



## Trust Fund for Victims: ICC withdrawals are a deplorable setback for victims

Press Release, The Hague, 28 October 2016

The five members of the Board of Directors of the Trust Fund for Victims (TFV) at the ICC express their grave concern about the recently announced withdrawals from the Rome Statute.

“Withdrawals are a deplorable setback for victims of the most heinous crimes such as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity affecting the most vulnerable, such as children and women.

“Not only a setback for those victims who happen to be in ICC situation countries, but for all victims around the world, for whom the Rome Statute’s universal promise of reparative justice risks becoming a more distant prospect.

“Withdrawals weaken the fight against impunity, invariably at the expense of the rights and well-being of victims of international crimes.”

“The protection and dignity of human lives depend on the rule of law, and in particular the Rome Statute’s determination to put an end to impunity for the perpetrators of crimes of the most serious concern to the international community.”

The Board recalls the inspiring moral leadership of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who was elected to the first, pioneering Board of Directors of the Trust Fund for Victims, representing the African States group in his personal capacity.

In his own words: “We want to recognize those who over the several years have been the faceless ones, the ones who have been side-passed, and so in that process, help to heal trauma, help to heal wounded communities, help to make whole what was broken.”

The current Board views ICC withdrawals as creating the risk of a hazardous relapse, sidelining victims and their communities.

The TFV Board of Directors respectfully submits that being an ICC State Party does not only mean being a part of global efforts to prevent and punish international crimes, but also being an advocate for the Rome Statute’s unprecedented mechanisms of reparative justice to provide meaningful redress to victims. The Board urges all States Parties to remain an active and integral partner in the fight against impunity and in the delivery of reparative justice.

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Under its assistance mandate, the TFV has reached over 300,000 victims, with modest means originating from voluntary contributions and donations. The TFV has worked with over 30 locally based partners employing hundreds of African professionals, including physicians, psychologists, educational specialists, agronomists, micro-credit specialists, and more. Community leaders and local government agencies play a crucial role in ensuring and boosting lasting results of the TFV’s assistance programmes. The TFV is currently embarking on its mandate to implement Court-ordered reparations in a growing number of ICC cases, thus providing further tangible meaning to victims of the notion of reparative justice.

The activities and programmes of the TFV are designed to be victim-owned, trauma-sensitive, gender-sensitive as well as mindful of the complex conflict and post-conflict situations in which victims and their communities are overcoming the harm they suffered.

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### Trust Fund for Victims, Board of Directors

Motoo Noguchi (Japan), Chair

Mama Koité Doumbia (Mali)

Baroness Arminka Helić (United Kingdom)

Felipe Michelini (Uruguay)

Alma Taso Deljković (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Executive Director - Pieter de Baan