



Victims' Rights & the ICC

Past international trials have focused on prosecution: proving the guilt of the accused and meting out punishment. The ICC takes justice further by considering the needs of the victims. To restore dignity and hope to survivors of atrocities, the ICC empowers them to hold their persecutors accountable for their crimes, protects those that testify from further trauma or harassment, and enables the rebuilding of lives and communities through reparations. The ICC incorporates these victims' rights without compromising the rights of the accused, creating an unprecedented combination of retributive and reparative justice.

Empowering Victims

With the ICC, victims are no longer mere passive witnesses or uninformed bystanders. For the first time in history, survivors of atrocities can actively participate in bringing their persecutors to justice.

- Victims can submit evidence and personal testimony directly to the Court and are notified of Court proceedings and decisions.
- Victims are empowered to present their views and concerns at many stages in the proceedings, including trial, sentencing, appeal, and reparations hearings.
- To ensure that the best interests of victims are always taken into consideration, the ICC actively encourages and assists victims to have their own legal representatives.

Protecting Victims

The ICC recognizes that victims have not only survived traumatic hardships, but that many of them also testify despite the threat of retaliation. It thus includes explicit protections for "the safety, physical and psychological well-being, dignity and privacy of victims and witnesses."

- The ICC's Victims and Witnesses Unit ensures that victims are safe, receive support and counseling, and are appropriately treated in the courtroom.
- Staff in all branches of the Court will include experts on trauma and will be trained to care for the special needs of victims.
- Witnesses can have a helper (like a family member) present during testimony, and the judges must prevent their harassment or intimidation during questioning.
- At all stages of a trial, the Court will protect the confidentiality and safety of victims, witnesses, their families, and others endangered by their testimony, including relocation if necessary.

Reparations

The ICC is the first international court to enable reparations to victims recovering from atrocities. The funds provided through reparations are about more than just money: they are a vital tool for rebuilding lives and communities.

- The ICC can order those found guilty of crimes under the jurisdiction of the Court to pay reparations directly to the individuals whose lives they shattered.
- Governments, organizations and individuals can also donate to the revolutionary Victims Trust Fund of the ICC, which will help victims of crimes under the ICC's jurisdiction, and their families.
- These funds can help pay for restitution of property, medical and psychological support, care and education of orphans, community rehabilitation, and other basic needs of survivors of these horrendous crimes.