

The impact of the Rome Statute system on victims and affected communities

Statement submitted by the International Committee of the Red Cross

The victims of armed conflicts and other situations of violence are at the centre of the mandate and activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Thus, the ICRC strongly supports the examination of the situation of victims of international crimes and their affected communities during this stocktaking exercise. The ICRC does this with a view to ensuring that justice accompanies the victims towards a better future.

The ICRC would like to highlight one particular point of our debates. This is the role of justice mechanisms – including the ICC – in the effective realisation of the “Right to know” what has happened to one’s loved ones. Many victims of armed conflicts tell the ICRC that what they want to know, above all, is the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones who have disappeared. The work carried out by judicial mechanisms, including forensics activities such as exhumations, can be particularly valuable and relevant in this regard.

These needs of victims are the reason, for example, why the ICRC has worked particularly closely with international stakeholders in the context of the Working Group on Missing Persons in Kosovo. The ICRC has been able to provide the Working Group with relevant information that has led to concrete answers for families. The relief granted to these families, and its effect on the reconciliation of the affected communities, should never be underestimated. The growing focus on the needs of victims is a most welcome inclusion in the approach that the ICC system is promoting. This is the case, even if the ICRC must always of course remain independent from judicial processes, in order to safeguard its access to victims in accordance with its mandate.

In closing, the ICRC would like to recognize the valuable contribution of the Governments of both Chile and Finland as joint focal points in this very important issue. Thank you.

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