provided Mwatana with expertise in international criminal investigations, international prosecutions and international legal frameworks.

MALDIVES

In 2021, Justice Rapid Response supported the work of the Maldives's Commission on Deaths and Disappearances by deploying expertise on criminal investigations, crimes analysis, witness protection and financial investigation. In 2018, the country's newly elected government established this Commission to conduct independent investigations into attacks, enforced disappearances and killings of journalists, bloggers, activists and members of the opposition. These victims were targeted as a result of their work

exposing facts related to abuses by the government.

Throughout 2021, Justice Rapid Response experts worked hand in hand with the Commission to strengthen its capacity to identify gaps in evidence, to plan and conduct interviews of witnesses, to develop a witness protection system for the Maldives, as well as to investigate financial flows surrounding crimes under the Commission's purview.

OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATIONS

In 2021, Justice Rapid Response continued to increase the visibility of its work through a variety of communications projects and events carried out entirely remotely amid the pandemic. In line with its mandate, Justice Rapid Response aimed to keep international attention on the plight of survivors in pursuit of justice and accountability. As part of this renewed focus on bolstering the reach of its on-line presence, the organization launched a series of short videos on child rights in addition to a microsite, Paths to Justice, focusing on the persecuted Rohingya minority. Through these online projects and social media campaigns – as well as the social media engagement surrounding hosting three webinars – Justice Rapid Response was for example able to expand its Twitter following by 22 per cent over the course of the year, thereby drawing more audiences to its mission. While striving to deliver content that is understandable to wider audiences, Justice Rapid Response also continued delivery of its newsletter and published opinion pieces from staff members on the news website, Justice Info, dedicated to transitional justice.

PATHS TO JUSTICE MICROSITE

Justice Rapid Response developed, in close collaboration with Legal Action Worldwide, an online microsite on the topic of accountability and the plight of the Rohingya people: Paths to Justice. This microsite features three survivors who had travelled to the International Court of Justice and as such could provide unique testimony surrounding the justice process. It was launched in May 2021 through a sustained social media campaign.



RAISING AWARENESS ON INVESTIGATING CHILD RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

Justice Rapid Response created a set of three short videos to feature on the organization's website and for use in a social media campaign on the need for child rights expertise in human rights investigations. Justice Rapid Response launched this campaign to coincide with an online event it hosted on the sidelines of the Human Rights Council.



HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL SIDE EVENT

Justice Rapid Response hosted an online event on 16 March 2021 at the 46th Human Rights Council, which was focused on children's rights. The event was led by Belgium, former chair of the UN Security Council Working Group on Children in Armed Conflict, with Uruguay. It delved into the need to integrate expertise in child rights in all international investigations of international atrocity crimes. Among the 240 attendees, there were representatives from a number of states, as well as attendees from several UN agencies, national authorities and civil society organizations.



ASSEMBLY OF STATES PARTIES SIDE EVENT ON CHILD RIGHTS

Speakers at a virtual event on 9 December 2021, held on the sidelines of the 20th Assembly of States Parties, highlighted for 228 attendees the need for using dedicated expertise to ensure that children are given agency in the accountability process. ICC Prosecutor Karim Asad Ahmad Khan reaffirmed his commitment to making access to justice for children a high priority of his mandate at the International Criminal Court (ICC). Justice Rapid Response and Save the Children held this event in collaboration with the ICC Office of the Prosecutor and with the support of Argentina, Belgium and Sierra Leone. Speakers included Mr. Khan and ICC Judge Justice Miatta Maria Samba, along with a host of other panellists specialized in child rights, international criminal justice and child trauma psychiatry, and representing member states and civil society.



INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS DAY EVENT ON YEMEN

Justice Rapid Response held an online event in partnership with the Yemeni civil society organization Mwatana Organization for Human Rights on International Human Rights Day, 10 December 2021. There were 176 attendees at this virtual panel which was made possible with the support of the Ville de Genève. Speakers highlighted the principle of universal jurisdiction as an alternative tool for pursuing accountability for victims of the conflict in Yemen in the absence of credible national prosecutions and investigations by international mechanisms.



ROSTER RECRUITMENT

In 2021, Justice Rapid Response continued to reinforce its roster of experts to ensure that the organization can effectively and rapidly respond to the evolving needs of international institutions, states and civil society organizations.

Recruitment to the roster focused on extending the pool of professionals with expertise in crimes affecting children to meet increasing demand for this focus in investigations. Together with its training partner, the International Institute for Criminal Investigation (IICI), Justice Rapid Response organized a recruitment course for experts in crimes affecting children, to train them in applying their highly specialized expertise to international investigations. This resulted in an important addition to the roster of experts specialized in child rights, child protection, psycho-social support to children, prosecution, in-

vestigation of crimes against children, human trafficking and child abuse, child and youth participation in truth commissions, as well as the forced recruitment of children.

Justice Rapid Response and IICI continued to adapt the new virtual format of the recruitment course in 2021, to ensure that some of the most reputed practitioners in the field of crimes affecting children were able to participate despite the travel restrictions in force.

This year's recruitments further strengthened the roster's diversity in terms of cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In line with Justice Rapid Response's policy and practice, the selected experts represented the desired regional balance, with a 50 per cent representation of experts from the Global South (ODA-recipient countries) on the roster.

INTEGRITY MANAGEMENT

In recent years, Justice Rapid Response has consolidated its operating procedures to ensure that all of its activities are undertaken with the highest standards of integrity and conduct. To this end, Justice Rapid Response has developed policies that are intended to ensure compliance with global standards in our interactions with our partners.

THESE POLICIES INCLUDE:

- **Code of Conduct**

Setting the standards to which experts, employees and consultants are held

- **Feedback and Complaint Policy**

Publicly accessible on Justice Rapid Response's website to report situations in which the organization's work has not met the expected standards

- **Security Framework**

Including a 'threats and risk assessment' and a 'crisis management plan' to ensure the safety and security of our staff and experts when deployed in sensitive countries

- **Cybersecurity Guidelines**

To ensure the safety and integrity of the data managed by Justice Rapid Response and its experts

During this reporting period, no incidents regarding integrity were reported.

OUR BOARD

Justice Rapid Response's Executive Board is composed of the following States, organizations and individuals: the Netherlands (Chair), Sierra Leone (Vice-Chair), Argentina, Belgium, Canada (Observer), Finland, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Uganda, UN Women, Ms. Athalia Molokomme and Ms. Yasmin Sooka. Its secretariat carries out operations through two legal entities, Justice Rapid Response Association in

Switzerland, and Justice Rapid Response USA in the United States. The secretariat is headed by an Executive Director, who is selected by the Executive Board. Ms. Nina Suomalainen was appointed to this position in May 2018, seconded by Finland. The Justice Rapid Response Executive Board meets twice a year, providing oversight and guidance to the secretariat.

OUR DONORS AND FINANCES

Justice Rapid Response relies on voluntary contributions to fund its activities and a lean secretariat of highly dedicated professionals based in Geneva, with a liaison office in New York. The organization's role as a unique actor in the field of transitional justice and accountability – along with its rigorous management and consistent results – has earned it the support of reliable do-

nors. In 2021, Justice Rapid Response continued to diversify its partnerships with a broader range of public donors and private foundations. The aim of further diversifying the donor base is to offset the limited availability of funding for the sector of conflict, peace and security, which still only represents less than 2 per cent of total Official Development Assistance.

CONTRIBUTING STATES

Justice Rapid Response's work is made possible thanks to the support of the following donors.

- Australia** – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Belgium** – Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation
- Canada** – Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development
- Denmark** – Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations Office in Geneva
- Finland** – Ministry for Foreign Affairs
- Ireland** – Department of Foreign Affairs
- Liechtenstein** – Division for Economic Affairs and Development
- Luxembourg** – Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs
- The Netherlands** – Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Republic of Korea** – Korea International Cooperation Agency
- Switzerland** – Federal Department of Foreign Affairs – Canton de Genève – Ville de Genève
- United Kingdom** – Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES



FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER (IN CHF)

	2020	2019
RECEIPTS		
Revenue from donors	3'000'873.29	4'359'193.31
TOTAL OPERATING INCOME	3'000'873.29	4'359'193.31
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Personnel expenses	1'306'154.04	1'235'884.44
Rent and utilities	124'784.38	110'500.00
General and Administration expenses	197'695.72	183'387.27
Consultant fees	168'060.63	173'441.28
Outreach expenses	8'050.97	41'341.35
Professional fees	49'015.95	54'032.59
Executive Board and Assembly / Committee expenses	1'518.29	24'359.73
Other operating expenses	1'578'593.80	2'208'656.31
<i>Deployments</i>	<i>1'020'997.18</i>	<i>1'419'505.79</i>
<i>Recruitment expenses, including sponsorships</i>	<i>108'295.01</i>	<i>246'892.84</i>
<i>JRR USA</i>	<i>449'301.61</i>	<i>542'257.68</i>
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	3'433'873.78	4'031'602.97
OPERATING RESULT	(433'000.49)	327'590.34
Financial expenses	(50'026.51)	(47'919.43)
<i>Interest expense</i>	<i>(709.05)</i>	<i>(953.22)</i>
<i>Other financial expenses</i>	<i>(8'671.65)</i>	<i>(5'317.94)</i>
<i>Foreign exchange gain / loss - net</i>	<i>(40'645.81)</i>	<i>(41'648.27)</i>
Financial income	-	765.09
<i>Interest income</i>	-	765.09
TOTAL NON-OPERATING INCOME / (EXPENSES)	(50'026.51)	(47'154.34)
EXCESS¹ / (SHORTAGE) OF RECEIPTS OVER EXPENSES	(483'027.00)	280'436.00
Total release of funds	1'354'297.00	1'242'831.00
Total allocation to funds	(871'270.00)	(1'523'267.00)
NET SURPLUS OR (DEFICIT) FOR THE PERIOD²	-	-

1 Donor funding received in advance to be used in following fiscal year.

2 As a Swiss non-profit association, we are restricted from showing either a profit or a loss on our statement of receipts and expenses.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 DECEMBER (IN CHF)

	2020	2019
ASSETS		
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash ³ and cash equivalents and current assets with a stock exchange price	1'339'135.53	1'959'596.19
Prepaid expenses and accrued income	121'260.79	78'820.24
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	1'460'396.32	2'038'416.43
Financial assets	21'423.40	21'423.40
Non-current assets	21'423.40	21'423.40
TOTAL ASSETS	1'481'819.72	2'059'839.83
LIABILITIES AND FUNDS⁴		
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Other short-term liabilities	116'401.30	194'294.95
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	116'401.30	194'294.95
TOTAL LIABILITIES	116'401.30	194'294.95
FUNDS		
Donor funds	526'418.08	959'532.25
JRR funds	839'000.34	906'012.63
<i>JRR fund</i>	<i>805'177.92</i>	<i>708'599.91</i>
<i>Roster management & deployment coordination fee fund</i>	<i>119'608.23</i>	<i>264'114.71</i>
<i>Foreign exchange differences</i>	<i>(85'785.81)</i>	<i>(66'701.99)</i>
TOTAL FUNDS	1'365'418.42	1'865'544.88
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUNDS	1'481'819.72	2'059'839.83

³ Includes cash allocated to Temporarily Restricted Funds.

⁴ Temporarily Restricted Funds are subject to donor-imposed stipulations & restrictions. These funds are limited in both substance and time. They cannot be used for any other purpose than the donor intent. Please refer to the Justice Rapid Response Association audit for a full description.



Justice Rapid Response staff members, March 2022



**JUSTICE
RAPID
RESPONSE**

CONTACT US

You can contact **Justice Rapid Response**
through our Geneva secretariat

Phone: **+41 22 544 29 00**

Email: **secretariat@justicerapidresponse.org**

Website: **www.justicerapidresponse.org**