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Trust Fund for Victims decides to launch assistance programme in Côte d'Ivoire



Meeting between the Trust Fund for Victims' mission team and victims survivors in one of the communities in western Côte d'Ivoire, which was visited during the country assessment mission in February 2017 © TFV-FPV

On the first day of its 16th Meeting, occurring from 16 to 18 May 2017, the Board of Directors of the Trust Fund for Victims ("the Trust Fund") at the International Criminal Court ("ICC") decided to launch a new assistance programme in Côte d'Ivoire to provide physical, psychological rehabilitation and material support for the benefit of victims of crimes under the ICC's jurisdiction. The Trust Fund hopes to have ongoing assistance projects in Côte d'Ivoire in 2018 and has obligated 800,000 EUR for this purpose.

"It is the Trust Fund's mandate to make a reality the Rome Statute's unique promise of reparative justice to victim survivors of crimes under the ICC's jurisdiction. Through its assistance mandate activities, the Trust Fund is also able to contribute to reconciliation. We know that the need for assistance in Côte d'Ivoire is immense and urgent.

Today, the Board has taken an important first step towards helping victim survivors in Côte d'Ivoire move beyond the harm that they have suffered to rebuild their lives and to begin the journey of healing, regaining dignity, and creating a better future."

- Trust Fund Board Member Mama Koité Doumbia

Following the recommendation of the situation country assessment report prepared by the Trust Fund Secretariat, the Board considered it appropriate for the Trust Fund "to provide physical, psychological rehabilitation and material support for the benefit of victims and their families" for victims of crimes under the jurisdiction of the ICC in Côte d'Ivoire. The Board also considered it appropriate to explore the possibility of collaborating with the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to assist the victims in articulating their views and desires with respect to government-provided reparations programmes.

With today's decision, Côte d'Ivoire becomes the third ICC situation country, joining the Democratic Republic of the Congo ("DRC") and northern Uganda, in which the Trust Fund will provide much needed support to victims and their families under its assistance mandate.

The Trust Fund's assessment mission

In January and February 2017, the Trust Fund conducted a preliminary assessment in regard of a possible assistance mandate programme in Côte d'Ivoire, in accordance with the Regulations of the Trust Fund. During the field visit, the Trust Fund's assessment team visited the capital, Abidjan, and 11 localities in the centre, west and southern parts of the country. The assessment team met with national and local authorities, including the ministry in charge of the administration of reparations, civil society organisations including victims associations, representatives of the international community, community leaders, as well as with victims and community members.

The assessment aimed at gaining an understanding of the situation of the victims of crimes under the jurisdiction of the ICC in Côte d'Ivoire, which covers the period from 19 September 2002 onwards, and to determine the feasibility of the Trust Fund intervening to assist victims and their families who have suffered physical, psychological and/or material harm as result of these crimes.

The assessment sought to answer the following questions: "What are the consequence of the crimes on the victims, their family and communities? Should the TFV intervene under its assistance mandate to address the harms suffered by victims and their families? If so, how should the TFV intervene?"

The assessment team collected information about the patterns of harm and different types of victimisation, the categories of harm suffered by victims and their communities, victims' expectations about rehabilitation and reparation in general, as well as about reparative initiatives by the government, civil society and the international community, including any gaps in these initiatives. The risks and opportunities of a Trust Fund assistance programme in Côte d'Ivoire were also identified.

The next steps

Now that the Board has decided to open an assistance programme and agreed on the types of intervention to be undertaken in Côte d'Ivoire, the Trust Fund will launch an international competitive bidding procedure to select assistance projects of relevant reparative value within the adopted programmatic framework, along with selecting the locally based (international or national) service providers to be the Trust Fund's partners to implement those projects. The Trust Fund will also further engage with the government of Côte d'Ivoire to explore coordination and cooperation.

The Board will also notify the relevant ICC Chamber competent for the situation in Côte d'Ivoire regarding its "conclusion to undertake specific activities", in accordance with the requirements of regulation 50 (a) of the Regulations of the Trust Fund.

The Trust Fund hopes to have ongoing assistance projects in Côte d'Ivoire in 2018.

For more information, visit: www.trustfundforvictims.org, or contact: trustfundforvictims@icc-cpi.int

Background

1. Information regarding the Trust Fund's assistance mandate

The Trust Fund's assistance mandate is provided for in article 79 of the [Rome Statute](#), rule 98 (5) of the [Rules of Procedure and Evidence](#), and regulation 50 (a) of the [Regulations of the Trust Fund](#).

Using voluntary contributions from donors, the Trust Fund provides assistance for the benefit of victims and their families in ICC situation countries through programmes of psychological rehabilitation, physical rehabilitation, and material support. Because it is not linked to any particular case before the ICC, the assistance mandate permits the TFV to provide an immediate response, at the individual, family and community level, to the urgent needs of victims who have suffered harm from crimes within the ICC's jurisdiction. It

also permits the Trust Fund to assist a wider victim population than only those who have suffered harms connected to specific cases before the Court.

The design and implementation of all TFV-supported activities incorporate three common features, which are that the activities are: 1) trauma-sensitive; 2) gender-sensitive; and 3) context-sensitive, particularly in terms of recent or on-going conflicts.

Since 2009, the Trust Fund has supported locally-based implementing partners that work directly with victims under the Trust Fund's supervision in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and northern Uganda.

In total, more than 350,000 victims have benefitted from Trust Fund supported assistance activities in these two countries. Many of these victims were subjected to physical and psychological violence and continue to live with trauma associated with unaddressed mental health conditions. In both the DRC and Uganda, victims include *inter alia* survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, child mothers, former (male and female) child soldiers, girls formerly associated with armed groups, returnee communities, disabled persons and amputees, disfigured and tortured persons, and other vulnerable children and young people, including orphans.

2. Trust Fund for Victims leadership

The Board of Directors of the Trust Fund for Victims at the ICC are elected every three years by the Assembly of States Parties. The five members come from different regions in the world. They are elected for a mandate of three years and may be re-elected for one second term. Board members function in their personal capacity and on a *pro bono* basis.

The five members of the current Board (2016-2018) are:

Motoo Noguchi, Chair (Japan, representing Asian States)

Mama Koité Doumbia (Mali, representing African States)

Baroness Arminka Helic (United Kingdom, representing Western European and Other States)

Alma Taso-Deljkovic (Bosnia Hercegovina, representing Eastern European State)

Felipe Michelini (Uruguay, representing Latin American and Caribbean States)

Pieter de Baan is the Executive Director of the Trust Fund for Victims, heading the TFV Secretariat.