



# **GENDER JUSTICE PRACTITIONER HUB**

## **REPORT**

*PHASE ONE*

DECEMBER 2024

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**December 2024**

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## About LAW

**Legal Action Worldwide** is an independent non-profit association comprised of human rights lawyers and jurists, unified in our belief that those who have experienced human rights violations and international crimes, should receive targeted, survivor-centred, gender-competent and trauma-informed support to access the justice they want. LAW's team works on the ground in conflict contexts combining national and international expertise with a deep understanding of victim and survivor needs and wishes. This approach provides a unique opportunity to address violence experienced; to bring national, regional, and international attention to the situation and to break the cycle of impunity and recurrence. We work directly with survivors and their communities, building their capacity to meaningfully engage with justice and accountability processes. In collaboration with survivors, their communities and national justice actors, LAW develops and implements creative justice and accountability strategies, including strategic litigation at national, regional and international levels. These initiatives are driven by victim and survivor justice priorities, whether this be criminal justice, state accountability, reparations or truth and transformative justice, tailored to the needs of those who need it most.

## Acknowledgements

LAW is extremely grateful to all who took part in this research, either by attending and participating in a roundtable or by taking the time to discuss with us via a bilateral interview. The process through which this research was undertaken is a result in itself, as it allowed us to engage and connect with hundreds of committed gender justice practitioners from all over the world and start building a solid community, which is what the Gender Justice Practitioners (GJP) Hub aims to become. We are grateful for the engagement, interest, curiosity, creativity and transparency of all those involved in this process. Likewise, LAW expresses its gratitude to the members of the informal Advisory Committee for their insightful advice and guidance throughout this process. Thank you to all persons involved in the research, drafting and reviewing of this report, including LAW staff, consultants and interns. Lastly, we are grateful to the Department of Foreign Affairs of Australia for supporting this work.

## Executive Summary

The Gender Justice Practitioner (GJP) Hub is a practical step toward addressing the persistent challenges faced by practitioners working to secure gender justice in conflict and post-conflict settings. Despite significant developments in international justice, practitioners continue to grapple with challenges to effectively implement gender-competent and intersectional approaches in their work, toward obtaining better gender justice outcomes.

The GJP Hub emerges as a vital solution, designed to provide a centralised, collective and accessible platform that supports and connects these practitioners. Its value lies in 3 key branches: (1) Knowledge, (2) Network, and (3) Helpdesk. First, through the creation of a comprehensive, multilingual repository of resources, the GJP Hub will streamline access to key information, helping to overcome the current fragmentation in the access to relevant and up to date resources and information. Second, through the fostering of a dynamic and inclusive community of practice, the GJP Hub will facilitate collaboration, peer support, and the sharing of strategies, ensuring that practitioners are better equipped to tackle the complexities of working in accountability for gender-based crimes work. Finally, the GJP Hub's Helpdesk will efficiently connect practitioners with the appropriate experts and resources, ensuring that their needs are met in a timely and effective manner. This will enhance the capacity of gender justice actors to respond to the challenges they face, from local contexts to global arenas.

The operational model of the GJP Hub is both flexible and inclusive, designed to allow broad participation across multiple regions. It combines global and regional approaches, with an incubation partner providing the necessary administrative and logistical support during its early phases. This approach ensures that the GJP Hub remains responsive to the diverse and evolving needs of practitioners worldwide.

A participatory approach is embedded in the GJP Hub's development to ensure its effectiveness and relevance. A call for proposals will invite practitioners from diverse contexts to shape the GJP Hub's core branches: Knowledge, Network, and Helpdesk. This initiative will ensure that the GJP Hub reflects the specific needs and insights of the global gender justice community, fostering a sense of ownership among those it aims to support.

As the GJP Hub moves into its next phase, securing sustained support from key stakeholders—both financial and technical—will be crucial. The GJP Hub is poised to become a cornerstone in the global effort to secure gender justice, offering a practical, collaborative, and impactful platform that addresses the critical needs of practitioners on the frontlines of this important work.

## Recommendations

1. **Establishment and strategic planning.** The first priority is the establishment of the GJP Hub, which should be followed by the development of a comprehensive strategic plan. This plan will define the scope and content of the GJP Hub's branches, ensuring that its activities are focused and aligned with its core mission. The strategic plan will serve as a roadmap for the GJP Hub's future operations, setting clear objectives and identifying priority areas for intervention.
2. **Management of expectations and focused impact.** Recognising that the GJP Hub will not be able to address all the gaps, challenges, and barriers that practitioners face in accountability work for gender-based crimes, the next phase must include a strategy for managing expectations. This strategy will offer advice and best practices to ensure that stakeholders understand the GJP Hub's capacity and limitations, while continuing to build and maintain support for its mission. Clear communication about the GJP Hub's focus areas will be essential to sustain momentum and engagement.
3. **Operationalisation.** The operationalisation of the GJP Hub must be a priority within the next six months, and it should be guided by the findings of the current report. A key aspect of this phase is establishing a meaningful presence in locations within the Global South, ensuring that the GJP Hub is accessible and relevant to practitioners working in those regions. This presence will enhance the GJP Hub's ability to address context-specific challenges and leverage local expertise.
4. **The GJP Hub is a collective project.** The process of setting up the GJP Hub must be community driven. In the same way that the consultation process resulted in the identification of a wide community of practitioners, the implementation phase must enhance such connections and networks. Therefore, giving ownership to those for whom the GJP Hub seeks to serve, is a key part of such an approach. The call for proposals shall ensure wide access and participation, particularly from practitioners of the global south.
5. **Addressing limitations and gaps in the research.** The gaps identified during Phase 1 of this initiative must be addressed through further research.
6. **Building sustainability through funding and support.** In the next phase, a critical focus for the GJP Hub must be on building its long-term sustainability. This will require securing access to diverse funding opportunities, which will be essential for supporting the GJP Hub's ongoing activities and expanding its impact. Developing a robust funding strategy will help to ensure that the GJP Hub can continue to operate effectively and settle itself.

## List of Acronyms

Gender Justice Practitioner Hub – GJP Hub

Conflict Related Sexual Violence – CRSV

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – DFAT

Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia – ECCC

Lesbian, Gay Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual and others  
- LGBTQIA+

Inter-American Court of Human Rights -IACtHR

International Criminal Court – ICC

International Committee of the Red Cross - ICRC

International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda – ICTR

International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia - ICTY

Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court – OTP

Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative – PSVI

Sexual orientation, gender identity, expression, or sexual characteristics – SOGIESC

UN Team of Experts of Sexual Violence in Conflict - TOE

Women Peace and Security – WPS

UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office – FCDO



## Background

LAW, with the support of the government of Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), began implementing the GJP Hub initiative in 2023, as a flagship project within Australia's National Plan on Women Peace and Security (WPS). This report is the product of the findings of the first phase of this project, which set out to respond the following questions:

- Is there a need for a GJP Hub? What is its purpose?
- What should its core values be?
- Who is it for?
- Where should it be established and how should it operate?

At the outset of the research phase, the GJP Hub was envisioned as a centre mandated to support and connect practitioners involved in securing gender justice for core international crimes. Through collaboration and coordination, and by leveraging decades of experience at national and international levels, the GJP Hub will provide practical tools and assistance to practitioners to help strengthen efforts in pursuit of gender justice. It will do so by:

- Creating a well-recognised, practitioner-focused, centre of expertise to facilitate the work of core-crimes accountability actors and assist them in promoting more gender-just outcomes.
- Developing a comprehensive network connecting practitioners working on gender issues across different accountability mandates, in national and international jurisdictions, to facilitate the sharing of expertise, experiences and lessons learned, as well as to provide support to gender justice actors.
- Establishing a mechanism for collating and extending best practices and making them available to new and existing accountability mandates, and for promoting the progressive development of approaches over time.
- Dedicating resources for practical gender informed tools to facilitate the work of practitioners.
- Promoting coordination in building capacity of core crimes accountability actors to pursue gender justice; and
- Promoting more effective engagement among scholars working on gender justice research and practitioners involved in accountability processes.

This report concludes Phase 1—research and consultation—of the GJP Hub initiative and establishes the findings and recommendations for a way forward to establish the GJP Hub.

## I. Introduction

Historically, justice and accountability processes have not served marginalised victims and survivors well. There has been little recognition of the gendered impacts of violence, especially where this occurs during armed conflict, and few proactive strategies to address structural discrimination. Women and individuals of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, and sex characteristics are adversely affected by discriminatory gender norms, with children and people with disabilities, among other groups, at increased risk of having their voices silenced and their experiences overlooked. There is growing awareness that correlated gender norms also negatively impact men and boys.

Some momentum for change arose in the 1990s as a result of heightened attention to the issue of sexual violence during the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and, subsequently, the genocide in Rwanda. Important steps forward in addressing conflict-related sexual violence were made in practice and helpful foundational jurisprudence was generated during the related accountability processes. However, overall, past accountability processes have failed to reflect a comprehensive and effective gender analysis. They have often overlooked or mischaracterised gendered harms; failed to consistently surface and address gender discrimination driving harms; created (or failed to overcome) barriers experienced by women and others adversely affected by gender discrimination that prevent them contributing evidence and participating as witnesses; inadequately conveyed the gravity of harms experienced by victims/survivors affected by gender discrimination; and failed to create a foundation for reparations for victims/survivors who are disadvantaged due to discriminatory gender norms.

While rhetoric supporting accountability for conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) has increased, it has been challenging for accountability actors to operationalise this commitment in their work. Meanwhile, the many other gendered impacts of conflict—beyond CRSV—remain largely unaddressed. A significant aspect of the challenge for justice actors is understanding how structural gender factors operate in a particular geographical/cultural context and adjusting justice-seeking methodologies accordingly. Even when there is a commitment, difficulties arise in accessing the right experience, expertise, resources and precedents to effectively support inclusive justice processes.

The challenge of integrating an intersectional gender analysis as a core part of accountability work applies to all accountability processes for international crimes and other serious rights violations related to conflict. Currently, effective implementation of a comprehensive intersectional gender analysis remains on the periphery of the accountability field. There are few precedents to guide practitioners, who are typically thrust into work on a new conflict context without the time or expertise to develop a baseline understanding of the relevant structural gender factors. There is an urgent need for practical tools that highlight the importance of intersectional gender analyses and facilitate practical implementation.

Furthermore, with each new accountability process undertaken, there is a risk of the same mistakes and omissions being repeated. While multiple efforts have been made to record best practices in relation to investigating—and to a lesser degree prosecuting—CRSV crimes, these insights are not always utilised by those assigned to new documentation mandates, and there are few tools to assist when it comes to broader gender justice issues. The conflicts in Ukraine, Palestine, and Sudan are recent examples in a long series of situations underscoring the urgent need for more effective and coordinated approaches to channelling comprehensive gender expertise into accountability processes from the outset.

Moreover, contexts related to migration, climate emergencies, social protest and organised crime overlap with scenarios of protracted conflicts and war. This results new forms of violence, including human trafficking, enforced disappearance, femicide, and reproductive violence. The disproportionate impacts on women, girls, LGBTQIA+ persons, indigenous communities, and Afro-descendant peoples still need to be fully analysed and addressed.

The GJP Hub initiative was conceived in this context. It was conceptualised in two phases. Phase 1 focused on answering the question of whether a GJP Hub was needed, and if so, what should it do and for whom (see Background section). Phase 1 was the consultation, trust building, mapping and needs assessment phase. Phase 2 will be the development and delivery phase, informed by the results of Phase 1.

This report is the result of Phase 1. It identifies the challenges and opportunities that exist in relation to gender justice accountability work and proposes ways for the GJP Hub to bridge gaps and implement solutions.

This report is divided into six sections. The first section explains the methodology of the extensive research and consultations undertaken. The second section summarises gender justice developments in recent decades, noting the challenges and opportunities missed. The third section sets out the challenges that practitioners who participated in this research identified in relation to their work in securing gender justice. The fourth section sets out the opportunities that arise for an initiative such as the GJP Hub. The fifth section proposes a roadmap for a GJP Hub and answers the research questions discussed above. The final section sets out conclusions and recommendations.

This report uses the following key definitions:

**Practitioner:** refers to justice professionals or other qualified individuals actively working on accountability processes (whether criminal or non-criminal) addressing core international crimes, or who are otherwise engaged in securing gender justice for grave human rights violations and abuses in context of conflict, repression and/or war. These practitioners could be legal professionals, investigators, prosecutors, civil society litigators, or any other experts involved in accountability processes at national, regional

and international levels. Their work focuses on ensuring justice is achieved for victims and survivors of violence and discrimination, particularly in conflict or post-conflict settings. While the initial idea behind the GJP Hub initiative focused on legal practitioners (and in particular, criminal prosecutors), it quickly became apparent that a more flexible and nuanced definition was more appropriate recognising the active role played by a wide range of actors in accountability processes for core international crimes.

**Gender Justice:** refers to the fair and equitable treatment of all individuals, regardless of gender, within justice and accountability processes. This involves recognising and addressing the gendered impacts of violence and discrimination, particularly those faced by women, girls, LGBTQIA+ persons, and other marginalised groups. Gender justice aims to rectify the inequalities and injustices that stem from discriminatory gender norms and ensure that these groups have their voices heard and experiences acknowledged in legal and accountability frameworks. This includes addressing issues such as conflict-related gender violence, structural discrimination, the broader gendered impacts of conflict, and other forms of violence.

## II. Methodology

LAW staff undertook this research between January 2023 and July 2024, with oversight by the Executive Director and with guidance and advice from an Advisory Committee.<sup>1</sup> Approximately 828 individuals were consulted, and 172 key initiatives/organisations were reviewed. Research processes included a series of roundtables in key locations; a series of bilateral interviews; and mapping and analysis of existing initiatives, organisations and projects around the world. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

### A. Mapping existing initiatives

A core component of the research was extensive mapping of key national and international stakeholders and initiatives focused on gender justice, particularly in conflict settings. The purpose of the mapping was to better understand the gaps in current initiatives, projects and organisations—and to better inform the mandate of the GJP Hub. Mapping included national, regional and international civil society organisations, academic institutions, international courts, tribunals and investigative/inquiry mechanisms, as well as government initiatives (such as the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative, led by the UK Government).

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<sup>1</sup> The advisory committee included Michelle Jarvis, Deputy Director, International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to assist in the investigation and prosecution of persons responsible for the most serious crimes under International Law committed in the Syrian Arab Republic; Patricia Sellers, University of Oxford, Special Advisor to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court on Slavery Crimes; Madeleine Reiss, Secretary General, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), and Professor Susana SaCouto, Director, War Crimes Research Office of the Washington College of Law, American University. LAW would also like to thank Daniela Kravetz, former Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, and Lily Kather, co-founder of the Emergent Justice Collective who attended early meetings of the Advisory Committee.

The team mapped 89 civil society organisations and initiatives, 23 academic institutions, 19 multinational or international organisations or entities (including UN actors), and 8 international courts/inquiry or investigative mechanisms, and 33 initiatives led by member states.

## **B. Bilateral interviews**

The team conducted semi-structured bilateral interviews with leading legal experts, practitioners and stakeholders working at national, regional and international levels in gender, justice, international criminal law, humanitarian law, and human rights. The team developed and utilised a guiding questionnaire for a number of these interviews, while others encompassed broader discussions about the GJP Hub initiative. In total, the team conducted 26 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with practitioners bringing expertise in geographical contexts from Africa, Europe, North America, Latin America and the Asia Pacific regions.

## **C. Regional Roundtables**

Parallel to the above, the team organised and convened eight regional roundtables with practitioners from UN institutions, civil society organisations, governmental institutions, the judiciary, academia, and victim and survivor-led organisations. Roundtables took place in Beirut, Lebanon; Bangkok, Thailand; The Hague, The Netherlands; Geneva, Switzerland; New York, United States; Bogotá, Colombia; and Nairobi, Kenya. In total, roundtables gathered around 300 participants, including national and international prosecutors, litigators, academics, civil society representatives, UN representatives and survivors.

In addition, in September 2023, LAW led a closed-door workshop at the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) on the topic of the GJP Hub initiative. Participants included representatives of the following FCDO units and teams: PSVI; the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the United Nations in Geneva; the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the United Nations in New York; Women and Girls; Mass Atrocity Prevention; Sanctions; Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, and LGBT Rights.

In January 2024, the Gender and International Criminal Law Conference co-organised by LAW included a dedicated session on the GJP Hub initiative to leverage the extensive expertise present in this space. Over the course of two days, practitioners, survivors, academics, and activists came together to share insights, practices, and experiences. The hybrid format of the conference allowed more than 400 people to register online, while more than 100 attended the Conference in person. The conference brought together leading international criminal, humanitarian and human rights law practitioners, activists

and academics, as well as survivors, to discuss a broad range of issues concerning gender dimensions of international criminal law.

## **D. Limitations in the methodology**

The methodology designed for the Phase 1 of the GJP Hub aimed at gathering as much input, feedback and information as possible to inform the gaps and opportunities for the GJP Hub. However, LAW has identified and considered a few limitations when interpreting the findings and results of this phase of the research. Phase 2 of the GJP Hub initiative will include efforts to address these gaps, better ensuring an inclusive approach.

First, a limitation identified at the outset of the research was the breadth of the action being undertaken to address and secure gender justice globally. Around the world, there are thousands of initiatives designed, in whole or in part, to dismantle gender stereotypes or to improve the lives of those negatively impacted by gender norms. Some explicitly use legal frameworks, while others undertake critical work outside formal justice mechanisms that ultimately contribute to transformational change that would be characterised as justice in other contexts. In some places, initiatives that primarily seek to address other forms of discrimination may ultimately challenge harmful gendered conduct. The incredible number of initiatives being undertaken means that a comprehensive mapping or analysis is not achievable.

In recognising this, LAW's research team sought to prioritise research into initiatives or commentary with a clear link to a) gender; b) core international crimes; and c) the experiences of those involved in securing justice for survivors of gendered crimes occurring in contexts of oppression or armed conflict. Information was not excluded unless it very clearly fell outside the scope of the research.

The above is especially relevant in the context of the mapping exercise. A further measure adopted to facilitate analysis of the information mapped was a 'tag' system whereby information gathered would be 'tagged' to allow for easier filtering and review. The 'tags' used covered geographic region, areas of law, thematic focus, and the nature of activities being undertaken by the organisation mapped or through the initiative in question:

- Regional focus is categorised based on the UN regional system (i.e., Africa, Asia Pacific (APAC), Eastern Europe, Latin American and Caribbean Group (LAC), and Western Europe and Other Groups (WEOG)).
- Areas of law include International Criminal Law (ICL), International Humanitarian Law (IHL), International Human Rights Law (IHRL), transitional justice, domestic/national laws/ legal frameworks.
- Thematic focuses include general categories as Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), gender discrimination, women's rights, and then specific violations/thematic focuses as torture, genocide, reparations, Women Peace and Security, children's rights, LGBTQIA+ rights, slavery, reproductive rights, human trafficking, terrorism, military, others.



- Activities undertaken by the initiative or the key focus of that initiative, including the International Criminal Court (ICC), the International Court of Justice (ICJ), domestic/national litigation, regional litigation, capacity building, UN mechanisms, funding, and advocacy.

This approach, while useful for a preliminary analysis, is ultimately limited as it relies on a simplified and subjective assessment by LAW's research team, which may not fully capture the nuances of the work being undertaken—especially when this information was not made explicit in the materials available through desk-based research. To address this, LAW sought to be as inclusive as possible in tagging and has avoided preparing statistical analysis of the mapped information. Rather, LAW has used the mapping process to identify broad trends, gaps and opportunities.

The research team also encountered a limitation in accessing resources and information from organisations and actors whose work is not conducted in English, Spanish, or French. That said, LAW's team acknowledges that the majority of resources identified are in English. This linguistic constraint might have excluded stakeholders or initiatives that operate primarily in other languages, thus potentially overlooking perspectives and contributions from non-Western contexts. Additionally, the nature of the mapping research might have restricted the depth of information available, as some organisations and initiatives may not have all relevant data publicly accessible, leading to possible gaps.

Given the lack of capacity to map and contact practitioners from every country and region—the team has undertaken additional research efforts for specific countries that will allow the identification of practitioners and institutions they might not have engaged with during Phase 1 of the initiative.

Additional challenges arose related to bi-lateral interviews. Many experts and practitioners had limited availability, and, in some cases, LAW did not receive responses to interview requests. To better gather feedback from practitioners on an individual basis, LAW continued the bilateral interview process through December 2024.

### **III. Gender justice in focus: key developments and issues**

Over the past thirty years, there have been significant developments within the field of international justice in addressing gender-based crimes—in particular, sexual violence taking place in armed conflict. Historically overlooked and under-prosecuted, these crimes are now increasingly recognised and codified as serious violations of international law. This shift has been driven by a combination of the development of robust legal frameworks, growing global awareness, and the concerted advocacy efforts from feminist movements, NGOs, and international organisations.

Notwithstanding these important developments—and the incredible efforts undertaken to secure progress—fundamental issues remain, and opportunities have been missed to

advance and secure better gender justice outcomes. The consequences of this are manifold—individual victims, survivors, their families and communities may be excluded from justice altogether, gendered drivers of harm may be missed, and wider transitional justice processes may fail to address underlying gendered issues. In some contexts, hard-won legal frameworks incorporating gendered crimes may themselves be undermined or diminished because of insufficient gender analysis and meaningful participation of survivors in accountability processes.

The work of the International Criminal Court (ICC) provides an important case study. Building on the legal frameworks and precedents set through the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, the establishment of the ICC in 2002 marked a milestone in the fight against gender-based crimes. The Rome Statute explicitly codified the broadest range of sexual and gender-based crimes in the history of international law through the explicit proscription of rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, and other forms of sexual violence as war crimes and crimes against humanity, and, in some cases, genocide. This recognition within the Rome Statute has provided a critical legal basis for the prosecution of gender-based crimes and has underscored the international community's commitment to addressing these atrocities. The convictions in the cases of Bosco Ntaganda<sup>2</sup> and Dominic Ongwen<sup>3</sup> for gender-based crimes have contributed to the corpus juris of international jurisprudence. Ntaganda was found guilty on the charges of rape and sexual slavery, and the ICC established that crimes of sexual nature committed by members of armed groups against their own can constitute war crimes.<sup>4</sup> The conviction of Dominic Ongwen for gender-based crimes was the first time the crimes of forced pregnancy and forced marriage were successfully prosecuted.<sup>5</sup> A vital recent development was the 2023 revision of the Office of the Prosecutor's Policy on Sexual and Gender-Based Crimes, which provides thoughtful and detailed guidance with regard to gender in the context of the work of the Office.<sup>6</sup>

However, the ICC framework has fallen short of achieving gender justice in several places. Commentators note the failure by the Office of the Prosecutor to specifically include relevant charges in the case against Thomas Lubanga<sup>7</sup> notwithstanding the

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<sup>2</sup> The Prosecutor v. Ferdinand Nahimana, Jean-Bosco Barayagwiza, Hassan Ngeze (Judgment and Sentence), ICTR-99-52-T, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), 3 December 2003, <https://www.refworld.org/jurisprudence/caselaw/ict/2003/en/91852> [accessed 06 September 2024]

<sup>3</sup> The Prosecutor v. Dominic Ongwen (Trial Judgment) ICC-02/04-01/15, International Criminal Court, 4 February 2021 <https://www.icc-cpi.int/court-record/icc-02/04-01/15-1762-red> [accessed 06 September 2024]

<sup>4</sup> ICC, Appeals Chamber, Situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the Case of The Prosecutor v. Bosco Ntaganda, Judgment on the appeal of Mr Ntaganda against the "Second decision on the Defence's challenge to the jurisdiction of the Court in respect of Counts 6 and 9, para. 63.

<sup>5</sup> ICC, Trial Chamber IX, Situation in Uganda in the case of The Prosecutor v. Dominic Ongwen, Trial Judgment, paras. 2741, 2751.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/2023-12/2023-policy-gender-en-web.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in the case of the Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, ICC-01/04-01/06, International Criminal Court (ICC), 14 March 2012, <https://www.refworld.org/jurisprudence/caselaw/icc/2012/en/85486> [accessed 03 October 2024]



importance of sexual and gender-based violence to the charge of war crimes of enlisting and conscripting children.<sup>8</sup> In the Katanga trial,<sup>9</sup> while charges of rape and sexual slavery as war crimes and crimes against humanity were included, just three witnesses testified to their rape and sexual enslavement during proceedings, and the Court was not satisfied that sexual violence had been part of the common plan for which Katanga was successfully convicted. Critics have also noted several instances in which the Court overlooked opportunities to engage with basic definitions and clarify the law, while elsewhere its decisions perpetuated outdated understandings of gender and gendered crimes (e.g., that sexual violence is a spontaneous act).<sup>10</sup>

Comparable concerns exist in regional and national contexts. Critical developments and important legal precedents indicate that progress in gender justice is possible but underscore outstanding concerns and opportunities missed that deny survivors of gendered crimes justice.

In Latin America, there have been significant developments in normative and jurisprudential standards for the investigation, prosecution and punishment of gender-based violence in contexts of armed conflict and repression, and a number of landmark judgments at regional (Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACtHR)) and national fora (for example, case of Sepur Zarco in Guatemala).<sup>11,12</sup> These important developments, however, are the exception, rather than the norm. Commentators highlight that progress has been slow—notably, Colombia’s Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) has been criticised for its failure to meaningfully address conflict-related sexual violence, as well as for the extensive delays in initiating Macrocase 11, which focuses on sexual and gender-based violence. Critics indicate that delays are linked to historical marginalisation of gendered violence, evidentiary challenges, institutional delays, political sensitivities, and the need for a gender-sensitive approach to transitional justice.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Interview with Patricia Viseur Sellers, international criminal lawyer, former Legal Advisor for Gender and a prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Available at: <https://www.fidh.org/en/region/Africa/democratic-republic-of-congo/Crimes-of-sexual-violence-and-the>

<sup>9</sup> *Situation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in the case of the Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo*, ICC-01/04-01/06, International Criminal Court (ICC), 14 March 2012, <https://www.refworld.org/jurisprudence/caselaw/icc/2012/en/85486> [accessed 03 October 2024]

<sup>10</sup> McIntyre GL. The Pace of Progress: Addressing Crimes of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in the Generation After Rome. *AJIL Unbound*. 2018; 112:177-181. doi:10.1017/aju.2018.52

<sup>11</sup> Sentencia Esteelmer Francisco Reyes Girón, Heriberto Valdez Asig, Tribunal Primero de Sentencia Penal, Narcoactividad y Delitos contra el Ambiente, C-01076-2012-00021, 26 de febrero de 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Other examples in other jurisdictions include: Corte IDH, Caso Rosendo Cantú y otra vs. México, excepción preliminar, fondo, reparaciones y costas, sentencia de 31 de agosto de 2010, Serie C No. 216.; Corte IDH, Caso del Penal Miguel Castro Castro vs. Perú, fondo, reparaciones y costas, sentencia de 25 de noviembre de 2006. Serie C No. 160.; Corte IDH, Caso Fernández Ortega y otros vs. México, excepción preliminar, fondo, reparaciones y costas, sentencia de 30 de agosto de 2010, Serie C No. 215.; Corte IDH, Caso De la Masacre de las Dos Erres vs. Guatemala, excepción preliminar, fondo, reparaciones y costas, sentencia de 24 de noviembre de 2009, Serie C No. 211.

<sup>13</sup> Schulz, P., & Kreft, A. (2022, February 24). Accountability for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. *Oxford Research Encyclopaedia of International Studies*. Retrieved 2 Oct. 2024, from <https://oxfordre.com/internationalstudies/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.001.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-702>.

In Africa, despite extensive ratification of the Maputo Protocol (Protocol To The African Charter On Human And Peoples' Rights On The Rights Of Women In Africa), which generates multiple obligations on states parties with respect to the prevention and punishment of discrimination against women, including violence against women, there remain concerns about its effective and consistent implementation.<sup>14</sup> While there have also been important steps forward in prosecuting and securing convictions for gendered crimes, such as the conviction of Thomas Kwoyelo, a former commander of the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, and the decision of Kenya's judicial authorities to charge police officers for the killing of Baby Samantha Pendo during the 2017 post-electoral violence context as a crime against humanity, there are also notable failures in pursuing gender justice. One example is the Minova trial in DRC, where just two of 39 individuals tried for rape were successfully convicted. In this context, as in many others, the ambition of securing gender justice does not match the justice outcomes secured.

A crucial factor underlying many missed opportunities is the absence or underrepresentation of women in senior prosecutorial roles and leadership roles within accountability mechanisms. While there have been positive developments in some contexts (in its 2023 annual report, the ICC Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) notes its ongoing commitment to bringing more women into senior managerial positions and the appointment of four senior coordinators who are women, including one at P5 level focused on gender-based crimes) leadership positions within accountability processes remain dominated by men.

## IV. Challenges, barriers and obstacles faced by practitioners in securing gender justice

While significant progress has been made in understanding how gendered violence operates in times of armed conflict and repression, and some promising legal and jurisprudential developments have occurred at the international, regional and national levels, immense challenges remain in securing effective gender justice outcomes for survivors of these crimes and violations.

Based on Phase 1 research, LAW has identified **five sets of challenges** facing practitioners and those seeking to support survivors in securing gender justice. While many of the issues practitioners raised relate to specific national contexts and situations, LAW identified key commonalities and grouped these issues accordingly. —Initial analysis indicates that the GJP could play a key role in addressing these challenges.

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<sup>14</sup> Westminster Foundation for Democracy, "Reflecting on two decades of the Maputo Protocol promoting women's rights in Africa", 11 July 2023, available at: <https://www.wfd.org/commentary/reflecting-two-decades-maputo-protocol-promoting-womens-rights-africa>.

Participants underscored the deeply entrenched gender norms that exacerbate existing challenges, or generate new/ additional challenges, in access to justice for women, girls and members of LGBTQIA+ communities. However, they also noted the significant and persistent barriers that prevent access to justice, in conflict contexts generally, such as non-functioning justice mechanisms or legal frameworks, financial costs in accessing justice, remoteness of justice, lack of protections for victims and witnesses participating in justice processes, and corruption. Many of these challenges have consistently been well documented by credible civil society organisations and experts (including UN Special Procedures), and significant action is being taken to address these issues. While a future GJP Hub would necessarily need to tailor specific interventions to address these issues and would likely support new and existing initiatives, were the GJP Hub to focus on these challenges as core problems it seeks to address, this may result in duplication of existing work by other organisations.

The **five sets of challenges** where the GJP Hub could play an important and distinct role are as follows:

## **A. Institutional resistance to address gendered impacts of violence**

Throughout the consultation phase for the GJP Hub initiative, one of the most prevalent challenges voiced by justice practitioners is the profound sense of isolation that accompanies being an often singular or insufficiently supported advocate for the integration of gender discrimination impacts across institutional operations. Practitioners within governmental bodies tasked with investigating crimes and human rights violations, UN institutions, and the judiciary frequently encounter institutional cultures that marginalise "gender issues," relegating them to a lower priority at both strategic and operational levels. This marginalisation stems, in part, from the false dichotomy that distinguishes between so-called "serious" human rights violations—such as enforced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, torture, and massacres—and those deemed "incidental," with sexual violence often falling into the latter category.

This flawed perspective fails to recognise that all major human rights violations that can amount to international crimes inherently possess gendered dimensions and impacts, which are a direct product of structural gender discrimination. As one roundtable participant poignantly observed, *"Unless there are specific methodologies and questions to inquire about gendered impacts, what happens to women in conflict continues to be subsumed under the 'big' crime or violation, because that is what is deemed important."*

This narrow focus not only perpetuates the invisibility of gender-specific harms but also undermines the very principles of comprehensive justice that these institutions purport to uphold. This is exacerbated by a wider lack of gender competence throughout institutions, leaving many practitioners unable to identify, understand and analyse the gender dimensions, harms and impacts of a wide range of criminalised conduct. In some places, this is a result of outdated views or understandings of gender and a failure to fully embed

or mainstream key academic and policy developments (such as the best practices outlined in the raft of policies developed by the ICC OTP).

Despite a number of important steps forward in securing gender justice and improving understanding of gender in the context of armed conflict, a core challenge facing practitioners is a growing antipathy to initiatives and activities designed to mainstream or prioritise ‘gender.’ Participants highlighted increased hostility—at local, national, regional and international levels, including on social media platforms—to discussion around gender and related issues, such as reproductive rights or LGBTQIA+ topics. ‘Gender’ can be seen as a hindrance at an international level—and as a dangerous topic for practitioners in the field.

Additionally, even though there is an increasing rhetorical commitment to incorporating a gender perspective in both institutional practices and mission-driven work, practitioners report that this often does not translate into substantive change. The mandate to implement a gender perspective, in the absence of concrete guidelines, dedicated internal capacity-building, and precise methodologies, becomes little more than a specified objective on paper that does not translate to practice. Practitioners often find themselves perceived as institutional burdens, facing resistance when advocating for the meaningful application of a gender perspective both within the institution and in its external operations.

Moreover, the presence of committed professionals with extensive expertise in gender justice—many of whom gained their experience in feminist movements or civil society organisations—within these governmental, judicial, or international decision-making spaces has not necessarily facilitated transformative change. On the contrary, these individuals frequently confront institutional misogyny, inequality, and overt resistance to their knowledge, experience, and explicit calls for the inclusion of gender justice considerations. Their efforts to shift the paradigm toward a more inclusive and equitable approach to justice are too often met with scepticism, dismissal, hostility, or backlash further entrenching the marginalisation of gender issues in the pursuit of justice.

A number of practical consequences can be linked to these biases. Practitioners noted that, within institutions investigating serious human rights violations and international crimes, gender advisors are held to a higher standard than their counterparts focused on other topics. Core concepts are often misunderstood or conflated with other terminology—practitioners highlighted the conflation of ‘gender’ with ‘women’s rights’ as well as equation of ‘gender-based violence’ with ‘conflict-related sexual violence’ or ‘rape’—resulting in specific gendered harms falling outside these definitions being overlooked. Distinctions are drawn between gendered violence occurring within and outside armed conflict—hindering consistent and comprehensive recognition of important commonalities and root causes of gendered violence, including harmful gender norms, stereotypes, and assumptions that underpin social and structural discrimination and further silo gender justice from broader justice strategies. Gendered crimes also risk being siloed more generally, resulting in particular groups or conduct being overlooked altogether, as well as sexist, violent targeting of activists working on gender.

Practitioners also noted that a siloed approach to gender occurs in respect of other ‘at risk’ groups, such as children, the elderly, and those with disabilities—resulting in those with intersectional concerns being overlooked altogether. In some places, gender and child rights issues are addressed concurrently. However, despite the important intersections between these two topics, this approach sometimes results in an incomplete consideration of both issues, primarily due to siloisation and limited resources.

Practitioners further reported that they experience significant isolation and mental burdens as a result of their work.

Finally, there are deep implications for the justice outcomes of survivors and victims of gendered crimes and violations. When institutions fail to prioritise gender justice and do not recognise the expertise, voices, and experiences of practitioners who advocate for it at an internal institutional level, they contribute to the perpetuation of systemic inequalities. This neglect directly impacts victims’ right to access justice effectively, leaving their needs unmet and their experiences marginalised.

## **B. Increasing rise of anti-gender discourses and narratives**

There is an increasing internationally organised group of actors seeking to restrict, undermine, and in some cases, reverse the legal gains that the feminist and LGBTQIA+ movements have achieved in the last decades. The so-called “anti-gender movement” continues to push for regressive frameworks and understandings that adversely affect the rights of women and LGBTQIA+ persons and threaten the existing legal and jurisprudential frameworks protecting these rights.

During the consultations, participants discussed the need for greater coordination in countering the rhetoric of the “anti-gender movement.” Such coordination would help ensure that harmful rhetoric does not result in a reversal of key developments in gender justice. It would also support practitioners bringing cases against perpetrators of gendered crimes in places where there may be opposition to the wider concept of gender.

Mobilisation campaigns by anti-gender groups focus on fighting so-called ‘gender ideology,’ the legal and policy framework protecting sexual and reproductive health and rights, and LGBTQIA+ persons’ rights. These groups are not only well-organised and well-funded, but they are also increasingly connected across regions. Their efforts operate at both national and international levels, where they leverage their influence to promote anti-democratic narratives that are gaining traction in various parts of the world.

During discussions at roundtables and the Gender and International Criminal Law (ICL) Conference, participants emphasised that these anti-gender groups are thriving within a broader context of rising authoritarianism. One roundtable participant expressed: *“Women’s rights are not high on the agenda of governments, it is always the first thing to be negotiated, eliminated or deemed unimportant. The word ‘gender’ is being questioned.”*



Governments adopting anti-gender rhetoric further amplify threats to the rights of women and LGBTQIA+ people. In regions facing significant insecurity and high levels of criminality, such as Latin America and South Asia, narratives advocating for punitive, anti-democratic, and anti-human rights policies often incorporate anti-gender ideologies as a core element.

One of the consequences of this hostile environment is public officials not only lacking an understanding of gender discrimination but also actively opposing efforts to address it. In such contexts, the pursuit of gender justice becomes increasingly challenging. Furthermore, the growing influence of anti-gender governments is contributing to the shrinking of civic space, making it harder for activists to participate, demonstrate, and demand accountability from authorities. This escalating repression increases security risks for activists and their families, while also exacerbating the scarcity of available funding, further constraining their efforts to advance gender justice.

### **C. Fragmented knowledge on gender justice**

A recurring gap practitioners identified during the consultation process referred to the lack of access to existing information in the field of gender justice. Despite the wealth of information available on prevention and responses on gender-based violence—including, but not limited to extensive literature, databases, jurisprudence, reports, and legal and policy briefings—these resources remain significantly fragmented across various platforms and websites. Participants underscored the fact that knowledge and good practices around the investigation and prosecution of international crimes from a gender perspective have been generated, but much of the information is inaccessible—either stored behind a paywall or in a piecemeal manner.

One of the primary challenges is the lack of a centralised, quality controlled, and accessible repository that consolidates information and facilitates gender analysis as a core component of accountability work. This dispersion of resources means that practitioners often spend considerable time and effort searching for the information they need—and often cannot find it. For example, legal practitioners expressed that when searching jurisprudence on best practices or legal standards for the investigation of gender-based crimes, they must navigate through multiple databases, each housing different types of information across different jurisdictions. They struggle to find relevant information or reports that are scattered across various CSO websites, government agencies, and international organisations.

Moreover, the issue of scattered information is compounded by the diverse formats in which data is presented. Gender justice resources are often found in different languages, formats, and disciplines (e.g., law, sociology, public health), which can be a significant barrier for practitioners who may not have the expertise or resources to navigate these diverse sources effectively. Even when information is available online, it may not be accessible to those without reliable internet access or those who face language barriers.

This digital divide means that practitioners in regions with unreliable internet connections are often unable to access the wealth of information available globally, thereby limiting their ability to effectively integrate such knowledge in their practice.

The rapid pace at which new information and resources are generated can overwhelm practitioners who are already struggling to manage and process existing materials. With the continuous production of reports, studies, and legal briefs, there is a constant influx of new information on which practitioners must stay updated. Without a centralised system to organise and classify the information available, valuable insights and data can easily be lost in the noise, further impeding gender justice efforts.

A related consequence of a fragmented knowledge base is the increased difficulty in identifying patterns of conduct and root causes of gendered violence. As noted above, in drawing distinctions between gendered crimes occurring during conflict, and those occurring in peace time, or between crimes happening in different locations, the full extent and nature of gendered crimes can be missed.

## **D. Gaps in interdisciplinary approaches to gender justice**

Gender-based crimes as expressions of violence in armed conflicts and repressive contexts must be considered in light of systems of oppression that have differentiated impacts on feminised, racialised and oppressed individuals. Access to justice and accountability and effective justice outcomes are therefore elusive for these victims if gender justice practitioners do not adopt an effective interdisciplinary approach. Participants in roundtables and bilateral interviews expressed the need to integrate interdisciplinary approaches to accountability work:

*To make progress in gender justice, an interdisciplinary approach is needed. This could include, for example, facilitating exchanges between prosecutors and psychosocial experts to help them understand the impact of trauma, with forensic experts to assist prosecutors in documenting a crime scene in a rape and femicide case, or with experts familiar with the use of satellite imagery to identify linkage and pattern evidence.*

*Spaces for exchange of experiences and learning with colleagues in the region should go beyond women lawyers, litigators and legal professionals, and include other professionals whose knowledge in the context of gender justice is relevant, including psychosocial experts, sociologists, forensic experts, and so on.*

Engaging with experts from various fields is crucial, not just for the purpose of identifying qualified witnesses to testify in gender-based crime cases, but also for the broader objective of educating legal practitioners. The complexities of gender-based crimes and violence and the ways we respond to them go beyond the legal framework, involving psychological, sociological, and public health dimensions that require interdisciplinary

insights. Furthermore, leveraging interdisciplinary approaches can also help bridge the gap identified practitioners between academia and practice.

By engaging in effective dialogue with experts from these diverse fields, legal professionals can gain a deeper understanding of the multifaceted nature and the way gendered violence operates in certain contexts. This holistic approach enables them to better appreciate the broader social, cultural, and psychological contexts in which these crimes occur, leading to more nuanced strategies to respond to it and its structural nature.

An interdisciplinary approach also plays a key role in developing our collective understanding of gender-based crimes as a structural phenomenon. When legal practitioners collaborate with experts in fields such as psychology, public health, sociology, and gender studies, they can contribute to a more comprehensive body of knowledge that reflects the true complexity of the violence and the contexts in which it operates. This collaboration not only enhances the legal community's ability to address gender-based violence effectively but also enriches the broader discourse on how such crimes are understood and addressed at societal levels. By integrating diverse perspectives, the legal profession can help to develop more effective prevention strategies, improve victim and survivor support mechanisms, and ensure that justice is served in a way that fully acknowledges the wider impact of gender-based violence.

## **E. Security concerns—physical and online**

Practitioners across multiple regions voiced concerns about persistent security challenges. They identified both physical and digital threats, each with profound implications for their personal, family and community safety and effectiveness of their work. These concerns are distinct from and additional to similar security concerns facing lay clients/ direct survivors of core international crimes.

Practitioners are often exposed to direct physical violence and intimidation, especially in contexts where gender-based crimes are prevalent, state actors are complicit in the abuses, or there is complete refusal to discuss and name gender-based crimes. One practitioner from the Middle East region who participated in the consultation process expressed: *“I can’t even say the word gender.”*

Practitioners may face threats to their personal safety, including harassment and assault, particularly in regions where patriarchal norms are deeply entrenched and their work is seen as challenging the status quo. The risks are heightened in conflict zones or areas with weak rule of law, where practitioners may be targeted not only by non-state actors but also by state security forces aiming to suppress their activism and support for survivors and victims.

Digital threats have become increasingly pervasive, with practitioners facing online harassment, hacking, and surveillance aimed at disrupting their work. These threats can include the dissemination of personal information, cyber-attacks on their communications and data storage systems, and the use of spyware to monitor their activities. Such digital



incursions can undermine the confidentiality of sensitive information, including the identities of survivors and witnesses, thereby compromising their safety and the integrity of ongoing investigations and judicial proceedings. Moreover, the pervasive nature of digital threats means that practitioners must constantly adapt to an evolving landscape of cyber risks, often with limited resources or technical expertise.

The combination of physical and digital threats creates a hostile environment that can deter individuals from engaging in gender justice work or force organisations to divert resources towards security measures, thus limiting their capacity to achieve their core objectives. The chilling effect of these threats also extends to survivors and witnesses, especially of gender-based crimes, who may be discouraged from coming forward if they perceive that they, their families, and their communities could be at risk. Consequently, these security challenges not only endanger the lives and well-being of those working on gender justice issues but also hamper the broader efforts to hold perpetrators accountable and secure justice for victims.

Participants in the consultations welcomed the idea of practical support in addressing (to the extent possible) security concerns and engagement with other practitioners who had experienced or managed similar challenges.

## **V. Opportunities for a Gender Justice Practitioner Hub**

Throughout the consultation and research phase, national practitioners, international practitioners, prosecutors, UN actors, civil society organisations and academics have indicated consistent and overwhelming support for the GJP Hub initiative. Following the identification of the most recurring challenges and obstacles practitioners face to integrate effective gender justice work in their profession, there is a strong call for the GJP Hub to fill in those gaps.

### **A. Building a community of practice and safe spaces for practitioners**

A consistent theme of the consultations was a strong desire for connection among practitioners working on gender justice issues, for the purposes of providing technical, peer, and moral support, practical assistance, and inspiration. The GJP Hub could leverage, formalise, and democratise access to existing connections among practitioners. This opportunity responds to some of the challenges outlined in relation to growing feelings of isolation, increasing threats to gender justice issues by anti-gender actors, and the need to implement and connect with practitioners beyond legal professionals.

Creating a space for strategizing, collective learning, and development is essential, and it would be beneficial to expand this opportunity. The GJP Hub could help bridge many informal and sometimes exclusionary networks of practitioners. Often, access to resources like trainings, events, conferences is dependent on previous existing

relationships with practitioners close to such resources. The GJP Hub could improve resource access for all practitioners, regardless of professional contacts.

Connected to the above, participants in the consultations consistently endorsed the value of an annual or bi-annual convening of gender-justice practitioners for practical discussion of challenges and strategies. While a desire has been expressed for in-person gathering opportunities, creative and multi-faceted approaches will be needed, along with the integration of technology, to ensure a format that is feasible and environmentally sustainable. The Gender and ICL conference held in The Hague in January 2024 was a helpful experiment upon which the GJP Hub could build.

It is crucial to think critically about the challenges that inhibit the community-building process. These challenges are often rooted in already established organisational interests and funding restrictions, rather than from a lack of interest from practitioners themselves.

To create an effective space for sharing information, offering support, and fostering development, it is important that all participants can meaningfully and equally utilise the opportunities by the GJP Hub. Conditions that enable equal access and participation, promote trust and collaboration, and ensure that everyone can participate and freely share their experiences are intentional components in the building and implementation of the GJP Hub. For example, careful consideration must be given to how to include those who are new to the space or come from geographic or socioeconomic backgrounds that have limited access to opportunities such as conferences, trainings and events. The corollary of this is that any network or forum developed through GJP Hub must be actively managed and curated—not only to ensure a quality practitioner experience when engaging with GJP Hub activities, but also to ensure that new opportunities for connection are actively created and that the network does not deteriorate through passage of time and lack of participation.

The development toward building and establishing a GJP Hub community of practice and safe space for practitioners must initially include all those practitioners involved in the consultation phase, should they wish to participate. It will set out a strategic plan, in line with the roadmap for the GJP Hub, which will specify the steps that will determine the GJP Hub's agenda, thematic focuses and strategic partnerships.<sup>15</sup>

## **B. The GJP Hub as a centralised, collective and accessible resource on gender justice**

One of the key needs identified during the consultation process was the demand for a centralised platform that provides access to a wide range of resources in multiple languages. To address this, the GJP Hub can serve as a comprehensive repository, bringing together precedents, tools, methodologies, policies, and best practices related

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<sup>15</sup> See *infra* Section V for the GJP Hub roadmap.

to gender justice. Bringing available knowledge together in a single place would allow better access for practitioners working for gender justice who otherwise may not have access to informal networks of expertise.

Participants in the consultation process also emphasized the importance of curating this repository to ensure it offers broad and inclusive coverage. The GJP Hub must actively manage and update the repository to include diverse resources that reflect the varied needs of gender justice practitioners across different regions and contexts.

Additionally, many of the existing tools and guidelines are currently available only in a limited number of languages, restricting their accessibility for a large portion of the global practitioner community. To address this, the GJP Hub should prioritise translating these resources into multiple languages, ensuring that practitioners worldwide can utilize them. This will enhance the inclusivity of the repository, making it a truly global resource for gender justice.

The GJP Hub will also identify and curate a select number of high-impact resources to be made widely available to practitioners. These resources might include template gender strategies, adaptable implementation plans, standard operating procedures (SOPs) for interviewing gender-based violence witnesses, template requests for witness protection, and tools designed to support gender-sensitive institution building within accountability bodies. By providing these resources, the GJP Hub will facilitate the integration of gender perspectives into the daily operations of practitioners, regardless of their specific context or challenges.

To ensure that the GJP Hub does not merely become a 'document farm' filled with redundant materials, it will focus on analysing and incorporating the most current data, information, and jurisprudence. The GJP Hub's approach will be to identify and fill existing gaps in the available resources, rather than duplicating efforts. This strategic curation will enhance the value of the repository, making it a dynamic and essential tool for gender justice practitioners around the world.

### **C. Supporting ongoing advocacy to counter anti-gender narratives**

The GJP Hub could play an important role as a counterbalance to the increasingly well-coordinated anti-gender actions that threaten to rollback progress in securing and advancing women's rights, LGBTQIA+ rights, and the broader understanding of gender, intersectionality, and survivor-centred approaches, especially where the issues in question relate to technical or legal issues within the application of international law.

While advocacy initiatives that champion gender, women's rights, LGBTQIA+ rights and countering anti-gender narratives already exist, and other national, regional and international organisations are better placed to lead these efforts, the GJP Hub could still play an important role.

By supporting ongoing advocacy efforts, the GJP Hub could amplify the efforts of various organizations, activists, and academics who are committed to advancing gender equality. Through coordinated advocacy, education, and policy influence, the GJP Hub can help challenge and dismantle the harmful narratives and actions propagated by anti-gender movements, which continue to have an impact on gender justice outcomes. It can provide the necessary resources, platforms, and networks to ensure that the progress made in gender rights is not only protected but expanded.

Connected to the above, the GJP Hub can be instrumental in expanding the understanding of gendered issues, particularly in contexts of conflict and accountability. Discussions around gender and conflict have historically been limited, often focusing only on sexual violence. This focus overlooks the varied and distinct experiences of different gender groups, including women, men, boys, girls, and individuals of diverse SOGIESC. Practitioners have highlighted the urgent need for increased attention to the gendered impacts of unlawful attacks (including chemical weapons) against the civilian population, conflict-related displacement, and detention crimes as well as gender perspectives regarding the contextual elements of core international crimes. The GJP Hub aims to broaden the scope of gender issues addressed during justice processes, encouraging a more holistic approach to understanding gender in conflict.

A key function of the GJP Hub could be challenging the dominant narratives that minimise or reduce gendered experiences in conflict to a single dimension. By doing so, the GJP Hub will promote a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of how gender intersects with other factors—such as race, class, and ethnicity—to shape the experiences of individuals in conflict zones. This expanded understanding is crucial for the effective design and implementation of justice initiatives that are truly inclusive and responsive to the needs of all affected populations.

The GJP Hub's efforts could include fostering dialogue, conducting research, and providing training on the varied gendered dimensions of conflict. This will help ensure that justice initiatives are not only gender-sensitive but also intersectional, acknowledging the multiple and overlapping forms of discrimination and harm that people may face. By promoting a victim/survivor-centred approach that is informed by a deep understanding of these complexities, the GJP Hub will contribute to more effective and just outcomes in post-conflict settings.

## **D. Feminist institution building**

The GJP Hub can support the building of internal capacity for judicial and/or accountability mandates on gender justice approaches. By equipping different institutions with best practices in mainstreaming gender justice internally in their methodologies, policies, and institutional culture, the GJP Hub can help ensure gender justice issues receive the institutional emphasis they deserve.

In addition to building capacity, the GJP Hub can leverage gender justice facilitation services. This opportunity would involve identifying jurisdictions or accountability mandates where there are substantial opportunities to advance gender justice within a

specified timeframe, supporting their ongoing work, and connecting them with each other. This opportunity could arise, for example, within national jurisdictions exercising universal or extraterritorial jurisdiction, or within UN accountability mandates, such as commissions of inquiry or fact-finding bodies. The selection of these jurisdictions or mandates will be guided by ongoing dialogue with the justice actors involved, ensuring that the services provided align closely with the specific needs and challenges they face.

The GJP Hub's goal is to work in areas where the impact of feminist institution-building would be most profound and can promote systemic change in a specific location or region. Through a collaborative approach, the GJP Hub will work closely with the selected jurisdictions or mandates to tailor the facilitation services to their unique contexts. This collaboration will ensure that the services provided are not only relevant but also practical and implementable within the existing legal and institutional frameworks.

## **VI. The GJP Hub: a roadmap for a way forward**

The research set out to answer several key questions:

- Is there a need for a GJP Hub What is its purpose?
- What should its core values be?
- Who is it for?
- Where should it be established and how should it operate?

The following sections address each question in turn.

### **A. Is there a need for a GJP Hub? What is its purpose?**

Participants in the research phase expressed overwhelming support for the establishment of a GJP Hub as an explicitly feminist initiative.

The GJP Hub's primary purpose is community. It involves building and coordinating networks, the facilitating safe spaces, and collating available resources, knowledge and information in a manner that is widely accessible. It involves taking continuous steps in shaping a space for strategizing, collective learning, and development, leveraging the already existing knowledge and expertise in the field of gender justice. The GJP Hub will adopt a strategic approach that addresses the identified gaps by utilising existing knowledge and resources, as well as the momentum that the consultation for this initiative has brought in building a gender justice practitioners community.

Establishing, maintaining and strengthening partnerships with relevant, influential actors at national, regional and international levels will be a central, cross-cutting focus for the GJP Hub. Through regular dialogue and coordination, this will ensure 1) opportunities to enhance and complement the work of partners and of the GJP Hub itself are identified and pursued, and 2) the risk of duplicating existing initiatives is mitigated. As part of the

Phase 1, LAW identified and began collaborating with several global partners and stakeholders. These include the UN Team of Experts on Rule of Law on Sexual Violence in Conflict,<sup>16</sup> Justice Rapid Response, and Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice.

For the GJP Hub to be effective and have value for practitioners, initial limitations to the GJP Hub's mandate must be clarified. Key activities focus falling *outside* the current envisaged mandate include:

- **Training/Capacity Building:** The GJP Hub will support the expansion, strategic design and inter-connecting of existing training initiatives, rather than develop new training initiatives itself.
- **Strategic litigation:** The GJP Hub will support strategic litigation efforts at national, regional and international levels being undertaken by other organisations, with a view to ensuring these initiatives incorporate gender or take a gender-proactive approach.
- **Documentation:** The GJP Hub will not undertake documentation itself but will support existing documentation efforts by different actors by providing technical support.

Although the above have been identified as outside of the current envisaged mandate of the GJP Hub at this stage, it is recognised that the GJP Hub must be responsive to needs and opportunities as they arise in future, commensurate with available resources.

## B. What are the GJP Hub's core values?

Throughout the research phase, participants identified core values that the GJP Hub should uphold:

- An **intersectional** approach that acknowledges that multiple factors—including race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, disability—shape the experiences of individuals. The GJP Hub shall seek to take action to centralise and enable input and participation to voices that have been marginalised. It shall also seek to address structural drivers of inequality in the field of gender justice.
- **Decolonial** and **anti-racist** approaches that recognise the legacies of colonialism and racism, as well as the structural systems of oppression that persist today. These approaches consciously seek alternative actions and forms of building relationships, networks, advocacy and interventions outside of existing legacies of colonial sexism and violence. For the purposes of the GJP Hub initiative,

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<sup>16</sup> In March 2024, as part of the International Conference of Prosecutors on Accountability for Conflict Related Sexual Violence, organised by the UN TOE, a discussion was facilitated on the establishment of a Gender Justice Practitioner Hub.



consciously resisting internalised colonial structures of thought<sup>17</sup> means intentionally fostering new frameworks and relationships that centre but do not exploit the knowledge and experience from historically disadvantaged and marginalised groups, including women, people of colour, LGBTQIA+ individuals, and people living in situations of poverty, among others. It also involves engaging with methodological tools and approaches that aim at understanding and critically engaging with the impacts of systems of coloniality.

- **Gender proactive** interventions and approaches that actively prioritise consideration of gender in an intentional and impactful way. Rather than passively responding to issues where they arise, the GJP Hub anticipate and address gender as a foundational issue throughout its activities and projects. In doing so, it will actively involve, during project and activity development, women, men, girls, and boys, as well as members of LGBTQIA+ communities, affected by human rights violations and abuses. A gender-proactive approach must also be practical—it is closely linked to the need for a skills-based approach that ensures practitioners are gender-sensitive and gender-competent in all aspects of their work. As noted above, the GJP Hub is an explicitly feminist initiative. It seeks to move beyond ‘mere’ inclusion of women and girls (while recognising that this has still to be meaningfully achieved in many contexts) and commits to ensuring the entrenchment of feminist and queer liberatory methods, approaches and solutions to expose and address existing harmful hierarchies.
- Recognition that **justice and peace** are deeply interconnected, with one being unattainable without the other. To this end, the work of the GJP Hub will focus on promoting the rule of law and upholding international legal standards that increase access to justice for survivors and prevents the recurrence of the violence.
- Recognising the value of **diversity** by acknowledging it is multifaceted and encompasses race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, age, religion, socioeconomic status, and other dimensions that shape individual and collective experiences. The GJP Hub will actively promote the participation and leadership of individuals from historically marginalised and underrepresented communities, ensuring their voices and perspectives are integral to all aspects of its work.
- **Context-based interventions** allowing **south-to-south** engagement and leadership contributions. The GJP Hub recognises that local actors are the best placed to know the needs and impacts of certain interventions and actions, therefore, they should drive them.

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<sup>17</sup> Decolonization and Afro-Feminism, Sylvia Tamale, 2020, p. 244. See also: <https://www.universiteitleiden.nl/binaries/content/assets/governance-and-global-affairs/luc/decolonising-international-justice-report-april-2023.pdf>

Considering its core values and the opportunities and spaces that are available for an initiative like the GJP Hub, a way forward can be broken down into three branches: Knowledge, Network, and Helpdesk.

## **1. Knowledge**

The Knowledge branch is dedicated to creating and maintaining a centralised repository of resources that are essential for advancing gender justice. This repository will serve as a comprehensive, easily accessible database of information, including research papers, toolkits, policy briefs, best practice guides, jurisprudence, methodologies, and templates.

A key aspect of this branch is the commitment to multilingual access, ensuring that these resources are available in multiple languages to allow ample access to a wide number of practitioners.

By curating a diverse array of resources that reflect the latest developments and insights in gender justice in conflict, this branch aims to facilitate access to effective and up-to-date knowledge that practitioners need to effectively address gender justice in their daily practice. These resources may also be of interest to other actors and wide sharing could be facilitated.

In developing and maintaining this resource, the GJP Hub will prioritise a clear, well-organised and user-friendly search function on its website that signposts to external resources where appropriate and relevant. This could include, for example, ICC OTP policy documents and the extensive resource catalogue of the ICRC, which has extensive resources (commentaries, factsheets, checklists) to assist practitioners working on gendered crimes or engaged in introducing, amending or applying national war crimes legislation.

Additionally, this branch will prioritise the inclusion of region-specific and context-sensitive resources, ensuring that the knowledge shared is relevant and actionable across different cultural and social settings.

## **2. Network**

The Network branch focuses on building and enhancing connections among practitioners, organisations, and networks within the gender justice community. As identified above, practitioners have a strong desire for a space in which they can exchange, imagine, create, and feel safe. This branch will host a formal GJP Hub network where members can engage, collaborate, and support each other in their efforts to advance gender justice.

By connecting existing networks and fostering new relationships, the GJP Hub will facilitate the sharing of knowledge, strategies, and resources, enabling practitioners to learn from each other's experiences and successes. Consultation participants have noted that any 'network' developed through the GJP Hub must be managed actively rather than passively—that is, it must take a hands-on approach in managing the networks and proactively generate activities, opportunities, and engagement. Consultation participants



drew comparisons between existing, actively managed networks (such as the Coalition for the International Criminal Court), and past networks that were passively managed and no longer exist or are inactive.

This branch will also work to formalise these connections through structured frameworks and platforms, ensuring that the community of practice is sustainable, effective and accessible. Through this network, practitioners can benefit from mentorship, peer support, and collaborative opportunities, strengthening the collective impact of their work. The GJP Hub will actively nurture this network through the promotion and implementation of its core values.

### **3. Helpdesk**

The Helpdesk branch is designed to act as a central and strategic coordinating mechanism that links requests for gender justice advice with the appropriate expertise, experts, and partners. Serving as a matchmaker between those seeking guidance and those offering specialised knowledge, this branch ensures that inquiries are directed to the right individuals or organizations with the expertise to provide effective solutions. The Helpdesk will maintain a comprehensive, diverse, and interdisciplinary database of gender justice professionals, activists, organisations, and scholars, categorising them by their areas of expertise, geographical focus, and experience. When a request is received, the Helpdesk will quickly and efficiently connect the requester with the most suitable partner, facilitating timely and targeted support.

This branch will also monitor the outcomes of these connections to ensure that the advice provided meets the needs of the requester and contributes to the broader goals of gender justice. By streamlining access to expert advice, the Helpdesk will enhance the capacity of practitioners and organizations to address gender justice issues with precision and effectiveness.

## **C. Who is the GJP Hub for?**

Phase 1 research revealed two interlinked points related to the GJP's target audience. First, a broad definition of "practitioner" will be required to meet the varied needs of those pursuing gender justice. A range of actors play essential roles in securing gender justice, and while a GJP Hub must not overextend itself in trying to cater to all possible individuals, it is important that any approach adopted by the GJP Hub does not arbitrarily exclude those who play a role in justice processes. Second, the GJP Hub must be able to respond to varied needs in different contexts—participants in research were clear that a locally informed presence would be required to be appropriately attuned to the needs of practitioners in different contexts. In response to the need for regionally developed, locally informed responses to local challenges, it is envisaged that the specific thematic focuses for the GJP Hub will be defined, driven and implemented by practitioners. A call for applications will be launched for individuals, organisations, and networks to receive funding aimed at shaping the content and strategic direction of the GJP Hub. This initiative

is grounded in the GJP Hub's commitment to intersectionality, decolonial and anti-racist approaches, and gender-proactive interventions.

The primary goal of this funding opportunity is to give ownership of the GJP Hub to practitioners that will benefit from it by defining its thematic focuses and priorities for each of the three core branches of the GJP Hub: Knowledge, Network, and Helpdesk. This participatory approach will ensure that the GJP Hub reflects the needs, insights, and expertise of the global gender justice community.

Applicants will be invited to submit proposals that will help identify and prioritize key themes and issues that the GJP Hub should focus on within each branch, ensuring alignment with the GJP Hub's core values and responding to the particular needs of practitioners within their contexts and regions.

Selected applicants will receive grants of up to \$60,000 USD to carry out their proposed activities, along with access to the GJP Hub's networks and resources. This support is intended to facilitate collaboration and innovation, ensuring that the final outputs are both impactful and practical for the challenges faced by practitioners, identified in this report.

This call will be open to individuals, organisations, and networks working in the field of gender justice, particularly those with experience in intersectional, decolonial, and gender-proactive practices. We particularly encourage applications from groups and individuals from the Global South and other historically marginalised communities.

## **D. How will the GJP Hub operate?**

There were difficulties in gathering feedback about how the GJP Hub should operate, as its mandate and focus were still being defined. However, a number of ideas were proposed to ensure that the GJP Hub could formally be established and could begin operations. These are below.

### **1. Operationalisation**

The need for a flexible GJP Hub structure was underscored throughout the consultation process. While practitioners agreed that it is not possible to 'copy-paste' the model of an existing organisation or initiative, they mentioned various different organisational structures that could provide flexibility and allow broad participation (i.e. across multiple regions) in the GJP Hub. These include the Standby Partnership model, a federated structure, and a more conventional secretariat-led structure wherein a core secretariat could carry out administrative functions of the GJP Hub, while linked 'Hub-lets' implement the activities of the GJP Hub. This option is connected to the need for the GJP Hub to combine global and regional approaches. Participants in roundtables and bilateral interviews have underscored the necessity of a localised, collaborative approach and effective coordination among regions for the GJP Hub to be effective.

One potential first step is an existing organisation ‘hosting’ the GJP Hub while it is being established, initiating activities and identifying new sources of funding. An existing body or organisation with capacity to provide and manage financing, human resources, administration and logistical support would become the “incubation partner” for the GJP Hub during Phase 2. This will maximise the use of the resources available for Phase 2 on the substantive work of the GJP Hub for the development of its strategic plan around the three branches outlined before.

There are a number of considerations in identifying the incubation partner:

- The incubation partner should be approved to receive the DFAT funding already secured for Phase 2 of the GJP Hub initiative.
- The incubation partner should have experience managing multi-year funding in excess of USD \$1 million.
- The incubation partner must be financially independent (i.e., it must not rely on the funding specifically for the GJP Hub).
- The incubation partner should be able to support the work of the GJP Hub, including by supporting the development of practitioner networks.
- The incubation partner should not solely focus on conflict-related sexual violence. There are a number of initiatives that have this focus—utilising on such initiative as the incubation partner for the GJP Hub would risk conflating a specific focus on conflict-related sexual violence, with the much broader focus of ‘gender justice’ that the GJP seeks to pursue.

During the consultation phase, participants cautioned against the GJP Hub becoming part of the UN, as this could increase costs and bureaucracy and reduce its acceptance as a participatory body involving grassroots-level actors. Nevertheless, participants expressed the benefits of the GJP Hub being able to leverage the reach and ‘gravitas’ of the UN as important. Participants suggested further thinking about potential hybrid structures that might facilitate this. An important point raised was the need for caution around the perception of any link with the UN, including that the GJP Hub could be perceived as supporting or promoting the agendas or priorities of UN member states.

There are a number of past examples of non-governmental organisations hosting new/nascent entities:

- **WILPF hosting ICAN:** The Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), a membership-based feminist peacebuilding organisation with member Sections and Groups in over 40 countries across the Americas, Africa, Europe, Asia-Pacific, South Asia and the Middle East and North Africa, hosted the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), as it sought to establish a presence in Geneva, Switzerland in 2010. In addition to receiving administration and financial management services, ICAN was able to leverage WILPF’s extensive network to increase the impact of the campaign.
- **Saferworld (and others) hosting GAPS:** Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS) is the UK’s civil society network focused on the Women, Peace and Security Agenda. GAPS is comprised of 17 members, one of which hosts the GAPS secretariat, providing office space, administration services, and support for

grant management and fundraising. At the moment, Saferworld hosts GAPS—but previously another member, Women for Women International, hosted the organisation.

- **Women’s Initiative for Gender Justice hosting the CICC:** Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice currently hosts the secretariat of the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC).

In each of these examples, the organisation being hosted retains its own distinct identity and mandate but receives support services from the host organisation.

Alongside an incubator partner providing operational support, for the time being, it is envisaged that the GJP Hub will need clear leadership and direction, and a coordinator/project manager who can implement envisioned activities.

Consultation participants underscored that the GJP Hub would not be effective if it only had a physical presence in Europe or North America (i.e. a single office in Geneva, The Hague, or New York). While participants considered a presence in Geneva enabling engagement with the UN important, they also noted a need to ensure that the GJP Hub has a presence beyond the ‘Global North’ -- either through a physical presence or through partner organisations who could act as ‘Helpdesks’ for the GJP Hub.

There is a need for the GJP Hub to be able to span multiple time zones. If the GJP Hub is solely based in Asia or the Americas, it may not be effective across the globe. During the incubation period, a small presence outside of the Global North/West is envisaged—ideally in multiple locations, supporting the *global* nature of the GJP Hub’s work with a view to further expansion of its physical presence as it grows, ensuring effective coverage across different global regions. Nairobi and Bangkok have been identified as potential locations where initial GJP Hub staff could be located. Both cities have extensive civil society networks working on issues related to core international crimes, and this would allow the GJP Hub to operate across multiple relevant time zones—including relevant European time zones for donor and UN engagement.

## **2. Sustainability**

Expanding the funding available to the GJP Hub is critical to ensuring its sustainability. To this end, LAW and the GJP Hub Advisory Committee are actively pursuing diverse funding opportunities to support the strategic objectives outlined for Phase 2 of the GJP Hub’s development.

Moreover, another challenge in relation to endurance and sustainability of the GJP Hub will be keeping its relevance and value for practitioners. The GJP Hub is a groundbreaking initiative with the potential to redefine how gender justice for accountability work is done globally. This represents an opportunity to prove this concept—to show that by coming together under a common framework, we can achieve more than we ever could individually.

The period leading up to the formal establishment of the GJP Hub is crucial. During this

time, it is imperative to amplify the GJP Hub's profile to capture the interest and commitment of new supporters. A concerted push to engage with potential donors and supporters—through strategic events and targeted outreach—will be key to building the financial foundation necessary for the GJP Hub's long-term viability.

Sustainability of the GJP Hub refers not only to immediate funding but also to fostering enduring relationships with stakeholders who share the vision for global justice. This initiative requires a multi-faceted approach, combining advocacy, networking, and strategic partnerships, to ensure that the GJP Hub is not only established but thrives as a cornerstone of international justice efforts.

## **VII. Conclusions and recommendations**

The findings from Phase 1 of the GJP Hub initiative underscore the clear need for initiative and concrete action supporting gender justice work. The consultations and research conducted during Phase 1 reveal that while there have been critical developments and achievements in the last decades related to best practices, key jurisprudence, and normative advancements to address gender-based crimes in contexts of armed conflict and repression, substantial challenges for practitioners doing this work remain. These include institutional resistance(s) to engage in gender justice work, the rise of anti-gender narratives and increasing threats to the work done by practitioners in this area, fragmented and dispersed knowledge and information, and a lack of interdisciplinary approaches for better gender justice outcomes.

In this context, the GJP Hub presents a unique opportunity to bridge these gaps by fostering a community of practice, providing a platform for practitioners to find relevant resources and information, and promoting feminist institution-building. Central to the GJP Hub's work are three foundational branches: Knowledge, Network, and a Helpdesk mechanism. The GJP Hub aims to create a comprehensive, multilingual repository of resources, thereby addressing the current fragmentation of information and providing practitioners with the tools they need to succeed. Additionally, by building and formalising a diverse community of practice, the GJP Hub will enhance collaboration, peer support, and the sharing of strategies among gender justice practitioners worldwide. The Helpdesk mechanism will act as a coordinating link, connecting practitioners with the most appropriate experts and resources, ensuring that their needs are met efficiently and effectively.

To ensure the GJP Hub's design is responsive to the needs of practitioners, the initiative includes a call for proposals, inviting practitioners from diverse contexts to provide input on shaping the branches of the GJP Hub. This participatory approach will allow the GJP Hub to reflect the specific needs and insights of the global gender justice community, ensuring a localised approach that allows practitioners who will benefit from the GJP Hub to take ownership of this tool.

The GJP Hub is designed to be flexible and inclusive, with a structure that allows for broad participation across multiple regions. The GJP Hub's operational model will combine



global and regional approaches, with an incubation partner providing necessary administrative and logistical support during its early implementation phases. This model ensures that the GJP Hub is not only responsive to the diverse needs of practitioners but also capable of adapting to changing contexts and challenges.

However, to be successful and valuable for the work of practitioners, the GJP Hub must secure sustained financial and technical support from key stakeholders.

## Recommendations

- **Establishment and strategic planning.** The first priority is establishing the GJP Hub, which should be followed by the development of a comprehensive strategic plan. This plan will define the scope and content of the GJP Hub's branches, ensuring that its activities are focused and aligned with its core mission. The strategic plan will serve as a roadmap for the GJP Hub's future operations, setting clear objectives and identifying priority areas for intervention.
- **Management of expectations and focused impact.** Recognising that the GJP Hub will not be able to address all the gaps, challenges, and barriers that practitioners face in accountability work for gender-based crimes, the next phase must include a strategy for managing expectations. This strategy will offer advice and best practices to ensure that stakeholders understand the GJP Hub's capacity and limitations, while continuing to build and maintain support for its mission. Clear communication about the GJP Hub's focus areas will be essential to sustain momentum and engagement.
- **Operationalisation.** The operationalisation of the GJP Hub must be a priority within the next six months, and it should be guided by the findings of the current report. A key aspect of this phase will be ensuring that the GJP Hub has a meaningful presence in locations within the Global South, making it accessible and relevant to practitioners working in those regions. This presence will enhance the GJP Hub's ability to address context-specific challenges and leverage local expertise.
- **The GJP Hub is a collective project.** The process of setting up the GJP Hub must be community driven. In the same way that the consultation process resulted in the identification of a wide community of practitioners, the implementation phase must enhance such connections and networks. Therefore, giving ownership to those for whom the GJP Hub aims to serve is a key part of such an approach. The call for proposals shall ensure wide access and participation, particularly from practitioners of the global south.
- **Addressing limitations and gaps in the research.** The gaps identified during Phase 1 of this initiative must be addressed through further research.

- **Building sustainability through funding and support.** In the next phase, a critical focus for the GJP Hub must be on building its long-term sustainability. This will require securing access to diverse funding opportunities, which will be essential for supporting the GJP Hub's ongoing activities and expanding its impact. Developing a robust funding strategy will help to ensure that the GJP Hub can continue to operate effectively and settle itself.

## ANNEX 1

### Gender Justice Practitioner Hub (GJP Hub)

#### Questionnaire for Bilateral Consultations

#### Format: 45 Minute Semi-Structured Interview

##### Opening:

- Introduction of interviewer, LAW, Gender Justice Practitioner Hub (GJP Hub)
- Outline methodology (desk-based research, regional roundtables, semi-structured interviews) and output (report) of the project.

Present timeline (report likely in Summer 2024)

- Do I have your consent to enable automated transcription/ record the discussion?
- Does the interviewee have any questions before the interview commences?
- Confirm name and affiliation of interviewee.

##### Questions

1. Please describe how your work relates to advancing gender justice for core international crimes?

##### Identifying Current Network and Initiatives:

One branch the GJP Hub is exploring relates to the objective of connecting practitioners who have experience working on gender justice issues, or who are interested in developing expertise on gender justice issues:

Key Questions (must ask)	Potential follow up questions
2. Do you know of any current networks or initiatives that already exist that connect practitioners working on gender justice issues?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are models of good practitioner networks that might provide inspiration?</li> <li>• How, if at all, do these initiatives support you as a practitioner?</li> </ul>
3. What gaps exist that current initiatives do not fill with respect to supporting practitioners in advancing gender justice for core international crimes?	What would be the most effective way of approaching the existing networks/ initiatives and ensuring strong <b>buy-in/</b> participation by practitioners: e.g. periodic convenings to discuss topics of interest to practitioners, a regular newsletter with practical updates, access to a website with resources, etc?



### Mapping Practitioners' Challenges and Opportunities:

Key Questions (must ask)	Potential follow up questions
4. What are the main challenges you face in advancing gender justice of core international crimes? If possible, please illustrate by practical example(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What type of assistance would be most useful to you in your practice? If possible, please illustrate by practical example(s)</li> </ul>
5. do you think concept of "justice facilitation" works for thematic topic of gender justice	The concept of "justice facilitation,": Bodies like the International Impartial and Independent Mechanism (Syria), the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, and the Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD), act as a hub, a point of support, for disparate accountability actors (national prosecutors, lawyers before international courts, the ICC Office of the Prosecutor) in different jurisdictions operating with limited resources and expertise. The GJP Hub would adapt the "justice facilitation" idea and apply it to a thematic topic: gender justice.

### Development of General Resources:

Another branch of the GJPH seeks to examine is the development of general resources that would promote improved gender justice outcomes.

Key Questions (must ask)	Potential follow up questions
6. Which tools or resources would be helpful and effective for the GJP Hub to provide/ develop/ build upon (existing tools) with practitioners? <i>[don't give examples until they have provided an example]</i>	<i>Example may include: gender justice jurisprudence database; means of proof database or analytical digest; gender strategies for investigations, analytical work or institutions more broadly; templates/precedents on witness protection issues; translation or summaries of key existing resources for justice actors incl. key judgements or practitioner-focused literature/ reports; identification of expert witnesses to assist in addressing gender issues in cases; or model charges for gender-based crimes.</i>
7. If not mentioned as a tool or resource: Should the Hub be a resource for trainings on gender justice methodologies? Do you see any gaps in existing gender justice trainings that should be filled?	<p><i>Aware of any translators orgs that are already working on translating key resources? E.g. translatory without borders</i></p> <p><i>IICI develops and conducts trainings – but are they being offered outside of Europe?</i></p>

### Case-specific support:

Another branch of the GJPH involves specific support to jurisdictions where there are existing or anticipated future gender justice opportunities.

Key Questions (must ask)	Potential follow up questions
8. What kind of support on specific cases would be useful to you?	<i>Examples may include: gender analyses of specific conflict contexts to inform the work of justice actors; assistance with preparing charging frameworks/legal analysis relating to specific cases; assistance in developing strategies for overcoming specific challenges to addressing gender issues in cases; assistance in developing bespoke tools for specific offices etc.</i>

### Effectiveness and Coordination:

Key Questions (must ask)	Potential follow up questions
9. What do you see as the greatest potential advantages of an effective GJP Hub?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can those be strengthened?</li> </ul>
10. What are the greatest risks that would compromise effectiveness of the GJP Hub?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can those best be mitigated?</li> </ul>
11. If Hub has centralizing function, or takes on a coordination role for a particular context, what are anticipated challenges? (e.g. issues that could arise: fragmentation in accountability contexts; decentralized ownership, i.e. Hub only being supported or utilized by Global North)	<i>Fragmentation challenges include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Ukraine with several investigation and documentation efforts ongoing or</i></li> <li><i>Ethiopia with a lack of resources and access</i></li> </ul>

### Closing:

Is there anything that you would like to share in addition to the above or touch upon any issue that hasn't been covered?

### Next Steps:

Thank you so much for participating in this research. Your input is critical to the future success of the Hub initiative.

All information gathered through bi-lateral interviews and through the regional roundtables will contribute to a final report on the potential establishment of a Gender Justice Practitioner Hub. We will make sure that a copy of this is shared with you.

Thank you again for your time.



# **GENDER JUSTICE PRACTITIONER HUB**

## **REPORT**

*PHASE ONE*