

# Three Year Strategic Plan 2012–2014



Cover: **Tunis, Tunisia.** A woman lifts her hands while listening to one of many impromptu speeches during a demonstration in downtown Tunis. Holly Pickett/Redux Pictures.

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ICTJ gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Beverly Hyman in helping staff and board members to draft this document.

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## Mission

In recognition of the current state of the field, our unique role in it, and our belief in what transitional justice can accomplish, ICTJ will continue to pursue our mission:

*ICTJ assists societies confronting massive human rights abuses to promote accountability, pursue truth, provide reparations, and build trustworthy institutions. Committed to the vindication of victims' rights and the promotion of gender justice, we provide expert technical advice, policy analysis, and comparative research on transitional justice approaches, including criminal prosecutions, reparations initiatives, truth seeking and memory, and institutional reform.*

## Vision

We have the following vision for the future:

*We strive for societies to regain humanity in the wake of mass atrocity. For societies in which impunity is rejected, dignity of victims is upheld, and trust is restored; where truth is the basis of history. We believe that this is an ethical, legal and political imperative and the cornerstone of lasting peace.*

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## 1. Introduction

The International Center for Transitional Justice was founded in 2001 to assist societies grappling with the immense challenge of securing justice and accountability in the wake of mass human rights violations. In more than a decade of work since then, we have observed again and again that in order to move forward, communities affected by violence and repression must have a public accounting of the facts, justice for those responsible, reparation for loss and suffering, and a demonstrated commitment, through vetting and institutional reform, that abuses will not be repeated. These steps are essential to bringing justice to victims and to beginning to restore the social fabric undermined by repression and mass violations of human rights.

The four measures most commonly called upon to address mass atrocity and repression—criminal justice, truth and memory, reparations, and institutional reform—form the core elements of transitional justice. When transitional justice is most needed, societies are often at their most fragmented and their systems the most broken. In these moments, the pressure to forget the past, to forgo accountability and redress for the sake of moving forward, can be immense. Even when the demand and will to examine the past emerge, many societies in transition lack the information and know-how to formulate approaches that can address their challenges in practical terms.

The field of transitional justice has developed significantly since our founding, and a growing number of other institutions are now also engaged in working on these critical issues. This year, on the occasion of our 10th anniversary, we have undertaken a strategic-planning process to examine our unique role in this expanded field, to reaffirm our mission, and to ensure excellence in the fulfillment of our goals. Details on the consultative approach that we used to develop this plan are included on the final page of this document.

Despite the great progress made in responding to public demands for accountability in the last decade, we still witness impunity and injustice in the face of grave human rights violations. Though openings for political change are many, the fulfillment of victims' rights to truth, justice, and redress is far from universally realized. The language of transitional justice is now widely used, but its methods are still vulnerable to manipulation for political gain. As we move into our second decade as an institution, we will continue to support measures that benefit victims and affected societies, ensuring that commitments to transitional justice will not simply serve as hollow rhetoric, but will instead lead to real action and change.

## 2. The State of the Field of Transitional Justice

A number of factors signal challenges ahead for justice, accountability, and victims' rights. The global financial crisis will continue to put strains on the international community's ability to invest in the long-term, integrated approaches that are necessary to support societies emerging from transitions. Lack of political will at the national level continues to impose barriers to justice and accountability. As we are observing in the Middle East and North Africa, despite the impressive pace of change in the region in 2011, regimes responsible for violations continue to use the familiar rhetoric of the "threat of instability" to avoid examining past abuses. This language persists, even amid strong evidence that justice is a necessary element of peace and security.

Despite these challenges, there are also positive signals of a commitment to transitional justice. We have noticed growing international recognition of the importance of the principle of "complementarity": that states have a duty to investigate and prosecute serious crimes committed on their territory or by their nationals. Only when a state refuses or is unable to act is the International Criminal Court able to intervene. With greater awareness of this principle has come an increased international commitment to supporting national prosecutions. There is still considerable work to be done to build capacity at the national level in countries such as Côte d'Ivoire and Libya, where doing so can bring the most benefit.

There is also growing recognition that transitional justice measures can support broader development aims in societies emerging from conflict. In 2011, the World Bank's annual World Development Report, titled Conflict, Security, and Development, recommended transitional justice measures as a "core policy tool" for societies emerging from conflict and instability. The report confirms transitional justice measures have been crucial to countries avoidance of recurring "conflict traps." As a result of this central finding, governments and international policymakers will be seeking tangible guidance on how transitional justice institutions can be meaningfully introduced as part of the broader development framework.

Also in 2011, the United Nations Human Rights Council established a mandate for a special rapporteur for the promotion of truth, justice, reparation, and guarantees of nonrecurrence of serious crimes and gross violations of human rights. The mandate begins in 2012 and was supported by 75 countries. New openings to pursue accountability and reform in countries such as Burma, Tunisia, and Guinea will provide tangible opportunities for the rapporteur to advance transitional justice.

The current context is also characterized by a shift in the settings in which transitional justice is pursued. When transitional justice measures were initially developed in Latin America for states transitioning away from authoritarianism, they were used to repair repressive and abusive state institutions. In the last decade, they have increasingly been applied to fragile states and post-conflict environments, which tend to lack functioning state institutions with demonstrated authority over an entire territory. The crimes being examined in these settings are often more a product of social chaos than of policies of systematic state abuse. This deep shift in the context for transitional justice demands greater analysis of its tools and approaches to ensure that they are suitably adapted to bring about justice and accountability.

The proliferation of truth commissions and commissions of inquiry is also an important sign that the right to truth is becoming more widely recognized. In 2011, the International Commission of Inquiry on Côte d'Ivoire was established; Brazil passed legislation to establish a truth commission that will examine crimes of the 1964–85 dictatorship; and there were renewed calls in Nepal to establish a truth commission after years of political stalling. Following the political transition that catalyzed dramatic change throughout the Middle East and North Africa, one of Tunisia's first actions was to establish national commissions to investigate human rights violations, repression, and other crimes of the past. While these efforts can be subject to political manipulation, they can also play an important role in determining the truth and providing a basis for subsequent transitional justice approaches.

We have also seen increased attention to the development of outreach programs and other means of engaging victims directly in transitional justice processes, but these measures are not always successful in meaningfully reaching those most affected by mass violence. The first group of commissioners for Liberia's Truth and Reconciliation Commission was selected by the Liberian president, without consultation with victims' groups. Under pressure from civil society due to concerns about the commissioners' lack of credibility, the first group was dismissed, and a process was established to select new commissioners with the involvement of civil society. Pressure from civil society and international policymakers in cases like this is critical to ensuring that transitional justice processes incorporate the interests and needs of victims, and facilitate their involvement.

These signals of progress are heartening, but without practical delivery on policy advances and public commitments, they are merely gestures. Transitional justice measures meet with varying levels of international and domestic support. While international trials continue to be relatively well-funded and well-utilized, national criminal trials still occur all too rarely. Truth commissions are widely lauded but insufficiently supported in practice, while reparations programs are often orphaned by the international community, and institutional reform is only implemented in a scattered manner. A selective approach that adopts only those elements of transitional justice that are convenient or uncontroversial will not bring real change to victims or societies in transition.

## 3. Our Unique Role

ICTJ is the leading authority on transitional justice, with engagements in 2011 in 33 countries and an ongoing staff presence in 19. In our next 10 years, we will continue to respond to invitations to assist in emerging transitions, but we will prioritize engagements where analysis signals a feasible environment to advance justice and accountability and an opening for our technical expertise to add the greatest value.

### **Transitional Justice Expertise**

While the number of organizations working on transitional justice has grown in the last decade, we retain a unique profile. Our experts are valued for their nuanced understanding not only of the importance of each transitional justice measure (truth and memory, reparations, criminal justice, and institutional reform), but also of how those measures can work together in practice. Our profile is due in part to the practical experience of our staff, who have worked inside transitional justice mechanisms and transitional environments around the world. This expertise is complemented by a thorough understanding of local context and a diverse network of relationships with civil society, governments, and international policymakers.

### **Practical Problem Solving**

Our approach to real-world challenges has been critical to our effectiveness. We are viewed as flexible, practical, and dedicated to problem solving. Our work is informed by an understanding of legal frameworks and technical considerations, and we provide useful insights and solutions that advance justice and accountability in times of transition.

### **Leading Policy Advice**

Both international and national policymakers have turned to us to assist in formulating frameworks for the use of transitional justice in particular contexts and to answer specific technical questions about how methods work in practice. Our work has generated greater awareness among policymakers of the utility of transitional justice measures in helping societies to move forward from mass human rights violations. Working at the national and international levels, we have identified opportunities to advance transitional justice, as well as areas where transitional justice institutions are failing and need additional support.

### **Promotion of Victims' Rights and Inclusion of Marginalized Groups**

We have a particular focus on encouraging transitional justice processes to recognize and include the participation of victims of mass crimes at all stages in transitional justice processes. We promote the inclusion of groups that have been targeted or marginalized as a result of their status or identity. In particular, our gender justice unit works to ensure the participation of victims of gender-based violations in designing transitional justice measures, as well as advocating for those measures to address the experience of victims of gender-based violence and other differential harms. Our work on children and transitional justice examines the unique considerations of children and youth as both victims and perpetrators of violence. This focus on targeted groups has also included particular attention to the experience and interests of indigenous peoples who have faced serious crimes and systematic repression.

### **Empirical and Normative Research**

We are recognized for a strong commitment to research. Our research has repeatedly broken new ground with respect not just to each of the four core measures, but also to the links between them and the linkages between transitional justice and other fields such as peacebuilding, development, and rule of law.

### **Independence**

We are valued for our independence, and are often uniquely placed to assist and facilitate greater engagement between civil society, governments, and international policymakers. In our role as an independent provider of reliable and timely expertise, our work seeks to assist and connect, rather than replace, national institutions.

## 4. Three-Year Strategic Priorities

### Priority 1: Integrated Approaches

*Integrated policies for the development and implementation of transitional justice measures are increasingly adopted at the national level.*

Based on our experience over the last decade, we have become increasingly convinced that transitional justice measures operate most effectively when part of a deliberate, coherent policy that considers a range of measures. We will encourage the adoption of national transitional justice strategies that demonstrate a meaningful commitment to exploring all possible measures for dealing with the past and preventing recurrence, with consideration to timing, sequencing, and resourcing.

Through our technical advice and policy analysis, we will encourage national and international actors to demonstrate a meaningful commitment to taking an integrated approach to addressing the past and preventing recurrence. An integrated approach would consider the various means of delivering criminal accountability, truth and memory, reparations, and institutional reform in a way that suits the specific needs and political reality of that context, as well as the particular interests and needs of marginalized groups.

We will enhance collaboration among our own experts across our areas of geographic and thematic focus, bringing together our geographic and policy analysis with our thematic expertise in transitional justice. We will provide contextual advice on how to maximize the potential impact of each measure and on how measures might work together and build on one another. This will not prevent us from working in select contexts in which stand-alone measures are understood to present the only feasible option at that time, and have the potential to move a process forward toward greater accountability.

### Priority 2: Technical Assistance and Policy Analysis

*Key stakeholders in societies emerging from mass human rights abuse have timely access to relevant lessons and innovative approaches to transitional justice through the provision of targeted technical assistance*

Our ability to provide timely, high-quality, targeted technical assistance to key stakeholders depends on the quality of our expertise and political analysis. Working with civil society, governments, and international policymakers in specific countries, we will identify opportunities and define strategies to advance transitional justice on the basis of our political analysis. With the benefit of a strong understanding of applicable law, local

context, and policy trends, we will ensure the quality and speed of our needs assessments, strategy development, and the deployment of our expertise. Our experts will provide appropriate technical assistance and will elevate national and international dialogue on the value of transitional justice.

### **Priority 3: Victims' Rights and Participation**

*Transitional justice processes and institutions reflect the rights of victims and ensure their participation, especially for members of marginalized groups.*

We will continue to promote the rights of victims, including their participation in the design of transitional justice measures and access to transitional justice processes. We will give particular attention to the recognition of rights, participation, and access for those who have been the subject of specific forms of marginalization, such as women, children and youth, and indigenous peoples. We will support this priority by providing targeted technical assistance to civil society groups, including victims' groups, as they seek participation in the design of transitional justice measures and access to them. Working with state institutions and international policymakers, ICTJ will also promote channels for meaningful participation by victims in the development and implementation of transitional justice policies and institutions. Our policy work at all levels will also uphold the rights of victims and promote their interests, primarily by making connections among our civil society partners at the local level, national authorities, and international actors.

### **Priority 4: Reflection and Innovation**

*Transitional justice actors continue to innovate their practice based on critical reflection and exchange of lessons learned from current practice, research, and policy analysis.*

Our role in building the field of transitional justice has been attributed in part to learning and innovation that arises from our practical engagement with transitional justice measures and to learning from peers who are also engaged in this work. We will continue to dedicate time and attention to learning from the successes and failures we observe in practice and to sharing those lessons with one another and with peer institutions in order to promote good practices. We commit to further our analysis of the linkages between the fields of transitional justice and development over this three-year period, and to broaden our recommendations on practical steps that can be taken to realize the mutual benefits of the two fields. Other specific agendas for reflection and debate will emerge from trends we and others observe in practice. We will encourage dialogue among practitioners and researchers in diverse geographic and political settings. Our dedicated research unit will retain its commitment to empirical and normative research that informs, and is informed by, the practical work of ICTJ and others in the field.

## 5. Our Operational Approach

In the coming years, we will prioritize engagement in contexts where we can promote integrated transitional justice policies at the national level, in response to evidence of the will to support such advances. We will provide our expertise in a timely manner where it is most needed, based on deep practical knowledge of transitional justice, empirical and normative research, understanding of local context, and attention to providing solutions that will work in the real world of diverse and complex transitions. The interests of victims will be foremost in our approach, and we will carry out our work with particular attention to the needs of marginalized groups. We will continue to work in collaboration with national and international actors to translate the policy gains of the last decade into practical, on-the-ground advances in the next 10 years.

### **Integrated Programming**

In practice, ICTJ's effectiveness in fulfilling our mission relies on three elements of our substantive work: program delivery in our primary regions and thematic areas, our research, and our policy-relations efforts. These three areas depend on one another to ensure the quality of our advice, and they reinforce each other in practice. Going forward, we will strengthen this integrated approach as an institution. We will increase collaboration among thematic experts, policy analysts, and our in-country staff to develop specific national strategies.

We remain committed to working closely with civil society, governments, and international policymakers. Our high-level relationships with national and international policymakers contribute to our effectiveness in influencing the development of policy norms and frameworks. Through strong ties to state authorities and national transitional justice institutions, we develop partnerships and provide support and assistance to national processes. Without a strong network of relationships with national-level civil society, our insights would bring fewer tangible benefits to victims and would also be less valuable to policymakers. Through the provision of integrated expert advice on technical considerations, strategy, and policy development, our relationships with our stakeholders are critical to the effectiveness of our work.

We will prioritize our activities where there is a clear role for transitional justice or where there are important advances in the implementation of transitional justice measures, rather than where the promise of a future transition may be many years off. Looking forward, ICTJ will only engage in longer-term country presences in a limited way, focusing on a select number of countries where opportunities to advance justice and accountability call

for our particular expertise. ICTJ will continue to build capacity to ensure that actors in transitional contexts have the information for informed debate and good decision making. We will establish clear benchmarks for this capacity-building work and will focus on developing a critical mass of knowledge to allow for such debates and decisions. We will produce high-quality political analysis and develop key connections with civil society, governments, and international policymakers. Through these combined efforts, we will identify openings for transitional justice, build strong relationships with multiple stakeholders, and establish channels for moving a transitional justice agenda forward.

These operational directions will lead to a more efficient use of our expertise, reducing field presence where we are satisfied transitional justice work can be better carried on by national organizations. In such cases, we will help to transition to local organizations to continue the work we have done. It will also require that we increase our flexibility and capacity to respond to emerging opportunities and needs in a timely and efficient way.

### **Research**

As demand for transitional justice has increased globally, so have the complexity of the circumstances where it is applied and the expectations associated with its application. Our research indicates these new challenges can be met only by strengthening the links between transitional justice and other fields of policy intervention such as security and development. In the next three years, we will undertake research to further explore and systematize these findings. We will also continue to deepen our understanding of the contexts in which transitional justice measures are applied, particularly on how they can be made more effective in post-conflict settings and in contexts where states are strong but institutions for justice and accountability are otherwise weak.

## 6. Organizational Support

### **Communication**

Our communications strategy will focus on demonstrating the role and potential benefits of transitional justice measures to our target audiences, including the media, policymakers, civil society, governments, and academics. Our communications will demonstrate the impact and distinct, added value of our expertise while also supporting the programmatic goals of our individual units. We will emphasize the role and importance of integrated transitional justice measures and demonstrate the linkages between transitional justice and development, rule of law, security, good governance, and democracy. Our communications team will leverage the reach of social media by increasing the focus and consistency of our online content and by connecting with bloggers and other social media figures interested in transitional justice. We will continue to produce timely and high-quality written materials for national and international policymakers, international and national media organizations, peer organizations, and transitional justice actors in the global arena and in our countries of programmatic focus.

### **Institutional Learning**

We will sustain our commitment to institutional learning, with the aim of ensuring strong program design, understanding how changes happen as a result of our work, and documenting our impact. We will continue to monitor and evaluate our work in an effort to hold ourselves accountable to the commitments we have made as an institution, and to continue to improve the quality and value of our work.

We will formulate strategies for our work that will include clear goals for our in-country engagements and approaches to exiting responsibly once our core contribution has been made. In order to track our progress and compare the effectiveness of different approaches, the institutional learning unit will continue to support external evaluations of particular projects and broader program approaches. In 2009 we made a five-year commitment to evaluate all of our existing field work, which we will fulfill over the coming three years.

We will utilize our intranet as a cross-program planning tool and a space for documenting learning and facilitating critical discussions on program approaches. In order to do so, we will invest additional resources in strengthening the design and technical function of the intranet and in training staff on its use.

## **Development**

As with all organizations and institutions operating in the current financial climate, we are aware that growing our resource base will require continued focus and investment, including expansion of our development team. Guided by the organization's strategic priorities, we will leverage our accomplishments and demonstrated value into a broader commitment of funds. We anticipate that our primary donors will continue to be a mix of governments and foundations. For some years the institution has been interested in exploring the establishment of an individual-giving program, and we will aim to achieve this in the next three years. Through these efforts, we will seek additional unrestricted resources to build our financial reserves and to ensure our capacity to respond to emerging transitional justice opportunities.

## **Human Resources**

Expertise is our greatest asset and source of value. We will continue to attract, cultivate, and retain top professionals in the field. During the coming three years, we will invest in additional leadership in the human resources unit. We will improve orientation, mentorship, staff development, and development of updated policies and procedures. Our framework for compensation and benefits, based on the compensation review conducted in 2011, will be adopted throughout the organization. We will introduce a new performance-appraisal and performance-management system and give greater attention to this particular effort to maintain a strong team of professionals.

## **Finance**

We have re-established a stable financial footing and have a strong team of financial professionals in place to support our work. Over the next three years, we will continue to centralize our financial services in New York, reducing the administrative burden on program staff and emphasizing transparency and efficiency in the management of our resources. We will provide ongoing training in new software and methods for all staff with financial-management responsibility. We will continue to introduce internal reforms to strengthen our regulatory compliance and ensure accountability for noncompliance.

## 7. Conclusion

The coming three years will build on the success of our first decade as an organization and the tremendous growth of the transitional justice field. We will continue to be a leader in the field, consolidating our programmatic, policy, and research efforts to deliver high-quality technical assistance and policy analysis. We will focus our efforts to ensure that we have an impact at the national level, supporting the real changes that transitional justice can bring about in the lives of victims and communities affected by mass violence and repression. We will maintain a commitment to supporting the recognition of victims' rights and their participation, particularly those who are most marginalized in times of violence and repression. In support of these aims, we will offer the fresh and practical insights for which we are most valued, learning from others in the field and cultivating innovative approaches of our own.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN CONSULTATION PROCESS**

In the fall of 2011, we conducted a strategic plan consultation process that included the following formal steps, as well as a series of internal strategy meetings and consultations with the board of directors to inform the final selection of priorities.

### **Survey**

13 questions sent to all staff members and consultants, completed by 69 respondents across all offices, units, and job titles. The results were completed anonymously and analyzed by an external consultant, and translation services were offered to French and Spanish speaking staff members.

### **Internal focus groups**

14 focus groups were held in field offices and in New York, facilitated by ICTJ staff members. Groups ranged in size from four to nine participants from all parts of the organization. All field offices were invited to participate.

### **External focus groups and one-on-one interviews**

External focus groups were led by staff in Kenya, Israel/Palestine, Nepal, Colombia, and Indonesia, consulting with government officials, civil society organizations, university administrators, UN officials, diplomats, and donors. Six one-on-one interviews were conducted with external actors in New York and Europe.

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