



Questions and Answers: The Victims Trust Fund of the ICC

1. What is the Victims Trust Fund?

The Victims Trust Fund is part of the International Criminal Court. This fund was established in recognition that justice is not only about punishing perpetrators, but also about restoring dignity to victims.

As part of a criminal case before the International Criminal Court, victims may be awarded compensation or other forms of reparation. The Victims Trust Fund will help the Court distribute awards to victims. It will also help the many victims who would otherwise not receive reparations because the perpetrators have no money or have evaded the reach of the Court altogether.

2. Why was the Victims Trust Fund created?

The International Criminal Court was established to end impunity for the worst atrocities: genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. Often, at tribunals like those established for Yugoslavia and Rwanda, the needs and concerns of victims of these heinous crimes were ignored. When the international community created the treaty that established the International Criminal Court – the Rome Statute – it included careful protections for victims. The Victims Trust Fund, one of these special provisions, will ensure that victims have the concrete means to move forward with their lives. It is unprecedented; no other international criminal tribunal has such a fund.

While nothing can wholly rectify the wrongs done to these victims, survivors of atrocities do have concrete needs that financial aid can help meet. These needs can include medical costs, school fees for orphans, restitution of seized property, reconciliation projects for communities, and psychotherapy for traumatized victims and witnesses. The Court and the experts that manage the Victims Trust Fund will need to decide in each case, in consultation with victims and their representatives, how the money can be used most effectively to help the victims.

3. Who are the Victims Trust Fund's Board of Directors?

The Victims Trust Fund operates under the management of a volunteer Board of Directors. Currently the members of the Board are **Dr. Oscar Arias Sánchez** (former Costa Rican President and Nobel Peace Prize recipient), **Archbishop Desmond Tutu** (Chairman of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Nobel Peace Prize recipient), **Tadeusz Mazowiecki** (former Polish Prime Minister), **Her Majesty Queen Rania of Jordan** (a human rights and development advocate), and **Simone Veil** (a Holocaust survivor and the first President of the European Parliament).

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4. Where will the money come from?

Voluntary contributions from individuals, organizations, corporations, governments and others will likely constitute the majority of the funds. The fund will also include money and other property collected through fines and forfeitures imposed by the Court on perpetrators. **Donations in U.S. dollars can be sent to the Victims Trust Fund Campaign, PO Box 15250, Washington, DC 20003.** (Contributions are not tax-deductible in the United States.)

5. Where will the money go?

The rules establishing the Victims Trust Fund provide that it is for the benefit of victims of crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court, and the families of such victims. The recipients do not have to be citizens of countries that belong to the Court. Money from the Fund might also be paid to international and non-governmental organizations for projects, such as reconciliation efforts, that will directly help the victims of these crimes and their families.

6. Who decides the recipients, scope and the nature of the awards of the Victims Trust Fund?

One of the first tasks of the Board of Directors will be to develop criteria on how the Victims Trust Fund will make its decisions. These criteria will be approved by the Assembly of States Parties, the governing body of the International Criminal Court.

7. How is the Victims Trust Fund related to the International Criminal Court? To the United Nations?

The Victims Trust Fund was created by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Like the Court, it will operate independently from the United Nations. However, the Victims Trust Fund is not the same as the Court. It cannot rely on the regular budget of the Court for its work and therefore will be largely dependent on voluntary contributions. The Fund and its staff will be based in the Hague, the Netherlands, which is also the location of the International Criminal Court.

8. When will the Victims Trust Fund start distributing funds?

The Victims Trust Fund will start distributing funds after the criteria on how the Fund will make its decisions are approved.

9. Who is the Victims Trust Fund accountable to?

The rules governing the Victims Trust Fund set out strict financial controls. The Victims Trust Fund is obliged to report every year to the Assembly of States Parties on the activities and projects of the Fund and on all offered voluntary contributions. The Finance Committee of the Court is tasked with examining the budget of the Victims Trust Fund every year and making recommendations regarding the best possible financial management of the Fund.

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