

Strategic Plan

2022 – 2027



Cover Image: Jennifer Haber and Monica Lindsey, co-chairs of Connecting the Dots, a reconciliation organization in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, embrace at soil collection ceremony for King Johnson, a lynching victim murdered on Christmas Day in 1911. (André Chung/ICTJ)

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About ICTJ

The International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) works across society and borders to challenge the causes and address the consequences of massive human rights violations. We affirm victims' dignity, fight impunity, and promote responsive institutions in societies emerging from repressive rule or armed conflict as well as in established democracies where historical injustices or systemic abuse remain unresolved. ICTJ envisions a world where societies break the cycle of massive human rights violations and lay the foundations for peace, justice, and inclusion. For more information, visit www.ictj.org

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Adapting to Changing World

Since 2001, ICTJ has worked in more than 50 countries, advocating for the rights of victims of human rights violations, fighting against impunity, promoting reforms to prevent the repetition of violence and abuse, and fostering trust and reconciliation. In societies experiencing or emerging from periods of violent conflict or repression, we support our partners on the ground in their pursuit of redress. Where conflict is ongoing, we engage with peace processes and political negotiations to ensure that justice is part of the agenda and victims' voices are heard. In established democracies,

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Societies break the cycle of massive human rights violations and lay the foundations for peace, justice, and inclusion.

we support efforts to acknowledge and deal with the legacies of past atrocities as the way forward to a more just, peaceful, and inclusive future. Wherever we operate, we always consider the broader global context and its implications for what we do.

ICTJ is now more than two decades old. At the time it was established, many of those who contributed to transitions in Argentina, Chile, Guatemala, South Africa, and the former Yugoslavia saw the value of a specialized organization that could draw from diverse national experiences to provide expert advice to victims' groups, civil

society, governments, and international actors. Since then, the organization has continuously evolved, accumulating a wealth of experience and knowledge, and consolidating a leadership position in the field. It has demonstrated its ability to develop transitional justice approaches for a fast-changing world and emerge from periods of adversity as a stronger and more dynamic organization.

Today, the global context is one of multiple, interrelated crises. The COVID-19 pandemic and the resurgence of authoritarian governance have revealed the fragility of democratic institutions, even in countries where we thought they were well rooted and safe. Increasing violent conflict and the effects of climate change have also highlighted and exacerbated the suffering of the world's most vulnerable, including the poor, the displaced, the marginalized, and the victims of human rights violations. At the same time, we are witnessing growing demands for justice and equity connected to unaddressed past wrongs and a renewed momentum for change at the international and local levels. Space for the rights of victims has been consolidated in the global policy agenda, while local civil society organizations have been empowered as champions of justice in some of the

most difficult contexts. We are also energized by the many innovative alliances among institutions from the public and private sectors and their joint initiatives reflecting their critical role during this decisive moment for our shared world. Alongside these trends, the ongoing digital transformation is both accentuating the challenges and accelerating the demands for positive change, bringing with it both risks and opportunities.

Accordingly, we must rethink the pursuit of justice, inclusion, and sustainable peace and development in societies that have experienced massive abuses. As a leader in the transitional justice field, ICTJ has undertaken a systematic process of internal reflection to help set a course of action for the coming years. This has included bilateral discussions and roundtable dialogues with partners and supporters, as well as an extensive and participatory set of consultations and analyses with ICTJ's diverse staff in all the countries where it works. This strategic plan is the result of this process and presents the priorities and action plans that will drive our programmatic and policy work, research, and institutional development for the next five years. It describes the need to adapt to a post-pandemic world, focus on the right substantive themes, and secure the institutional investments necessary for sustainable growth. As we both confront huge challenges and open up opportunities, we are more committed than ever to helping create a more just world.



Vladimiro Bayona, whose son Alexander Bayona was kidnapped and disappeared by FARC, shares an emotional moment with his wife after intervening at the public acknowledgment of responsibility hearing held by Colombia's special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) on Case 01. (Isabel Valdés Arias/JEP Communications)

Strategic Priorities

1. **Leveraging Policy for Action.** *Influence the global policy agenda, ensuring that it incorporates transitional justice as a problem-solving and strategic tool. Mobilize political, technical, and financial support to translate this influence into action on the ground.*

ICTJ's effectiveness as an organization largely depends on its ability to successfully shape the relevant international policy frameworks so that they recognize and incorporate the valuable role and contributions of transitional justice. These include frameworks such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the recent UN Common Agenda that inform the sustainable peace and development policies related to human rights, international justice, rule of law, governance, gender, youth, and the environment. While many but not all of these frameworks explicitly refer to transitional justice, they all share transitional justice-related aims such as equity, inclusion, and

prevention and thus provide opportunities for practitioners to demonstrate and persuade policymakers of the value of people- and victim-centered transitional justice approaches.

Influencing the policy agenda is not an end in itself, however. Rather, it is a means to bring about change on the ground. ICTJ must therefore leverage its influence with policymakers, donors, and other relevant actors to increase political, technical, and financial support for transitional justice processes; identify and seize upon opportunities for such support; and protect and build upon previous gains made in existing transitional justice, peacebuilding, sustainable development, gender, and youth frameworks. Our ultimate aim is to mobilize

support and effect policy changes that lead to meaningful long-term progress in fulfilling victims' rights, combating impunity, and catalyzing institutional and structural reform in countries that have experienced massive human rights violations.

At the institutional level, leveraging our influence in policy circles for action in this way requires that we hone our ability to effectively articulate our added value and impact, including by using data,

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evidence, and analysis; measuring progress more systematically in all aspects of our work; and developing an assertive, clear, and impact-oriented communication style to better connect with the general public, policymakers, and donors. These steps, in turn, require us to strengthen human resources, design better systems, optimize digital technology, and create innovative products.

Externally, leveraging ICTJ's influence for action means strengthening existing partnerships with civil society networks; governments; regional and global multilateral institutions, including the African Union, the European Union, and United Nations; and key actors in the private sector. It also entails developing new partnerships linked to specific policy issues and working with partners at every level to shape and advance policy and to ensure that local stakeholders play a central role in all stages. Critical to this priority is expanding ICTJ's pool of public sector donors and identifying and engaging with new sources of support in the philanthropic world and private sector.

2. *Addressing the Issues That Matter.* *Set the agenda for the practice of transitional justice and enhance its impact by properly addressing the issues that matter most to our partners on the ground in contexts of massive human rights violations, including prevention, equity and inclusion, and new forms of accountability.*

In order to effectively and efficiently shape international policy and mobilize action on the ground, it is imperative to focus on the specific issues that matter most to our local partners, who can have the most meaningful impact. In the coming years, these issues include violence prevention, equity and inclusion, and new forms of accountability.

- **Prevention.** Prevention remains a high priority within the sustainable peace and development agendas. There is a clear and direct link between a historical lack of meaningful reform and accountability in institutions and present-day abuses and concurrent setbacks in recent transitions. Experience shows that preventing the recurrence or persistence of violence and abuse depends on whether transitional justice processes have societal and cultural endorsement, the legislative and institutional framework has been thoughtfully revised, and a broad approach to institutional reform and guarantees of nonrecurrence has been adopted. ICTJ will therefore work with its partners to ensure that mainstream transitional justice practice is more geared toward the long-term and systemic changes necessary for preventing the recurrence of violations and violence, and that actors in the development and peacebuilding field recognize the challenges created by massive abuse as well as the preventive value of transitional justice.



Victims in Uganda participate in a consultation conducted by ICTJ as part of research for an amicus curiae on reparations that a coalition of organizations submitted to the International Criminal Court in the case of *The Prosecutor v Dominic Ongwen*. (ICTJ)

- **Equity and inclusion.** Closely related to prevention are the issues of equity and inclusion. COVID-19 exacerbated the hardship experienced by marginalized populations and revealed the overlapping nature of different vulnerabilities. In response to the pandemic and intertwined socioeconomic crises, there have been growing demands at the grassroots level to address economic and social exclusion related to structural inequality, which in some cases is directly connected to recent or historical violations of human rights, including economic, social, and cultural rights. A more ambitious global agenda for equity includes addressing racial injustice and the legacies of slavery and colonialism, psychosocial harms, and climate and environmental injustice. ICTJ will work with its partners to ensure that mainstream transitional justice practice contributes more to equity and inclusion in contexts where current structural marginalization is rooted in massive violations.
- **New forms of accountability.** If transitional justice is to contribute meaningfully to prevention and equity, practitioners must promote a more sophisticated understanding of accountability. There remains a tendency within and outside the field of transitional justice to reduce accountability to criminal prosecution or retribution at the national or international level, despite the inherent limitations of criminal justice on its own. At the same time, however, there has been a promising global trend toward the proliferation of alternative or complementary means to provide accountability for serious crimes, which include UN special procedures, universal jurisdiction, restorative justice, and international sanctions on governments, nonstate actors, and individuals. ICTJ will work with its partners and stakeholders to ensure that mainstream transitional justice practice incorporates a more sophisticated understanding of accountability, and that together we more frequently and effectively leverage these new forms of accountability to fight impunity.

At the institutional level, we will conduct programmatic work on the ground and field-based policy research with an eye to assessing the added value and impact in these areas, and to developing actionable policy advice, issue-specific policy recommendations, and communication campaigns targeted at segmented audiences. This will require us to build our institutional capacity to maximize and articulate our impact in these specific areas, including training and developing staff, recruiting additional temporary or permanent experts, improving or designing systems, and building capacity for psychosocial support and integrating it in all aspects of our work.

Externally, we will strengthen and leverage existing partnerships and networks and develop new ones to advance our work, build our capacity in these specific areas, and articulate our impact. These include partnerships with members of the media, grassroots organizations, policymakers, and academics outside the field of transitional justice. We will increase and diversify alliances, innovate cross-sector projects to advance our work in these areas, and help develop and implement funding mechanisms that benefit local and grassroots organizations.

3. *Going Digital.* *Adapt transitional justice to the ongoing digital transformation, building its capacity to confront the challenges and leverage the opportunities that accompany the development and proliferation of digital technologies.*

In order to stay relevant, transitional justice must keep up with the times. Today, this means adapting to the ongoing digital transformation, which is changing the way people work and conduct business, access and use information, participate in politics, and interact with each other, their communities, and institutions. This transformation brings new security threats for human rights defenders and creates challenges for pursuing accountability, establishing legitimate narratives, protecting rights and civic space, and maintaining the social value of truth and acknowledgment in divided and polarized societies. This digital transformation also has

important implications for participation, eliminating some barriers related to physical distance while creating new ones related to access to the internet and communication technologies.

ICTJ will take a leading role in ensuring that transitional justice practice fully takes into account this digital transformation and its implications. We will address any barriers to participation as well as any security or other threats, while identifying and seizing on new opportunities and digital tools that can improve our operations and enhance our impact. We will work with partners and stakeholders to develop effective and more systematic digital strategies for documenting human rights violations; conducting consultations and outreach; registering, processing, and analyzing data and information for accountability or reparations purposes; holding social media and technology corporations accountable; addressing the impact of social and economic inequity on access to digital justice processes; and safely conducting activism remotely.

Taking a lead role requires us to convene relevant actors across sectors to better assess the opportunities and threats presented by this digital transformation, and to identify, map, and systematize current and emerging practices. Accordingly, we will strengthen key partnership and forge new ones with actors in the transitional justice and human rights fields with the aims of exchanging best practices on the use of technology and facilitating our adaptation to the digital transformation. Increasing and diversifying support for transitional justice will also mean bringing in actors with expertise in technology outside the pool of those who typically fund peacebuilding and human rights activities.



Relatives and friends hold balloons during the funeral of three-year-old Kateleen Myca Ulpina on July 9, 2019, in Rizal province, Philippines. Ulpina was shot dead by police officers conducting a drug raid targeting her father. (Ezra Acayan/Getty Images)

ICTJ will implement a comprehensive plan to modernize the organization's digital systems that includes solutions for collaborative cloud-based and remote work, granting staff quick, easy, and safe access to all institutional resources; solutions for cybersecurity, data protection, and compliance with data protection regulations; the integration of databases and software connecting grant management and finances, reporting and monitoring, and development and fundraising; upgraded equipment; and staff training.

Implementation

The strategic plan’s implementation will involve a series of overlapping phases, focusing on specific institutional actions and outputs at different moments. The ICTJ team will make targeted changes, which depend in part on external factors, throughout the coming five years, and will evaluate and adjust the specific steps as needed.

Phase I will cover the first year and most of the second and will focus on mapping relevant actors, incorporating the three priorities into program workplans more explicitly, enhancing institutional coordination, organizing multi-stakeholder convenings on specific issues, updating

digital and human resources infrastructure, and establishing new partnerships. We will also improve our internal processes to identify our impact and lessons learned from the field and to communicate them to external audiences clearly and in an appealing way.

Progress will be demonstrated when programmatic work incorporates specific actions on priority issues, for example, when workplans make explicit references to effective and concrete coordination among programs. Other indicators will be that policy and communication activities clearly contribute to strategic priorities, a new website is launched, a plan to update digital infrastructure is designed and



Irina Ghazaryan is one of the “Mothers in Black,” a group in Armenia seeking the truth about the non-combat-related deaths of their sons in the military. (Diana Alsip/ICTJ).

implemented, staff have received training and developed or strengthened their capacity in key areas, changes in how we measure are implemented in policy and fundraising activities, selected communication products articulate our impact, and key actors are identified and engaged at both national and international levels.

Phase II will begin in the plan’s third year, by which point ICTJ will have strengthened its capacity and improved its infrastructure. The ICTJ team will thereby incorporate insights and lessons

from the first phase of the plan's implementation. This second phase will focus on new sources of funding; targeted policy actions; advocacy and media campaigns powered by key partnerships and directed at segmented audiences; and the development, application, and dissemination of methods and tools that leverage the potential of digital technology in transitional justice processes.

Progress will be demonstrated when new donors are targeted and engaged, new sources of funding are developed, innovative policy initiatives are aligned with priority issues in coordination with key stakeholders, targeted media products related to key policy issues are produced and disseminated in collaboration with external partners, there are increased opportunities for bottom-up participation in global policy discussions and funding for grassroots partners, new partnerships are established with actors in fields directly related to strategic priorities, and digital technology applications and methods are developed.

Phase III will begin in the plan's fourth and fifth years and will focus on specific targeted changes in program, policy, and funding environments, rather than internally within ICTJ. This phase will follow up on and consolidate the gains from the previous years. In anticipation of a significant volatility and uncertainty in the contexts where ICTJ works and in relation to the prospects for justice in general, ICTJ will assess developments on the ground and propose specific actions accordingly.

Methodology

ICTJ’s 2022-2027 strategic plan was developed based on extensive internal and external discussions, including with a wide range of partners and supporters, and an analysis of the evolving global political context and trends in the transitional justice field. Using an initial organizational mapping tool, staff and board members reflected on the organization’s strengths, identified priority areas for improvement, and considered the implications of changes in the field since 2017. In participatory group discussions, they then assessed ICTJ’s programmatic and policy work,



“Balconies of Vigilance,” photograph by Rola Jawad, entry in the ICTJ Wide Awake Contest. Days after a massive explosion at facility in the port of Beirut on August 4, 2020, demonstrators took to the streets in Beirut to protest against a political class who allowed it happen but disavowed any responsibility. This picture tells the story of the broader civil opposition movement, from its first manifestations in 2013, 2015 and 2017, through the October 2019 revolution and beyond.(Rola Jawad/ICTJ)

its alignment with the funding environment and donor strategies, and the main opportunities for and challenges in implementing ICTJ’s mission and advancing its vision in the coming years.

As part of the process, the ICTJ team reviewed recommendations from recent evaluations and other qualitative inputs collected during institutional monitoring and evaluation, including a series of surveys and consultations with partners regarding the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, a staff survey, an information technology assessment, a website data analysis and assessment, and a web-based survey of website users. ICTJ also

conducted bilateral discussions with key partners and presented them with preliminary findings. The 2021 annual roundtable, which convened more than 70 representatives of governments, multilateral organizations, and private philanthropy, also offered valuable input on priorities and strategy.

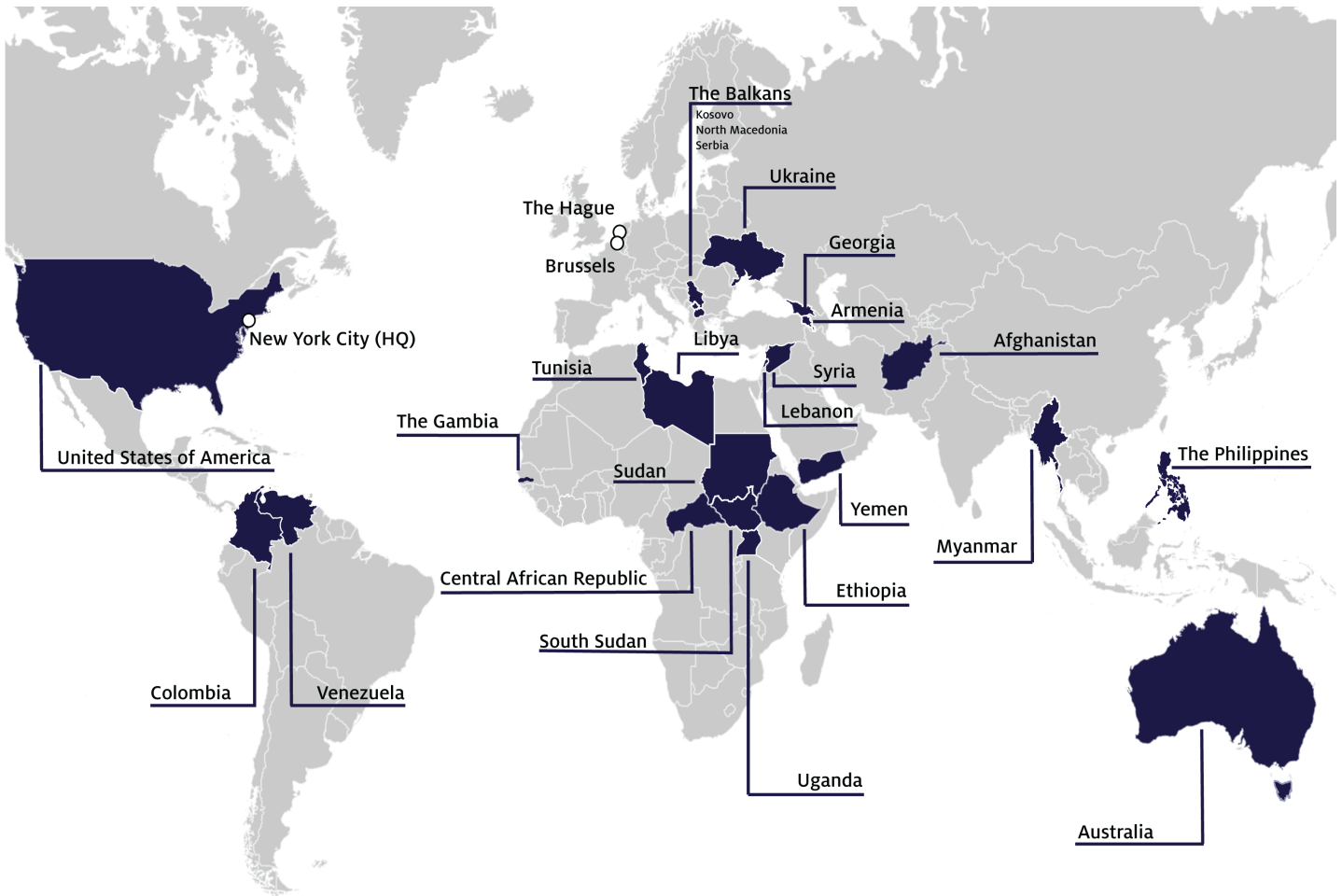
Where ICTJ Works

Since its establishment in 2001, ICTJ has worked in more than 50 countries. The map below reflects where we work in 2022.

ICTJ is also engaged at different levels in Georgia, Maldives, Mali, Myanmar, and The Philippines, ranging from targeted interventions to the initial development of broader strategies. ICTJ is headquartered in New York City, with institutional representation in The Hague and Brussels and country offices in Colombia, Lebanon, Uganda, Tunisia, and The Gambia.

Based on our analysis, we anticipate the demand for ICTJ interventions in the next five years will be determined in part by the following key factors:

- Transitional justice is no longer seen as relevant only in fragile and developing countries. For example, there are growing demands to address the legacies of colonialism, slavery, and other historical injustices in countries such as Australia, Belgium, and the United States. When responding to demands of this sort, ICTJ will evaluate whether intervening would add value and complement domestic initiatives, the same way it does in other contexts.
- Progress in transitional justice is a long-term, broad societal process. ICTJ has learned through experience that our support can be valuable well beyond the lifespan of specific transitional justice mechanisms. In countries such as Colombia, The Gambia, and Lebanon, we will thus plan durable engagements with the flexibility to scale down to a less resource-intensive presence as the situation requires. That said, when domestic actors are in position to sustain the work to which we have contributed or when political windows of opportunity are closing, we will wind down our operations.
- In a number of countries of the former Soviet Union, grassroots movements are demanding a more open democratic society and that governments address widespread corruption and the legacies of past injustice. In some cases, governments have responded by violently suppressing protests and turning toward authoritarianism. Despite increased volatility in the region, we also see opportunities for potential change, and actors in some contexts have requested ICTJ provide targeted support.
- In Africa, in response to a worrisome trend toward authoritarianism and conflict, we will build on our solid track record in a number of countries and nurture our strong partnership with the African Union, which we anticipate will lead to greater support at the regional level and further interventions at the national level. Capacity permitting, ICTJ is likely to respond to requests from both civil society actors and governments.



NOTE: ICTJ offices in New York City, The Hague, and Brussels are responsible for program strategy, delivery, and support; monitoring and evaluation; policy outreach; communications; development; finance; human resources; and administrative support.

- In countries experiencing ongoing violent conflict and humanitarian crisis linked to authoritarian rule, including in Asia, Latin American, and the Middle East and North Africa, ICTJ will continue to monitor developments, support groups documenting human rights violations and making preparations for potential transitions, and respond as needed and when feasible.

ICTJ's strategic plan provides for the flexibility needed to respond promptly to emerging and rapidly changing situations. Our assessment of potential interventions includes a careful do-no-harm and conflict-sensitive evaluation of the political context, opportunities for change on the ground, and our institutional capacity and anticipated added value.

For more than 20 years, ICTJ has proven to be a reliable partner and an effective results-oriented organization, able to design and execute feasible yet impactful programs in challenging operational conditions. We rely on rigorous research, data collection, and analysis and validate our work via external evaluations, which have provided valuable insights on how to improve our operations, as well as substantial evidence of our relevance, lasting impact, effective capacity building, and influence on policy. ICTJ also commissions annual external financial audits, for

which we consistently have impeccable results.¹ Staff members and the organization as a whole have earned numerous awards, including Guidestar’s 2021 Platinum Seal of Transparency.

Recent external evaluations have highlighted the organization’s ability to work in complex and polarized contexts and handle sensitive political processes, its efficiency and flexibility, and the expertise of its staff.² External reports also regularly point to ICTJ’s capacity to effectively leverage partnerships; empower local actors; and maintain an agile, global presence at the invitation of stakeholders and communities around the world who trust us to put victims first.

The present 2022-2027 strategic plan builds on our institutional knowledge, expertise, and experience and sets out ICTJ’s future as an organization ready to face the challenges of our fast-changing world and contribute to meaningful solutions.

¹ See ICTJ’s financial reports at <https://www.ictj.org/our-donors>.

² For example, see Bjorn Pettersson and Beatriz Cespedes S., “Evaluación del Programa de apoyo a iniciativas de justicia transicional en Colombia (2018-2022) del Centro Internacional para la Justicia Transicional (ICTJ)” (2022); Agency for Peacebuilding, “External Evaluation of the Policy-Influencing Interventions of the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ)” (2021); Ashanut Okille and Teddy Atim, “Final Project Evaluation of Advancing the Victim’s Rights in Uganda Through the Continued Support and Strengthening of Stakeholders,” (2021); Jocke Nyberg, Heidi Abuchaibe Abuchaibe, and Daniela Martínez Pérez, “The Key Role of ICTJ in the Designing of Colombia’s Complex Transitional Justice System” (2018); Lucid Collaborative, “Informing and Enabling Transitional Justice Actors Evaluation of ICTJ’s Capacity Development Programming in Uganda, Côte d’Ivoire and Tunisia” (2017). These external evaluation reports are available upon request.

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