



JUSTICE RAPID RESPONSE

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

STRIVING FOR JUSTICE AMID THE PANDEMIC



Annual Report 2020

FOREWORD: A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

THE YEAR 2020 started very positively but soon turned into the nightmarish experience of the global pandemic that made millions sick with the new virus and sadly saw many perishing from the ensuing disease. The impact of the pandemic turned the world upside down: nationwide lockdowns were imposed, travel and in-person communication stopped, economies faced severe problems. In addition, multilateralism continued to be challenged, atrocities took place unabated and many existing conflict situations remained unaddressed.

Justice Rapid Response, like other international actors, quickly had to find ways to overcome obstacles of the pandemic. We had to identify opportunities to continue working and doing what we do best: supporting investigation and documentation of war crimes globally and helping victims and survivors pursue justice. Through proactive approaches and innovative solutions we succeeded in deploying a record number of experts in 2020: in total 74 experts were deployed.

In 2020, new initiatives and partnerships also emerged, and we believe that Justice Rapid Response's targeted contributions were at the source of many of these innovative avenues, providing sustained support to a variety of accountability mechanisms, new or ongoing. With our roster of more than 700 highly specialized experts, we continued walking alongside partners and supporting their efforts, whether they were national prosecutions, truth and reconciliation commissions or survivor community organizations on their journey to make justice become reality. Also international mechanisms prof-

ited from the specialized professional expertise we were able to offer.

A lesson learnt from 2020 is the full extent of possibilities for online and remote work in addressing accountability challenges. These solutions have continued to progress in 2021 as we turn temporary fixes into long-term strengths. This makes us even more suitably equipped to continue delivering robust impact in 2021 and beyond in a changing world. Another key finding has been the identification of possibilities to enable children to be part of justice processes and to make their voices heard. And 2020 confirmed our principle over the last few years that partnerships make us all stronger, allowing us to have impact in an effective manner.

We will continue anticipating emerging needs for working towards accountability and justice globally and stand ready to offer solutions to our current and new partners. Looking forward, we are as committed as ever to our vision at Justice Rapid Response: to *raise the standard of international investigative responses globally*.



Ambassador Monique van Daalen
Chairperson, Justice Rapid Response
*Permanent Representative
of the Kingdom of the Netherlands*



Nina Suomalainen
Executive Director
Justice Rapid Response



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COVID-19:

STRIVING FOR JUSTICE AMID THE PANDEMIC

Despite the anxiety and disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, Justice Rapid Response's staff was determined to stay focused on the organization's mission to assist the international community in the pursuit of justice by 'deploying' experts in a context where travel had come to a halt.

To achieve this, the team carefully assessed which situations could be supported remotely by experts on the roster. The team activated new solutions and methodologies with experts to conduct remote investigations safely while managing cyber security. It became apparent that remote support is often possible, especially when a strong working relationship already exists based on previous deployments. Remote support has many

advantages: it can be better paced to match the needs of the requesting entity and can take place over longer periods of time, it is less expensive, and more friendly for the environment. It also has many disadvantages, including the impossibility to deploy more 'hands-on' missions, a high reliance on technology, as well as challenges for the experts to contextualize their support. The resulting lesson from this experience is that remote deployment should systematically be considered as a possibility, whenever it makes sense.

In addition, three planned recruitment courses were successfully converted from in-person classroom courses to entirely online training modules. These virtual courses maintained the high quality of Justice Rapid Response's process of preparing

and vetting criminal justice experts from all over the world for certification for its roster. Time-zone related constraints meant that virtual training had to be spread over longer time periods, with two parallel sessions offered each day. Other challenges included less opportunities for informal networking among participants, as well as intermittent Internet connectivity problems. Among the benefits were time and cost savings for both participants and course staff, as well as better availability of trainers, experts, and role players.

While aiming to maintain deployments using new methods, Justice Rapid Response also prioritized its staff health and wellbeing through flexible home working arrangements. This approach has been the occasion to put the word “trust” at the core of the organization’s professional interactions and to debunk several hard-lived myths about visual control, work-schedule, motivation and absenteeism/presenteeism. The team’s productivity and capacity to innovate increased despite the lack of in-person interaction. Justice Rapid Response will maintain this approach in 2021 and beyond, keeping flexibility and accountability as hallmarks of its dynamic team.



© UN Women


JusticeRapidResponse
@J_RapidResponse

#HumanRightsDay reminds us to strive for a better world, for human rights + justice. With experts coming from 100 countries + specialized in 50 professions, we support **#investigations of #InternationalCrimes** around the world **#StandUp4HumanRights**



Justice Rapid Response deploys criminal justice expertise
Justice Rapid Response's experts investigate the worst crimes known to humanity. With experts coming from 100 ...
youtube.com



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IRAQ: Universal jurisdiction cases tried in Germany

In 2020, German courts drew on the principle of universal jurisdiction to hold former Islamic State militants and participants accountable for crimes that took place in Syria and Iraq. In two of these cases, Justice Rapid Response supported the Yazidi survivor organization Yazda in identifying and locating witnesses and victims of the crimes.

In October 2020, German and Tunisian citizen “Omaima A.” was convicted in Hamburg of aiding and abetting the enslavement of a Yazidi girl. She was sentenced to three years in prison. At the request of German prosecutors, Yazda had identified a key witness and put her in contact with German prosecutors.

Yazda – with the support of Justice Rapid Response – identified another key witness, this time in the case of “Taha A-J”, the first trial in which an individual is charged with genocide of the Yazidi people. Along with his wife “Jennifer W.”, a German national, he is suspected of having enslaved a Yazidi woman and her daughter. He is said to have chained the five-year-old girl outside in the heat as punishment and she subsequently died of thirst. Yazda located the mother of the slain girl, who is also the key witness in the “Jennifer W.” case. Taha A-J is an Iraqi national facing multiple charges including crimes against humanity, war crimes, genocide and human trafficking.

Deploying the roster in 2020

In 2020, Justice Rapid Response quickly adapted to a short-term focus on remote deployments, developing new methodologies to ensure effective support for justice mechanisms worldwide. Thematically, nearly half of Justice Rapid Response's record 74 new deployments were dedicated to the documentation, investigation and prosecution of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

While remaining at the forefront of strengthening accountability for SGBV, Justice Rapid Response also increasingly contributed to child rights perspectives, deploying an increasing number of child rights experts. Enhancing victim participation and representation was another key area of focus as the organization reinforced its effort to give victims a voice at the heart of transitional justice and accountability mechanisms.

An emerging area of emphasis for Justice Rapid Response concerned crimes against journalists. As the pandemic and measures against it led to restricted freedoms and increased disinformation, this trend is likely to be exacerbated. Finally, Justice Rapid Response for the first time deployed experts with highly specialized technological expertise as part of its effort to support an increasingly diverse range of technological applications for investigating international justice.



700+
rapidly
deployable
experts



110+
nationalities



90+
languages



45%
from the
Global South



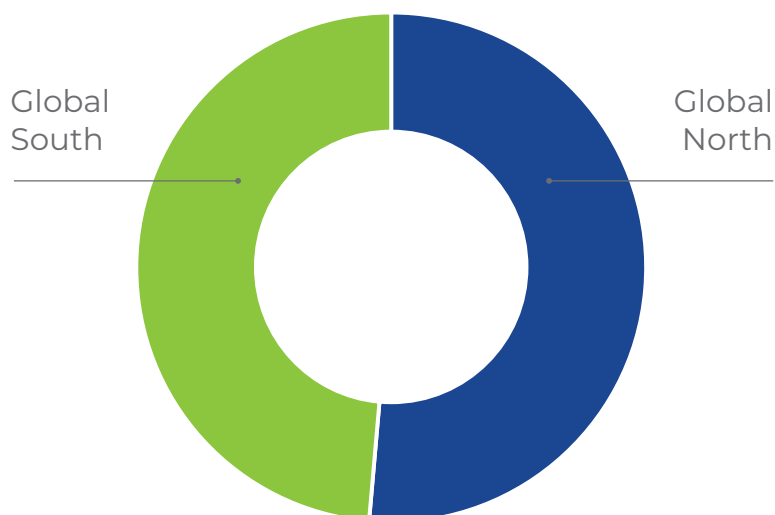
59%
women

EXPERTISE ON THE ROSTER

Child Rights	4%	Legal Advisory	24%
Forensic Sciences	11%	Military	4%
Human Rights	12%	Security	1%
Investigations	18%	Technology	2%
Justice Administration	2%	Witness/Victim Support	3%
Prosecutions/Analysis	12%	Other	7%

In addition to their primary expertise, many of the experts on the Justice Rapid Response roster are also specialized in SGBV. Since 2009, UN Women and Justice Rapid Response have partnered to support a specialized sub-roster of dedicated gender experts to deploy to investigations around the world to ensure SGBV crimes are accurately and safely documented.

DEPLOYMENT OF EXPERTISE FROM GLOBAL SOUTH & GLOBAL NORTH IN 2020

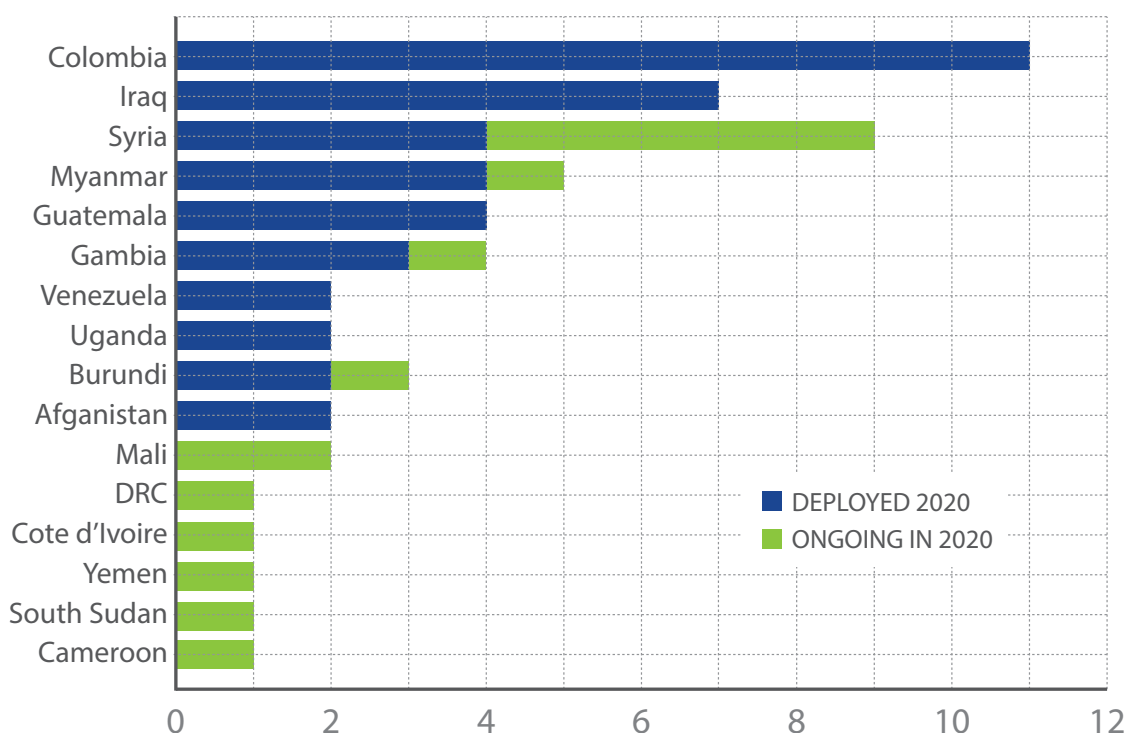


“ By providing highly qualified expertise to investigative mechanisms, Justice Rapid Response makes a unique contribution to promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, as well as to improving access to justice. ”

YASMIN SOOKA

International human rights lawyer, Chair of the Commission on South Sudan, member of Justice Rapid Response's Executive Board

MISSIONS BY COUNTRY IN 2020





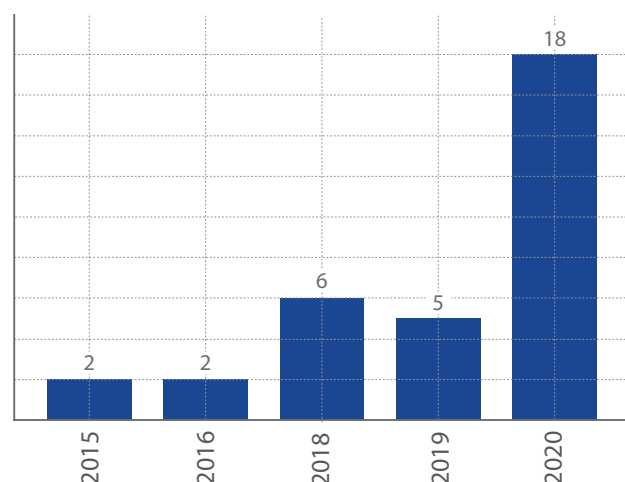
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CHILD RIGHTS

In 2020, Justice Rapid Response deployed a record number of child rights experts, helping to ensure that systematically overlooked crimes affecting children are properly investigated. Despite international recognition that children should have access to justice, there is a gap in the capacity of the international community to ensure this right. This has driven Justice Rapid Response to continue building its roster capacity and activities in this field.

Drawing on dedicated funding, Justice Rapid Response prioritized the deployment of child rights expertise in a wide range of engagements in 2020 – from UN human rights investigations in Burundi, Libya and Syria, to national investigation efforts in Colombia. Justice Rapid Response also partnered with UNICEF, the UN in Iraq (UNAMI), as well as civil society organizations to strengthen the capacity of child protection and human rights officers to document international crimes affecting children.

CHILD RIGHTS EXPERTS DEPLOYED



Six child rights experts supported the work of the UN Commissions of Inquiry on Burundi and Syria, the Fact-Finding Mission on Libya and UNICEF country offices in Europe and Central Asia, as well as Cameroon. In the case of Burundi, as a result of Justice Rapid Response's support, the Commission report included specific recommendations on improving the quality of life for children in relation to the country's socio-political crisis. The expert developed the Commission's capacities on child rights investigation in its reporting and highlighted that children are still victims of grave violations. The investigation unearthed how sexual violence is used to punish the children of political opponents and also highlighted the severe and long-term impact on children of the violence used against their relatives and parents.

In the Syrian context, the Commission's thematic report on child rights highlighted the use of SGBV, torture and detention against children, as well as the destruction and military use of schools. Justice Rapid Response also deployed an expert to support Legal Action Worldwide in documenting disappearances of Syrian women and girls. The resulting policy brief – set to be published in 2021 – is the first to document the gendered impacts of enforced or involuntary disappearances on Syrian girls and boys.

For the first time, Justice Rapid Response was asked to provide child rights expertise at the outset of a UN Fact-Finding Mission, in this instance in the context of Libya. This affirmed the invaluable role Justice Rapid Response child rights experts had played in the investigations on Burundi and Syria and signals the core role of child rights expertise in human rights investigations.

Justice Rapid Response advanced its contribution to child rights in the transitional justice and accountability process in Colombia, where it deployed for the first time a child rights investigations expert to support the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (the JEP). Drawing on the contribution of this expert, the JEP's investigations and accusation unit developed guidelines for the investigation of crimes affecting children. These guidelines serve as a crucial tool given the latest information indicating that the Colombian armed conflict has resulted in the forced recruitment of more than 8,000 children and youth.

“Accountability means to hear the voices of children, to acknowledge their pain and suffering from violations against them, and to investigate perpetrators. Children need to be given a role in justice processes. Justice Rapid Response is doing crucial work in enabling children's voices to be heard.”

MARC PECSTEEN DE BUYTSWERVE

Ambassador, Permanent Mission of Belgium to the United Nations Office in Geneva



JusticeRapidResponse @J_RapidResponse · Feb 12, 2020

Specialized #ChildRights investigations, backed by the international community, are a crucial step towards strengthening accountability + deterring would-be perpetrators, says @ninasuomalainen JRR Exec Director

Read her opinion piece:

bit.ly/2usK2YF #Syria @UNColSyria



10 8



Panelists at an event hosted on 30 January 2020 by Justice Rapid Response at the UN headquarters in New York following the release of the Syria Col's dedicated report on child rights.



A display at the Centro de Memoria, Paz y Reconciliación in Bogotá. © Justice Rapid Response

VICTIM PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION

Victims should be at the heart of the fight against impunity for international crimes. Part of achieving meaningful justice for victims is to ensure their participation and agency in transitional justice and accountability processes. In 2020, Justice Rapid Response continued to support transitional justice and accountability mechanisms, as well as civil society organizations, to improve victim participation and representation.

In Uganda, Justice Rapid Response contributed to strengthening the participation of victims in the country's first international crimes trial. It deployed a victim representation and participation expert to provide the Office of the Public Counsel for Victims with guidance on victim participation in international crimes cases. The Office of the Public Counsel for Victims has been facing significant challenges in representing victims in the context of the case of Thomas Kwoyelo – an alleged commander in the Lord's Resistance Army – partly because it

is a new office within the Ugandan judicial system.

In Colombia, Justice Rapid Response began working with the Procuraduría General de la Nación, which represents victims' interests. Justice Rapid Response deployed an international prosecutions expert to support the work of the Procuraduría as it intervenes on behalf of victim communities in 'macro-cases' – clusters of cases – before the JEP. The expert worked on issues such as modes of liability under international criminal law, including command responsibility, as well as the investigation of sexual and gender-based crimes. The expert's input will contribute to the Procuraduría's submissions, strengthening its potential impact on victims' rights. The Procuraduría's submissions present an opportunity to draw attention to the gender dimensions of life within armed groups, which often included control over the sexual and reproductive autonomy of female combatants. To date, this topic has received little attention under international criminal law.



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Establishing victim-centred guidelines

Justice Rapid Response deployed a victim participation expert to provide technical assistance to the JEP's Participation Commission in developing a victims' manual. In 2020, the JEP adopted this manual, which is set to bring concrete changes in how the special tribunal deals with victim participation and representation. The expert worked with the JEP to identify criteria for organizing grouped legal representation of victims. The aim of the manual is to provide much-needed clarity for the victims on how they can participate in the process, as well filling gaps in the rules of procedure and establishing minimum standards and best practices.



Meeting between C4JR members and Iraqi lawmakers. © C4JR

Supporting SGBV survivors advocating Iraq's parliament

Justice Rapid Response supported the efforts of victims and women's groups in Iraq to advocate parliamentarians for reparations for SGBV victims. A local civil society network sought the direct inclusion of victims and survivors in the consultations of lawmakers as they prepared a bill seeking to address reparations and redress needs. Justice Rapid Response deployed an expert to the local civil society network, the Coalition for Just Reparations, to draft a policy paper on gender-sensitive reparation frameworks in accordance with international standards for addressing SGBV as international crimes in Iraq. Members of the Coalition, which consists of victims' and women's groups, are using the policy paper as a basis for their advocacy with the Iraqi parliament. Provisions in the paper include expanding the definition of SGBV survivors to include all ethnic and religious groups, genders and perpetrators, as well as the meaningful participation of SGBV survivors and civil society organizations in reparation processes.

“ I have benefited from six visits of Justice Rapid Response experts. They have shared with us the experience of the International Criminal Court and other international criminal tribunals on issues of high importance such as the protection of victims and victim participation. ”

MAGISTRATE JULIETA LEMAITRE

Colombia's Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP)



Women carrying loads in South Sudan. © Adobe Stock / Wollwerth Imagery

SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (SGBV)

ADDRESSING SGBV INTERNATIONALLY

JUSTICE RAPID RESPONSE continued to provide regular and systematic support to Human Rights Council-mandated Commissions of Inquiry and Fact-Finding Missions to address SGBV. By the end of 2020, it had deployed dedicated gender expertise to all currently active investigations and the impact has been noticeable.

In November 2019, Justice Rapid Response had deployed two gender advisors to the Commission for Human Rights in South Sudan to investigate and document SGBV in the country. The Commission estimated in a report that by September 2020, SGBV against South Sudanese women and girls had increased by 88 percent since the start of the year. Instances of rape, sexual slavery, sexual mutilation, and forced marriage have been a consistent feature of the conflict since 2013 – according to the report

published February 2021 – but have been rising dramatically. These observations, and other findings concerning gender, were made possible by the work of Justice Rapid Response's experts.

Justice Rapid Response also deployed a gender expert to the Fact-Finding Mission in Venezuela to investigate and report on SGBV in the Venezuelan conflict. The expert was able to advise the investigations team on patterns of conduct and contextual elements to the alleged crimes, including SGBV, thereby prompting a change to the investigation methodology to include examination of the patterns of crimes being committed. In its report released in September 2020, the Fact-Finding Mission concluded that Venezuelan authorities and armed pro-government groups engaged in violations that amount to crimes against humanity.

TACKLING SGBV AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

JUSTICE RAPID RESPONSE continued to support the accountability and reparations processes for SGBV in national contexts, with a focus in 2020 on Colombia, Guatemala and Kosovo. In Colombia, Justice Rapid Response deployed an SGBV investigator to support the JEP in developing tools for the investigation of SGBV crimes in two cases. This support bolstered the capacity of national authorities to improve interviewing techniques, including how best to approach victims, witnesses and alleged perpetrators of SGBV in interviews. With the expert's support, judges and legal officers in the two cases increased their capacity to contextualize the gendered impact of crimes that are not sexual in nature and sexual violence within wider patterns of criminality. As a result, the JEP is better equipped to demonstrate the generalized context of those crimes not of a sexual nature. This represents a milestone for many women and young girls whose reproductive rights had been violated and who have come forward to testify despite the FARC's denial of the perpetration of these crimes.

In Guatemala, Justice Rapid Response continued to provide support to the Internal Armed Con-

flict Unit of the Public Prosecutor's Office. In 2020, a Justice Rapid Response expert provided mentoring on two cases relating to the genocide against the indigenous Maya Ixil population. The expert worked with the prosecution teams in both cases to develop arguments explaining how sexual and reproductive violence against Mayan Ixil women amounted to genocide and ensuring that relevant evidence on sexual violence was adequately reflected in the charges. The inclusion of sexual and reproductive violence as underlying acts of genocide, as presented in these cases, has the potential to set important precedents that would go beyond the current understanding of genocide within international criminal law.

In Kosovo, Justice Rapid Response continued to support the entity administering reparations to SGBV survivors. It deployed an SGBV legal advisor, as well as judicial and information security experts to provide capacity-building support for assessing evidence of SGBV crimes and digital security. This support has enhanced the capacity of the Commission for the Verification and Recognition of Sexual Violence Victim Status to process and evaluate applications, using a survivor-centred approach.

IMPACT CASES

MALI: ICC marks a first with Al Hassan case

In 2020 a former Islamist militant was indicted in the first International Criminal Court (ICC) trial for gender persecution. This indictment is the culmination of support by an SGBV investigator deployed by Justice Rapid Response and UN Women. In 2014, at the request of UN Women, Justice Rapid Response had deployed the SGBV investigator to support the ICC's Office of the Prosecutor. As a result of this investigation, Mr Al Hassan Ag Abdoul Aziz Ag Mohamed Ag Mahmoud (Al Hassan), an alleged member of armed group Ansar Eddine, was arrested in 2018 and transferred to The Hague.

The evidence gathered by the SGBV investigator contributed to the indictment of Al Has-



© ICC

san on specific charges including gender-based persecution, rape, sexual slavery, and forced marriage, as well as other inhumane acts. This case, currently before the ICC, represents an important avenue of accountability for survivors of SGBV in Mali.

At a Glance:

MISSION CONTEXTS

SUDAN

Justice Rapid Response provided expertise to Sudanese civil society actors to strengthen their capacity to document and report to international and regional mechanisms on international crimes and serious human rights violations. As Sudan is currently in transition after decades of conflict and oppressive regimes, it is critical for an increasingly active civil society to strengthen its capacity to bring reports before accountability mechanisms applying international standards. Amid COVID-19 restrictions in March 2020, the Justice Rapid Response expert quickly adapted the capacity-building programme for an online format. Justice Rapid Response adopted innovative methodology, using pre-recorded video lecture modules uploaded to a secure information-sharing platform.



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/ Gérard Bottino



Rohingya survivors attend a workshop given by Legal Action Worldwide near Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh © Justice Rapid Response / Turjoy Chowdury

MYANMAR

Justice Rapid Response deployed three experts on SGBV, gender and child rights, as well as military analysis, to the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar in 2020. These experts provided documentation of SGBV crimes and strengthened the Mechanism's capacity to conduct SGBV sensitive investigations. The Mechanism builds on the findings of the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar, to which Justice Rapid Response deployed seven gender, child rights

and military experts. These experts supported the investigation of SGBV in the conflict and the analysis of gender findings. They helped to flag the staggeringly high levels of sexual violence in the conflict. Reports from the Fact-Finding Mission highlight the patterns and prevalence of SGBV and contain numerous witness and victim accounts of these crimes - which affected women, men, boys and girls and extended far beyond rape. Notably, the experts investigated and documented SGBV against Rohingya transgender persons.



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SYRIA

Justice Rapid Response expertise helped to highlight the prominent role of SGBV and child rights violations in the conflict in Syria, as well as to increase the integration of SGBV and child rights considerations in investigations. In 2020, Justice Rapid Response deployed a gender advisor to the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for Syria and – together with UN Women – an interpreter, as well as three experts on SGBV and child rights to the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria. With access to dedicated child rights expertise and analysis, the Commission was able to release a report focusing exclusively on children. This report shed light internationally on the destruction of schools and their use for military purposes, as well as the detention and torture of children as young as 12 and the use of SGBV against children as a tactic of the war in Syria.

MALDIVES

Justice Rapid Response helped to strengthen the capacity of an independent commission appointed in the Maldives to investigate deaths and disappearances. The Commission was established to conduct independent investigations into the attacks, disappearances and killings of journalists, bloggers and activists that occurred between January 2012 and November 2018. In 2020, it requested the support of a senior investigations ex-

pert. The expert deployed by Justice Rapid Response was able to guide the Commission to work more methodically on a phased prioritization of cases, as well as to use best practice for investigative interviewing with victims, witnesses and suspects. While the Commission on Deaths and Disappearances had made advances on selected cases over a total of 28 cases, it still faced challenges in tackling a dearth of complex cases.

THE GAMBIA

As part of an ongoing collaboration, Justice Rapid Response deployed experts in 2020 to work with the Gambian Truth Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC) on improving its overall investigative strategy and ability to analyze and summarise findings and investigative gaps. An SGBV advisor also worked with the Commission's SGBV task force on the integration of gender considerations across the work of the different justice



tice process following more than two decades of oppressive rule, the TRRC expects to publish its final report in 2021.



Indigenous people of the Ixil region attend a hearing against former Guatemalan president Efraín Ríos Montt in Guatemala city. © Jose Cabezaz / REUTERS

Peace processes

The work of Justice Rapid Response experts contributes to the success of transitional justice and accountability processes that help to repair and rebuild the social tissue of societies emerging from conflicts. This in turn can help restore confidence in the rule of law and ensure a sustainable peace. For example, in Colombia, two years into Justice Rapid Response's work with the JEP and other bodies involved in the country's transitional justice process, there are high expectations and hope for these processes to play a critical role in exposing the truth. This would satisfy victims' right to justice, restore trust among communities, as well as their trust in the government. Exposing the truth would also involve exposing some of the systemic root causes that have made conflict possible in the first place. By working with the JEP to ensure that it is equipped to deliver its restorative mandate to achieve inclusive and gender-sensitive justice, Justice Rapid Response experts are also contributing to achieving this colossal endeavour.

In Guatemala, Justice Rapid Response has since 2015 supported the work of the public prosecutor's office – the Ministerio Público – as part of the country's transitional justice process. It supports the Ministerio Público's specialized Internal Armed Conflict Unit, which is investigating and prosecuting high-profile cases from Guatemala's 36-year internal armed conflict. Technical assistance provided by Justice Rapid Response has strengthened the capacity of the Ministerio Público to comprehensively address crimes committed, including sexual and reproductive violence, as part of the broader genocidal crimes against the Maya Ixil minority group. By increasing the ability of the Ministerio Público prosecutors to link the crimes to the accused in emblematic genocide cases, Justice Rapid Response is contributing to bringing victims and their families one step closer to knowing the truth and seeing justice done. There are still significant gaps, including in relation to the implementation of comprehensive reparations that urgently need to be addressed to ensure long-lasting peace in the country.



Outreach and Communications

■ In 2020, Justice Rapid Response continued to ramp up efforts to showcase the impact of its work to a wider audience, while also aligning communications efforts with operational priorities. Justice Rapid Response organized events and communications materials to draw further visibility to its work and the work of its partners.

■ In January, Justice Rapid Response highlighted the importance of child rights investigation expertise to the international community by hosting an event at the UN headquarters in New York, following the release of a child rights report by the Commission of Inquiry on Syria. Panellists included representatives from UN Women and the Commission, as well as a child rights expert deployed by Justice Rapid Response to the Commission.

■ As part of its work with the JEP, Justice Rapid Response produced a set of videos on topics including transitional justice and victim participation in Colombia. These videos were featured in the lead up to the release of the JEP's victim participation manual, as well as an online event in July on victim participation hosted by the JEP and Justice Rapid Response. Interviews with Justice Rapid Response experts and JEP representatives were filmed on location in Bogota.

■ In December, Justice Rapid Response organized an online side event to the 19th

Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute, co-hosted by Finland, Argentina and UN Women. This webinar aimed to bring visibility to the crime of gender persecution and to highlight how accountability for these crimes could bring opportunities for sustainable peace.

The two virtual events – the first two that Justice Rapid Response had delivered in this format – drew a combined audience of more than 500 participants from more than 60 countries. This was considerably more than in-person events would usually reach and drew a more diverse audience.

■ Throughout 2020, Justice Rapid Response strove to incrementally revitalize its web and social media presence. Campaigns surrounding its events, release of videos and articles, as well distribution of its triannual newsletter contributed to peaks in visits to the organization's website. Its quarterly expert community update also reached out to the 700+ experts currently on the roster, keeping them updated about the organization's latest activities.

■ As part of its communications strategy, Justice Rapid Response used a targeted approach on Twitter to disseminate information and engage with partners – such as UN Women, the JEP and Yazda. As a result, the organization boosted its Twitter following, which includes both organizations and individuals, by more than one third.



Yazda documents the exhumation of the Solagh mass grave, in Sinjar, northern Iraq, of what are presumed to be Yazidi victims killed by the Islamic State (© Yazda 2019). Justice Rapid Response has been supporting Yazda – a civil society organization aimed at raising awareness about the genocide of the Yazidi people and their subsequent protection – to strengthen its capacity to identify, collect and preserve information related to international crimes in a victim-centred way.

You Retweeted



JusticeRapidResponse @J_RapidResponse · Sep 25, 2020

We're proud to be featured in the latest edition of [#SwissPeaceSupporter](#) Thank you @HumanSecurityCH for allowing us to highlight the support our experts brought to cases involving atrocity crimes in [#DRC](#) [#Chad](#) [#CAR](#) @sam_emonet

🇨🇭 **Swiss Peace and Human Rights** @SwissPeaceHR · Sep 25, 2020
 🌟 New edition 🌟 of the [#SwissPeaceSupporter](#): With a wide range of expertise, 🇨🇭 has played an effective role in peacebuilding. The 3rd edition of the SPS shows 🇨🇭 initiatives in Central Africa Republic, South Sudan and Zimbabwe.
 📄 bit.ly/304HpZG



www.spmee.ch/peace-support www.civipd.ch 3/20

JusticeRapidResponse @J_RapidResponse · Jan 30, 2020

Commissioner @hmagally of @UNCotSyria recognizes the gendered nature of [#childrights](#) violations in the Syrian conflict



JusticeRapidResponse @J_RapidResponse · Jan 30, 2020

"We urge states to encourage bodies like the [#UNSC](#) [#OHCHR](#) to include both dedicated child rights expertise and reporting obligations on [#childrights](#) in the mandates of investigation and reporting mechanisms." - JRR Exec Director @ninasuomalainen



JusticeRapidResponse @J_RapidResponse · Nov 26, 2020

Belgium has joined our Executive Board! 🇧🇪 @BelgiumUNGeneva

"Belgium is an active proponent of accountability that can strengthen our strategic aims to deliver international justice expertise where it is most needed," @ninasuomalainen
bit.ly/3qazx4j



Roster Recruitment

To respond to the international demand for expertise, Justice Rapid Response organized two recruitment courses in 2020, after which 38 experts were invited to join the roster. Amid the pandemic, these recruitment courses were delivered in a new online format, which brought both challenges in terms of organization, as well as some advantages. Time-zone constraints and challenges related to Internet connectivity were addressed in advance, while alternatives for networking and socializing were also proposed. Benefits were found in time and cost savings for both Justice Rapid Response and participants, and, since there was no travel involved, trainers – including active-duty professionals – were more available.

To ensure Justice Rapid Response's ability to respond effectively to the evolving needs of the international community, the expert roster needs to be refreshed yearly with up to 60 new experts. For instance, there is increased recognition of the val-



Participants engage in a virtual recruitment course.

ue of child rights experts, forensic experts and big data/IT analysts. But language needs also evolve, with for example Arabic and Spanish in higher demand to support accountability processes in relation to the Middle East or Central and South America. In 2020, Justice Rapid Response selected an additional 13 experts from alumni of the Institute for International Criminal Investigations's international investigator courses.

IMPACT CASES

COLOMBIA: Protecting witnesses with a code system

Using a code system designed by a Justice Rapid Response witness protection expert, Colombia's Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) was able to dramatically improve the safety of victims participating in voluntary hearings for its first case, "Case 001" (concerning kidnappings committed by the FARC). The witness protection expert provided recommendations to "Case 001", which has since accredited 2,107 victims and has done collective and individual hearings. This code system shielded victim identities from the media and the public in general. This protection will in turn encourage victims to participate in the JEP's proceedings and could increase their trust in the justice process related to one of the longest armed conflicts in the world.



Experts deployed by Justice Rapid Response consult with representatives from the JEP in Bogota. © Justice Rapid Response

OUR BOARD

In November 2020, Justice Rapid Response welcomed the Kingdom of Belgium to its Executive 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.

The two legal entities, Justice Rapid Response Association in Switzerland, and Justice Rapid Response USA in the United States provide the legal and administrative basis for the functioning of the Secretariat. The Secretariat is headed by an Executive Director, who is selected by the Executive Board. The current Executive Director is Ms. Nina Suomalainen, who was appointed to this position in May 2018, seconded by Finland. The Executive Board meets twice a year, providing oversight and guidance to the Secretariat.



Netherlands
(Chair)



Sierra Leone
(Vice-Chair)



Canada
(Observer)



Argentina



Belgium



Finland



**Republic
of Korea**



Sweden



Switzerland



Uganda

Two individuals serve in their personal capacities.

Ambassador Athaliah Molokomme, Permanent Representative of Botswana to the UN in Geneva, and **Ms. Yasmin Sooka**, Executive Director of South Africa's Foundation for Human Rights.

Members of
Justice Rapid
Response's team.



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 2020, 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 percent 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 – Global Affairs Canada, Peace and Stabilization Operations Program

Denmark – Permanent Mission of Denmark to the United Nations Office in Geneva

Finland – Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Ireland – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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

United Kingdom – Foreign and Commonwealth Office

ORGANIZATIONS AND AGENCIES

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (**OHCHR**)

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (**GIZ**) GmbH

International Media Support (**IMS**)

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (**UN Women**)

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

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

	NOTES	2019	2018
RECEIPTS			
Revenue from donors	3.6 & 3.8	4'359'193.31	3'638'557.82
TOTAL OPERATING INCOME		4'359'193.31	3'638'557.82
OPERATING EXPENSES			
	2	1'235'884.44	1'022'466.96
Personnel expenses			
Rent and utilities		110'500.00	110'500.00
General and Administration expenses		183'387.27	197'517.59
Consultant fees		173'441.28	160'238.06
Outreach expenses		41'341.35	69'787.71
Professional fees		54'032.59	35'458.80
Executive Board and Assembly / Committee expenses		24'359.73	21'945.32
Other operating expenses		2'208'656.31	1'443'649.23
<i>Deployments</i>	3.9	1'419'505.79	675'491.07
<i>Recruitment expenses, including sponsorships</i>	3.10	246'892.84	320'717.63
<i>JRR USA</i>	3.11	542'257.68	447'440.53
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES		4'031'602.97	3'061'563.67
OPERATING RESULT			
		327'590.34	576'994.15
Financial expenses		(47'919.43)	(48'501.68)
<i>Interest expense</i>		(953.22)	(503.24)
<i>Other financial expenses</i>		(5'317.94)	(4'326.40)
<i>Foreign exchange gain / loss - net</i>		(41'648.27)	(43'672.04)
Financial income		765.09	75.53
<i>Interest income</i>		765.09	75.53
TOTAL NON-OPERATING INCOME / (EXPENSES)		(47'154.34)	(48'426.15)
Excess ¹ / (shortage) of receipts over expenses		280'436.00	528'568.00
Total release of funds	3.6-3.7	1'242'831.00	641'164.00
Total allocation to funds	3.7	(1'523'267.00)	(1'169'732.00)
Net surplus or (deficit) for the period ²		-	-

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)

	NOTES	2019	2018
ASSETS			
Current assets			
Cash ³ and cash equivalents and current assets with a stock exchange price	3.1	1'959'596.19	1'531'374.38
Prepaid expenses and accrued income	3.2	78'820.24	221'251.68
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS		2'038'416.43	1'752'626.06
Financial assets	3.3	21'423.40	-
Non-current assets		21'423.40	-
TOTAL ASSETS		2'059'839.83	1'752'626.06
LIABILITIES AND FUNDS⁴			
Current liabilities			
Other short-term liabilities		194'294.95	110'330.24
Deferred income and accrued expenses		-	23'453.94
<i>Accrued expenses</i>		-	23'453.94
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES		194'294.95	133'784.18
TOTAL LIABILITIES		194'294.95	133'784.18
FUNDS			
Donor funds	3.4	959'532.25	706'185.39
JRR funds	3.5	906'012.63	912'656.49
<i>JRR fund</i>		<i>708'599.91</i>	<i>715'856.64</i>
<i>Roster management & deployment coordination fee fund</i>		<i>264'114.71</i>	<i>229'768.73</i>
<i>Foreign exchange differences</i>		<i>(66'701.99)</i>	<i>(32'968.88)</i>
TOTAL FUNDS		1'865'544.88	1'618'841.88
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND FUNDS		2'059'839.83	1'752'626.06

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**

CONTACT US

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