

Global Initiative for
JUSTICE, TRUTH +
RECONCILIATION

VIOLENCE PREVENTION, TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY CONSULTATION: A Field Guide from Guinea



International Coalition of
SITES of CONSCIENCE



About The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience

The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC) is a global network of museums, historic sites and grassroots initiatives dedicated to building a more just and peaceful future through engaging communities in remembering struggles for human rights and addressing their modern repercussions. Founded in 1999, the ICSC now includes more than 250 Sites of Conscience members in 65 countries. The ICSC supports these members through seven regional networks that encourage collaboration and international exchange of knowledge and best practices.

Learn more at www.sitesofconscience.org.

Cover photo: Activists, survivors and government officials attend a GIJTR press conference in July 2018

Unless otherwise noted, all photos were taken by the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience.

Designed by Lori J. Dawson

ABOUT THIS FIELD GUIDE

Founded by the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, the Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation (GIJTR) is a Consortium of nine organizations around the globe dedicated to multi-disciplinary, integrated and holistic approaches to transitional justice. Grounded in a spirit of collaboration, each GIJTR project is managed by a specific Consortium member with support from other members.

This publication, *Violence Prevention, Transitional Justice and Community Consultation: A Field Guide from Guinea*, was produced as part of a year-long GIJTR project titled “Building Community Capacity to Address Fault Lines for Violence: Violence Prevention, Truth, Justice and Reconciliation in Guinea,” which aimed to increase the participation of communities to influence the design and implementation of transitional justice mechanisms and promote local-level truth, justice and reconciliation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

By Sarah Case

With contributions from Terry Beitzel

ABOUT THE GLOBAL INITIATIVE FOR JUSTICE, TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION CONSORTIUM

Around the world, there is an increasing call for justice, truth, and reconciliation in countries where legacies of gross human rights violations cast a shadow on transitions from repressive regimes to participatory and democratic forms of governance. To meet this need, the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC) launched a new initiative, the Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation (GIJTR) in August 2014. The goal of the GIJTR is to address new challenges in countries in conflict or transition struggling with legacies of or ongoing gross human rights abuses.

ICSC leads a Consortium of nine organizational partners: American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (ABA ROLI), USA; Asia Justice and Rights (AJAR), Indonesia; Center for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSV), South Africa; Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), Cambodia; Due Process of Law Foundation (DPLF), USA; Humanitarian Law Center (HLC), Serbia; Fundación de Antropología Forense de Guatemala (FAFG), Guatemala; and Public International Law and Policy Group (PILPG), USA. In addition to leveraging the expertise of the Consortium members, ICSC taps into the knowledge and longstanding community connections of its 250 member organizations in 65 countries in order to strengthen and broaden the Consortium’s work.

Consortium partners, along with members of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, develop and implement a range of rapid response and high-impact program activities, utilizing both restorative and retributive approaches to justice and accountability for gross human rights violations. The expertise of the organizations under the Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation includes:

- Truth-telling, reconciliation, memorialization, and other forms of historical memory;
- Documenting human rights abuses for transitional justice purposes;
- Forensic analysis and other efforts related to missing and disappeared persons;
- Victims’ advocacy such as improving access to justice, psychosocial support, and trauma mitigation activities;
- Providing technical assistance to and building the capacity of civil society activists and organizations to promote and engage on transitional justice processes;
- Reparative justice initiatives; and
- Ensuring gender justice in all of these processes.



Participants in a GIJTR self-care workshop held in Conakry in May 2017.

To date, the GIJTR has led civil society actors in multiple countries in the development and implementation of documentation and truth-telling projects, undertaken assessments of the memorialization, documentation and psycho-social support capacities of local organizations, and launched a transitional justice “academy” to provide activists and non-traditional actors in the Middle East and North Africa region with training, support and opportunities to participate in the design and implementation of community-driven transitional justice approaches.

Given the diversity of experience and skills within the Consortium and amongst ICSC network members, the program offers post-conflict countries and countries emerging from repressive regimes a unique opportunity to address transitional justice needs in a timely manner, while promoting local participation and building the capacity of community partners.

CONTENTS

1: Introduction7

THE GLOBAL INITIATIVE FOR JUSTICE, TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION IN GUINEA7

USING THIS FIELD GUIDE7

TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE: A BRIEF OVERVIEW7

TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION: UNCOVERING KEY LINKS8

2: Building Local Capacity For Truth, Justice and Violence Prevention in Guinea 13

COUNTRY BACKGROUND13

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR JUSTICE, RECONCILIATION AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION.....14

FIRST STEPS: CAPACITY BUILDING FOR LOCAL CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND THE MEDIA15

ASSESSING LOCAL NEEDS AND IDENTIFYING THE ROOT CAUSES OF CONFLICT16

TELLING VICTIMS’ STORIES: RESPONSIBILITIES AND APPROACHES17

A LOCALLY-OWNED AND COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE17

SMALL GRANTS: RESPONDING TO LOCAL NEEDS.....18

BUILDING TRUST BETWEEN GOVERNMENT-LED TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES20

FINAL REFLECTION AND NEXT STEPS.....20

3: Violence Prevention, Transitional Justice and Community Consultation: A Flowchart for Practitioners 23

4: Conclusion.....29

5: Additional Resources.....31



A participatory methodologies workshop held in September 2017

1: INTRODUCTION

The Global Initiative For Justice, Truth and Reconciliation In Guinea

The Global Initiative for Justice, Truth and Reconciliation (GIJTR) recently completed the first phase of a multi-year project in Guinea, entitled “Building Community Capacity to Address Fault Lines for Violence: Violence Prevention, Truth, Justice and Reconciliation in Guinea.” The project’s main focus is to build the capacity of civil society organizations (CSO) to play an active and constructive role in the country’s national reconciliation process initiated in August 2011, when the Provisional Commission for Reflecting on National Reconciliation (CPRN) was established by presidential decree. This project further aims to support local communities in better understanding the transitional justice mechanisms— both judicial and non-judicial— that have thus far been implemented and identify ways in which they can engage with these mechanisms to address the past and ensure the non-recurrence of human rights violations in the future.

GIJTR has pursued these goals in close collaboration with its local partners, The Guinean Organization of Human Rights (OGDH) and the Association of the Family and Friends of the Victims of 28 September 2009 (AVIPA).

USING THIS FIELD GUIDE

By highlighting lessons learned throughout GIJTR’s work in Guinea, this Field Guide aims to shed light on the intersections between the transitional justice and violence prevention fields and the significance of involving local communities in fulfilling broader peace and reconciliation goals. While recognizing that transitional justice processes are context specific and must be tailored to local needs, the guide includes practical examples of participatory awareness-raising and consultation methods; highlights opportunities for local communities to engage in formal and informal truth, justice and reconciliation activities and discusses the role of the media in contributing to awareness-raising and violence prevention within communities that are at risk of mass violence – all of which could be adapted to diverse post-conflict contexts.

TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

The process of overcoming widespread human rights violations and mass atrocity requires a unique set of mechanisms and cooperation between multiple actors to promote long-term, just and sustainable peace. This set of mechanisms, commonly referred to as transitional justice, aims to foster reconciliation, prevent past acts of violence from recurring, ensure accountability for victims and re-establish a sense of cohesion in communities through redress and reparations for victims.

While notions of justice differ across cultures and individual societies must decide which programs are best suited to help them transition toward new periods of peace and recovery, the following are some of the most common transitional justice mechanisms:

Criminal prosecutions involve the investigation and trial of those accused of gross human rights violations in a court of law. These can be domestic, international or hybrid or mixed courts involving the participation of both local and foreign actors.

Truth-telling initiatives frequently involve the creation of specialized truth commissions or nation-wide truth-telling programs designed to operate outside of the judicial system to

uncover information about the nature of the human rights violations committed, address the root causes of conflict, provide a space for victims to share their experiences and make recommendations for overcoming widespread human rights violations.

Institutional reforms are designed to address patterns of systemic abuse or corruption within a nation’s fundamental institutions, such as the police force, court system, governing branches and military. These reforms may involve the removal of individuals accused of human rights violations. They aim to rebuild a sense of trust among the general public in a nation’s central institutions and promote a culture of accountability among the people working in the institutions themselves.

Reparations are material and symbolic benefit programs for victims of human rights violations designed to address the long-term consequences of the violence or abuse they suffered. These benefits may include but are not limited to financial compensation, the return of lost or stolen property, the provision of health care or psychosocial services, the creation of educational support programs, formal apologies and the construction of memorials or museums.

Memorialization efforts are a symbolic form of recognizing victims, educating the general public and future generations about past human rights violations and preserving memory to raise moral consciousness and prevent atrocities from recurring in the future. Memorials and museums frequently provide opportunities for members of diverse communities to express the different truths surrounding their experiences of conflict.¹

In addition, many of GIJTR’s programs incorporate capacity building workshops for local civil society organizations engaged in human rights documentation efforts—the gathering of information, including testimonies, about past violations—and the provision of psychosocial support to address trauma and promote healing among victims and survivors of conflict.

TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION: UNCOVERING KEY LINKS

While there are multiple intended outcomes of transitional justice processes, the implementation of all of these mechanisms is undertaken with the goal of preventing atrocities and human rights violations from recurring in a society that has just emerged from conflict. Despite this shared aim, however, few studies have directly analyzed the linkages between the fields of transitional justice and violence prevention. In countries like Guinea that have experienced ongoing cycles of conflict across multiple decades—with tensions frequently escalating around key political events like elections—there is a clear need for measures that both address past injustices while striving to prevent renewed violence from arising. The GIJTR’s work in Guinea has therefore been driven by these two complementary objectives, and this guide aims to analyze those efforts using ideas from both fields.

In 2014, the United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect developed a set of guidelines and indicators for states and practitioners working to prevent future widespread human rights violations—“The Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes: A Tool for Prevention.” Within this framework, the UN has identified multiple “risk factors” that indicate a state or community is particularly at-risk for experiencing atrocity crimes, including genocide, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and war crimes.² A study of these risk factors and indicators reveals several conditions that transitional justice mechanisms have been developed to address. This framework thus contains useful insights for examining the ties between transitional justice and violence prevention.

A history of human rights abuses and past atrocities puts states at greater risk for future violations. According to the UN framework, this is especially relevant when perpetrators

remain in positions of power, victims’ experiences of violence have not been officially recognized, there is little political will to uncover the truth about past abuses and feelings of hostility and resentment between groups have been left to fester, potentially leading to further discontent or a desire for revenge.³ While a history of widespread human rights abuses increases a state’s chances for experiencing atrocity crimes again, transitional justice mechanisms are specifically designed to aid societies in moving from periods of conflict to periods of long-term, sustainable peace. If implemented on a broad scale, with ownership by local actors and attention to the particular cultures and contexts in which the violations occurred, transitional justice mechanisms have the ability to help reshape a society in a way that promotes greater justice and equality for all, while recognizing past crimes and fostering a desire among its citizens to prevent similar acts of violence from happening again.

The presence of inadequate or dysfunctional institutions increase a state’s likelihood of experiencing future atrocity crimes.⁴ A nation’s fundamental institutions, including its security forces, governing bodies, and judicial branch play a critical role in protecting its citizens from human rights violations. When those institutions are unable to provide that protection—either due to a lack of resources, training or will—the possibility that members of that society will experience future atrocity crimes significantly increases. Transitional justice mechanisms, particularly institutional reforms, can be implemented to foster an increased sense of accountability among public servants, ensure they are adequately trained to deal with situations that could escalate into violent confrontations and increase the public’s trust in those institutions, lessening feelings of suspicion and fear between a state’s citizens and the members of its key institutions.

Unresolved inter-group tensions, particularly stemming from past conflict or acts of violence, increase the probability that renewed human rights violations will occur on a broad scale.⁵ When members of an identity-based group have been conditioned over long periods of time to consider those with different national, racial, ethnic, religious, or political backgrounds with fear or in terms of “us vs. them,” those fears and differences are at risk of being politicized and used to mobilize violent action against one group or another. Even in the absence of formal state-sanctioned criminal prosecutions or national truth commissions, transitional justice mechanisms can play a role in creating understanding between communities about

different perspectives and reducing the sense of threat or desire for revenge between groups. While differences of opinion or belief may remain, community dialogues, grassroots truth-telling initiatives and memorialization projects can aid individuals in recognizing the humanity of others outside of their communities and identifying non-violent solutions for addressing differences.



Paintings based on youth dialogues, a project sponsored through a GIJTR subgrant

In identifying these risk factors, it is important to note that it is impossible to precisely predict when and where future conflict will occur. The presence of one or more of these indicators in a particular context does not mean that widespread human rights violations will be committed. Rather, the UN has published these indicators in the hope that states and various domestic and international actors might use them to evaluate aspects within a particular society that put it at increased risk for future atrocity crimes and work toward addressing those negative conditions so that the crimes do not occur,

Indeed, the framework also identifies specific “mitigating factors” that, if present, lessen the chances that atrocities will be committed.⁶ Among these factors, the framework states that the presence of “a strong, organized and representative national civil society and of a free, diverse and independent national media” may reduce the likelihood that a nation will experience future conflict.⁷ The GIJTR’s holistic approach to transitional justice in Guinea and elsewhere recognizes the fundamental role that local civil society organizations and the media can play in educating the public on past atrocities, promoting respect for a culture of human rights, encouraging local ownership of and engagement with transitional justice processes and advocating for the ongoing reforms necessary for building an enduring peace based on the recognition of the fundamental rights of all members of a society. As will be reflected in the following pages, many of the conditions described above relate directly to the transitional justice and violence prevention work that the GIJTR and its local partners have undertaken in Guinea.



A body mapping workshop with South African activist Shirley Gunn held in Conakry in November 2017



A man reflects at an exhibition of body maps held in Conakry in July 2018.



A local partner offers his reflections at a GIJTR sponsored exhibition of body maps in July 2018.

2: BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY FOR TRUTH, JUSTICE AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION IN GUINEA

Country Background

Since gaining independence from France in 1958, Guinea has experienced ongoing cycles of violence characterized by wide-scale human rights violations and ethnic and political tensions that have been further exacerbated by authoritarian rulers who failed to hold perpetrators accountable and allowed a culture of impunity to flourish. President Alpha Condé's election in 2010 brought tremendous hope for greater protection of democracy and respect for human rights. In his inaugural speech, Condé declared his commitment to fight impunity. He has since taken concrete steps to break the cycle of violence and human rights abuses by initiating specific measures with regard to national reconciliation and securing justice for the victims of past atrocities, focusing particular attention on the victims of the September 28, 2009, stadium massacre.⁸

Following a UN International Commission Inquiry report, Condé' appointed three judges to investigate the members of the military involved in the massacre. Parallel to judicial proceedings concerning the 2009 stadium massacre, in 2011 President Condé also initiated a national reconciliation process by mandating a commission, the Provisional National Commission on Reconciliation (CPRN), to develop and recommend mechanisms for reconciliation. After conducting national consultations, the CPRN submitted its report in June 2016. The CPRN made several recommendations related to truth, justice, reparations, memorialization and institutional reforms to promote peace and reconciliation in Guinea. With regard to past atrocities, the report recommended establishing a Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission to investigate human rights violations committed since 1958. The issue of reparations— individual, collective, material as well as symbolic — is also highlighted in the report. Specifically, urgent measures of reparations are recommended to support victims with pressing needs that resulted from their victimization. These urgent reparations are recommended as an interim measure while formal national reparations mechanisms are being established.

However, since the submission of the CPRN report, there has been little progress on transitional justice issues in Guinea. Following a meeting in April 2017 with CSO and public sector representatives to discuss a draft bill for a Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission to be presented to parliament, there have been no further developments to date. In the interim, victims' hopes for any kind of redress and justice continue to dwindle, while many victims— such as those from the notorious Camp Boiro prison—are now frail and dying.⁹ Furthermore, the country's unresolved political and ethnic tensions, coupled with a pervasive culture of violence and impunity, threaten any expectations for reconciliation, peace or security for Guineans.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR JUSTICE, RECONCILIATION, AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Despite this recent period of inaction, the release of the CPRN’s report constitutes an opportunity for CSOs and the government of Guinea to pursue new truth and justice projects that have the potential to foster a sense of cohesion among groups from diverse backgrounds, promote reconciliation and prevent violence related to future key political events. Within this particular context, the GIJTR’s work in Guinea has aimed to ensure that communities—particularly survivors groups, the media and CSOs—have the required capacities to fully participate in the country’s transitional justice processes and that local communities’ needs in truth, justice and reconciliation issues are addressed in an integrated and sustained manner in the framework of the massacre trial and the implementation of the CPRN’s recommendations.

THE INITIAL OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT WERE THEREFORE DESIGNED TO:

- 1. Build the capacity of local CSOs to use participatory methodologies as tools to raise awareness within local communities on issues related to truth, justice and reconciliation and violence prevention;
- 2. Support local communities in better understanding the transitional justice mechanisms that have thus far been implemented to address atrocities such as the stadium massacre and identify ways in which they can access and engage with these mechanisms as a means to address past injustices and ensure non-recurrence;
- 3. Support CSOs to augment their existing advocacy programs, including increased dialogues with government ministries in the framework of the 2009 massacre trial and broader truth, justice and reconciliation processes with a goal of rebuilding confidence and respect for the rule of law;
- 4. Provide opportunities for vulnerable groups such as women, youth and survivors to actively promote the non-recurrence of violence within their communities by supporting them to use their own experiences of human rights violations as catalysts for dialogues about non-violence, empathy, personal healing and community re-building; and
- 5. Generate new insights on the intersections between transitional justice, violence prevention and community consultations.



Survivors and journalists gather at a violence prevention workshop

First Steps: Capacity Building For Local Civil Society Organizations and The Media

Transitional justice processes that prioritize victims’ needs and have broad public participation can help societies address histories of abuses and causes of conflict, thus disrupting cyclical patterns of violence. Conducting consultations with affected communities regarding transitional justice issues and promoting broad public participation in the development and implementation of truth, justice and reconciliation mechanisms have been shown to increase the legitimacy of the mechanisms that are implemented, because they are informed by and responsive to communities’ current needs and their perceptions of the historic sources of past atrocities. Most significantly, community consultations and participatory approaches to raising awareness of transitional justice mechanisms allow communities to identify and address some of the root causes of mass violence themselves, as well as develop strategies to prevent the recurrence of future violence and atrocities beyond the limited lifespan of formal transitional justice mechanisms. Moving into the initial stages of this project, the GIJTR worked to ensure that its support to existing survivors’ groups and CSOs would aid planned truth, justice and reconciliation mechanisms in meeting local needs—particularly those of victims—as well as conforming to international legal standards while remaining credible to all Guineans.

The GIJTR’s first steps in the project therefore involved extensive desktop research on the CPRN’s report, a review of local transitional justice programs and in-country consultations with project partners and key-stakeholders, which led to the selection of fourteen representatives from seven Guinean CSOs including victims’ groups, youth associations, women’s groups and human rights organizations and twelve journalists to participate in the project’s activities. During the first meeting of the participants, the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC), Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, and local partners OGDH and AVIPA provided attendees with a theoretical overview of transitional justice processes, grounding this information with practical sessions and taking examples from diverse fields such as journalism, political science, law and psychology to illustrate the holistic approach necessary for addressing questions of truth, justice and reconciliation in the wake of human rights violations. Participants showed a particular interest in sessions on best practices when interviewing victims of gross human rights violations, identifying and dealing with trauma, developing needs assessment questionnaires and constructing a media strategy.

As part of the workshop’s theoretical overview of transitional justice, sessions also included an introduction to national reconciliation processes implemented in related contexts, including South Africa, Liberia and Tunisia, as well as their successes and failures. These examples from other countries were not meant to offer a template of processes for Guineans to reproduce but, rather, were presented so that participants could learn from the positive and negative results of outside transitional justice efforts, decide which might be best suited to their particular context, understand the real limits of transitional justice mechanisms and gain inspiration for developing their own innovative approaches to national reconciliation and violence prevention.

“Youth are not only the future of the country but its present as well.”

— Workshop participant, Conakry, Guinea, September 2017

ASSESSING LOCAL NEEDS AND IDENTIFYING THE ROOT CAUSES OF CONFLICT

Using many of the techniques they learned about developing questionnaires and working with victims experiencing trauma, the local participants then carried out needs assessments aimed at identifying the greatest and most pressing concerns of individuals in their respective communities. Notably, many of the points that emerged from these local consultations are closely related to issues identified in the UN Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes, such as the needs for:

- An official acknowledgement by the state of the crimes committed;
- Fair trials to hold perpetrators of past atrocities accountable;
- The State apologizing for past human rights violations;
- Financial and symbolic reparations, including the restitution of lost property;
- Medical and psychological support programs;
- Institutional reform, particularly involving the judiciary; and
- Additional advocacy by CSOs and the local media for victims’ rights.¹⁰

In addition, local CSOs, victims’ associations, youth groups and women’s groups identified demands for the restitution of mass graves to the families of the victims, the building of monuments to preserve the memory of the disappeared; the collection of oral histories, the documentation of victims’ testimonies and the mapping of torture sites associated with past regimes. The results of these needs assessments were later used in the design of three-month community-based projects developed by each of the participating CSOs.

TELLING VICTIMS’ STORIES: RESPONSIBILITIES AND APPROACHES

From the earliest stages of the project, GIJTR and its local partners stressed the importance of engaging journalists and developing a media strategy to aid CSO and victim advocacy efforts, promote national reconciliation and educate the public on transitional justice mechanisms. The first in-person workshop between the participants covered examples of the ways in which media in Tunisia and South Africa played a role in those countries’ transitional justice processes and provided a space for participants to discuss security concerns related to working and conducting interviews with victims throughout the country. Questions emerged about accurately portraying victims’ experiences without exaggerating emotions, and many expressed a desire for more local journalists to be introduced to the topic, as participants were concerned that too few members of the media were familiar with core transitional justice concepts.

“You journalists, you are the first defenders of human rights because you are constantly listened to on the radio.”

— Reflection from workshop participant, Conakry, Guinea, May 2017

As a result, a second training with fifteen additional journalists was organized to provide a theoretical and practical introduction to transitional justice with a focus on the ways in which members of the media could effectively aid in promoting non-violence, establishing a culture of respect for human rights and encouraging empathy for others outside of one’s own community. The journalists involved continued to stay engaged throughout the project, providing the other participants with opportunities to share their advocacy work on television and radio programs and in newspaper articles and actively reporting on the smaller projects developed by the local CSOs, victims associations and women and youth groups. The important efforts of journalists throughout the project are a testament to the UN Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes’ suggestion that a strong national media operating independently and with a commitment to highlighting a diverse range of perspectives and views has the potential to play a role in preventing future outbreaks of violence, as the journalists indeed played a critical role in educating the public on local transitional justice processes and victims’ advocacy campaigns.¹¹

A LOCALLY-OWNED AND COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH TO TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

Building on the first workshop and in response to the needs assessments collected, GIJTR partners organized a follow-up, five-day intensive training focused on the use of participatory methodologies to raise awareness on issues related to transitional justice, human rights and violence prevention. ICSC members from South Africa and Kenya facilitated workshop sessions focused on the role of oral history, theatre and visual art as tools for community engagement. Throughout the workshop, discussions revolved around using the discussed methodologies to meet the identified victims’ needs and resulted in elaborating the following group priorities that were common to several of the participants’ findings: (1) collecting oral histories to document human rights violations; (2) mapping the locations of past atrocities; and (3) conducting advocacy actions to assert victims’ rights in the transitional justice process to influence policy.

“Someone’s life story is a gift.”
— Reflection from workshop participant, Conakry, Guinea, May 2017

Prior to the training, few participants had knowledge of conducting oral history interviews. Workshop sessions emphasized the importance of collecting victims’ stories in a participatory and ethical manner that would empower interviewees and function as a broader community-building activity. Using the example of the extensive oral history work conducted by the South African facilitators from the District Six Museum, the workshop highlighted the point that the collection process alone is valuable but inadequate for creating social change. Oral history projects must therefore be deliberate and transparent about how the interviewees’ stories will be shared with others, and for what purpose. All of the participants, and particularly the representatives of the victims’ associations, agreed that there is an urgent need to document human rights violations for use in Guinea’s nascent transitional justice process, as many victims of violations under past regimes are now elderly and have numerous health concerns. In addition, participants improved their ability to develop clear, concise advocacy messages and discussed the need to map the locations of mass graves and sites where atrocities have occurred in order to preserve the memories of those events and contribute to broader national truth-telling initiatives.

Small Grants: Responding To Local Needs

As a final step in the participatory methodologies training, six of the participating CSOs and victims’ associations discussed the findings of their needs assessments and, working closely with workshop facilitators and taking inspiration from the examples presented from other contexts, shared proposals for three-month community engagement and awareness-raising projects. With small grants of 3,000 US dollars each and technical support from the GIJTR, these community engagement actions were carried out over the following months and took a number of different forms. Each of these projects is described below and will be further developed during subsequent stages of GIJTR’s collaboration with local partners in Guinea.

The Humanitarian Association for the Protection of Women and Children (HPFE) identified 41 victims of the Zogota Massacre (August 3-4, 2012), including four widows and 37 orphans.¹² HPFE conducted interviews with the women and children victims and produced oral histories documenting their recounted experiences. HPFE intends to continue working with the victims to form a victims’ association and draft a formal complaint for use in further transitional justice processes, while continuing to provide them with judicial and psychosocial support.

The Association of Victims of Camp Boiro (AVCB) used their small grant funds to identify victims imprisoned at Camp Boiro between 1960 and 1984; provide them with information on key transitional justice issues and mechanisms; identify their immediate needs in relation to local truth-telling, justice and reconciliation; and conduct advocacy training with them. The participating victims expressed their broad support for the community-based exchanges. AVCB will continue post-project work with the victims to mount an advocacy campaign aimed at securing increased access for victims to mass graves and sites of past atrocities.

The Association of Victims of Repression (AVR) located victims of Guinea’s July 4, 1985 coup and accompanying breakdown in law and order and documented their experiences. AVR successfully collected oral histories from victims across five prefectures. Following the project and in partnership with the other participating CSOs and victims’ associations, AVR will work with the victims to pursue legal action against the state before relevant international tribunals.

The Guinean Organization for the Defense of Human and Citizens’ Rights (OGDH) identified 40 victims of the violence perpetrated by Guinea security forces amidst nationwide demonstrations in January and February 2007. OGDH organized four gatherings that brought together representatives from four partner organizations, victims, and a lawyer and law professor to discuss key issues mentioned in the CPRN report as well as relevant transitional justice concepts, including truth-telling, justice and reconciliation mechanisms. OGDH will expand their project within Guinea’s interior to collect additional victim testimonies; advocate before government officials for the revision and implementation of the draft national reconciliation laws; and conduct a campaign to mobilize media professionals to publish articles on key issues and points of debate related to national reconciliation.

The Association of Victims, Family and Friends of September 28, 2009 (AVIPA) used their small grant funds to identify the needs of victims of the September 28th 2009 stadium massacre. Following an initial consultation, AVIPA worked with victims to produce both a skit and a short film highlighting select victim testimonies and featuring descriptions of their experiences on the day of the massacre and in its aftermath. AVIPA noted their success in gaining the wary but crucial participation of key stakeholders through a roundtable discussion focused on AVIPA’s advocacy efforts and media strategy to draw increased

attention to their activities. AVIPA will build on the short film and produce a second documentary bringing together testimonies of victims of political violence from multiple periods in Guinea’s recent history, dating back to the country’s independence in 1958.

The Youth Coalition for the Defense of the Rights of Victims of Violence in Guinea (COJEDEV) conducted trainings with 20 young leaders in their community, educating them on key transitional justice concepts and training them to advocate for the rule of law and the national reconciliation process in Guinea. As part of this training, COJEDEV documented stories of ten young activists who experienced human rights violations during protests and then recruited an artist who created ten paintings based on each of the of the victims’ stories in order to raise awareness on the impact of political violence. COJEDEV will continue to expand their efforts to educate more young people on the importance of national reconciliation and involve them in future transitional justice advocacy campaigns.

BUILDING TRUST BETWEEN GOVERNMENT-LED TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Despite the publication of the CPRN’s report and the initiation of the 2009 stadium massacre trial, Guinean CSOs and victims’ associations have continued to advocate for increased transparency in the government’s pursuit of transitional justice processes. To aid in fostering trust between relevant government ministries and project participants, ICSC supported local partners to organize four roundtable discussions during the course of the project to facilitate discussions between members of participating CSOs, victim associations, women’s and youth groups and a representative from the Ministry of National Unity and Citizenship and the United Nation’s Office of the High Commissioner. These meetings focused on truth, justice and reconciliation developments within the country as well as community needs and concerns related to these issues. The roundtables also allowed for a regularly-scheduled and updated flow of information about the 2009 stadium massacre trial and broader transitional justice processes to communities participating in the project, as well as to existing survivors’ organizations and the broader public. Following these discussions and in response to the concerns relayed by the project participants, the representative of the Ministry of National Unity and Citizenship expressed his support for the participants’ efforts to achieve sustainable reconciliation and conveyed that “the issues of truth, justice and reconciliation are just and noble causes, in the sense that they are the bedrock of any country’s development and good governance.”

Final Reflection And Next Steps

The first phase of GIJTR’s work in Guinea culminated in a workshop that provided participants with an opportunity

to present their individual three-month projects, reflect on lessons learned throughout the trainings and generate ideas for ongoing programming and advocacy activities.

Participants noted that they intend

“It should be recognized that one of the biggest successes of this project has been the bringing together of multiple victims’ associations; by working together, the victims’ associations realized that the most important point is not which association was created first or which type of violence should be judged most harshly, but that impunity must come to an end and all victims without distinction must have their rights reestablished.”

— Reflection from participants’ project report, July 2018

to incorporate the skills and knowledge they gained during the workshops and trainings to advance victims' rights and engage with the national reconciliation process. They credited the unique, multidisciplinary nature of the trainings with significantly increasing their effectiveness and expressed their appreciation for the culturally-sensitive approach taken by the facilitators. Finally, participants used the final meeting to formalize their plans to establish a local network to collectively advocate for a comprehensive and integrated approach to transitional justice in Guinea that will meet communities' and victims' needs in a holistic manner. The creation of this network was regarded as a success by all, as many of the different CSOs, victims' associations, and women's and youth groups were initially hesitant to share information and work collaboratively.

Future steps in GIJTR's work in Guinea will build off of the progress made in this initial stage, further developing the participants' community-building projects, equipping religious leaders with knowledge on key transitional justice mechanisms, providing participants with an opportunity to learn about transitional justice processes in other African countries and resulting in the production of a second short film and a traveling exhibition of body maps created by victims of human rights violations.



A violence prevention workshop in Conakry

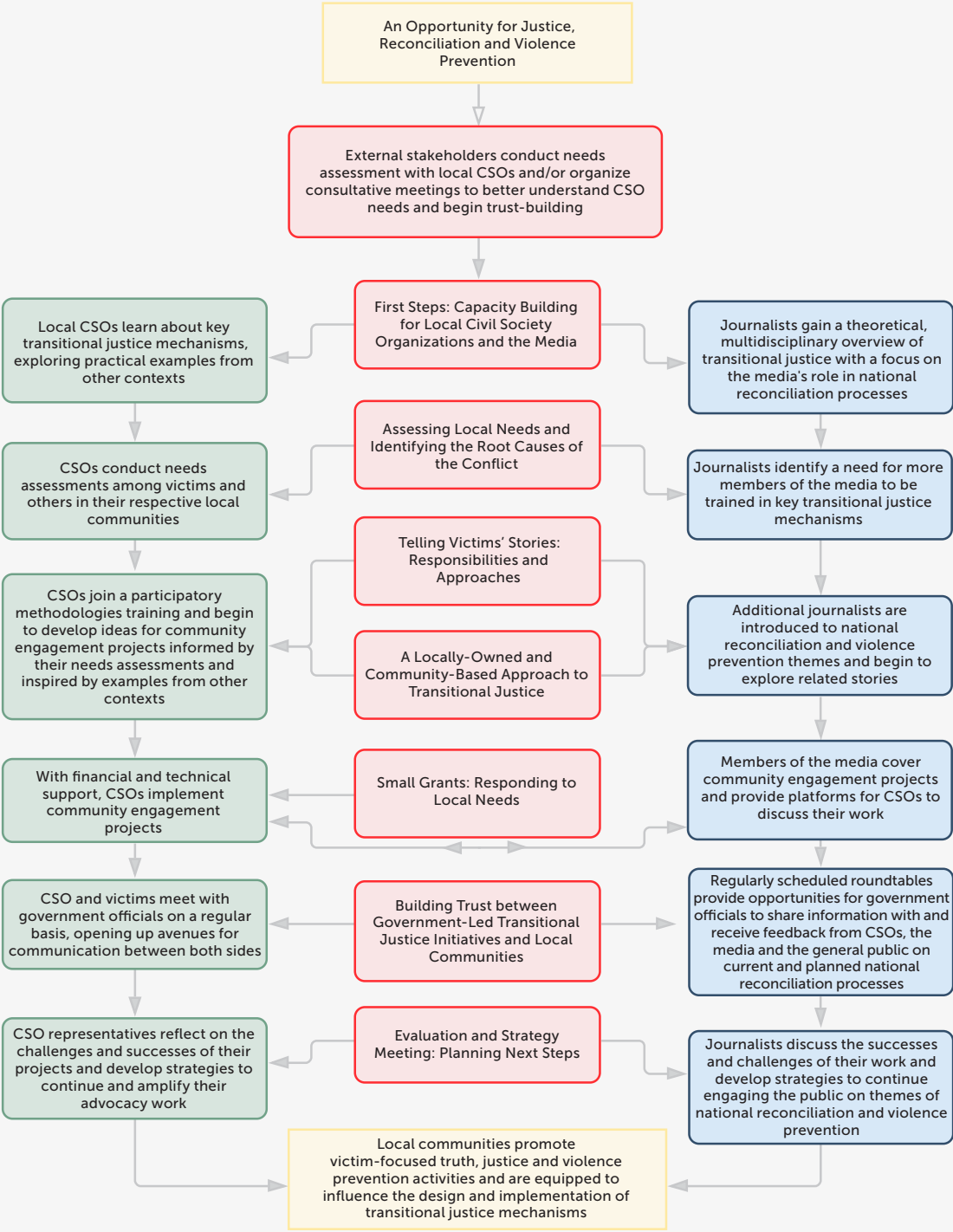


Activists, journalists and survivors convene at a violence prevention training



A local partner helps lead a workshop on transitional justice and media in May 2017

3: VIOLENCE PREVENTION, TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE AND COMMUNITY CONSULTATION: A FLOWCHART FOR PRACTITIONERS





A woman reflects at an exhibition of body maps in July 2018

4: CONCLUSION

In countries like Guinea that are rebuilding in the wake of cyclic patterns of violence, transitional justice mechanisms provide opportunities for communities to come to terms with the past by uncovering the silences and myths about the violations that occurred, recognizing and reintegrating survivors into their communities, ensuring accountability and rebuilding a culture of human rights based on the rule of law. GIJTR's work in post-conflict countries has shown that the perpetuation of a culture of violence, flourishing in the absence of respect for human rights, is partly a result of a traumatized society that has experienced protracted violence but has had limited opportunities to address the residues of the past or manage feelings of vengeance. Additionally, the lack of recognition and justice for survivors – and their ongoing marginalization within their communities – can breed recurring cycles of violence, anger and hate in new generations.

While more research is needed on the links between transitional justice and violence prevention, this field guide aims to make a small contribution toward identifying the ways in which the two fields are connected, while providing practical examples of lessons learned from GIJTR's work in Guinea that can serve as points of inspiration for practitioners working in other countries emerging from conflict and decades of human rights abuses.



A participatory methodologies training in September 2017



A survivor of Camp Boiro during a participatory methodologies training in September 2017

5: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Select Online Resources:

"Field Guide: Helping Prevent Mass Atrocities"

- <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/Field%20Guide%20Mass%20Atrocities.pdf>

"Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes"

- http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/publications-and-resources/Framework%20of%20Analysis%20for%20Atrocity%20Crimes_EN.pdf

"Transitional Justice Grassroots Toolkit: User's Guide"

- https://www.ulster.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/231712/75856R658TJI-USER-GUIDE112017.pdf

"United Nations Approach to Transitional Justice"

- https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/files/TJ_Guidance_Note_March_2010FINAL.pdf

"Can Inclusive Peace Processes Work?"

- <https://www.usip.org/events/can-inclusive-peace-processes-work>

Select Print Resources:

Bangoura, Dominique. "Transitioning to Democratic Governance in Guinea." *Learning from West African Experiences in Security Sector Governance*. Edited by Bryden, A and Chappuis, F. London. Ubiquity Press. 2015: 37-59.

Boraine, Alexander L. "Transitional Justice: A Holistic Interpretation." *Journal of International Affairs*. vol. 60. no. 1. 2006: 17-27.

Chenoweth and Stephen. *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict*. Columbia University Press. 2011.

De Greiff, Pablo. "Theorizing Transitional Justice." *Nomos*. vol. 51. 2012: 31-77.

Duthie, Roger. "Afterword: The Consequences of Transitional Justice in Particular Contexts."

Transitional Justice: Global Mechanisms and Local Realities after Genocide and Mass Violence. edited by A. Hinton. Rutgers University Press, 2010: 249–256.

Fletcher and Weinstein. Violence and Social Repair: Rethinking the Contribution of Justice to Reconciliation. *Human Rights Quarterly*. Vol 1. No. 1. 2002: 580. <https://scholarship.law.berkeley.edu/facpubs/545/>

Human Security Unit. United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security. “Human Security in Theory and Practice” 2004: 12.

Lundy and McGovern. “Whose Justice? Rethinking Transitional Justice from the Bottom Up.” *Journal of Law and Society*. vol. 35. no. 2. 2008: 265–292.

Olsen, et al. “The Justice Balance: When Transitional Justice Improves Human Rights and Democracy.” *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 32. no. 4. 2010: 980–1007.

Olsen, et al. “Transitional Justice in the World, 1970–2007: Insights from a New Dataset.” *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 47. no. 6. 2010: 803–809.

Perkoski and Chenoweth. “Nonviolent Resistance and Prevention of Mass Killings During Popular Uprisings” *International Center on Nonviolent Conflict*. Volume No. 2. April 2018. www.nonviolent-conflict.org.

Stromseth. “Peacebuilding and Transitional Justice: The Road Ahead.” *Managing Conflict in a World Adrift*, edited by Chester A. Crocker et al. McGill-Queen’s University Press. 2015: 571–592.

References

¹ For additional overviews of transitional justice, see: Transitional Justice Overview, US Department of State, May 16, 2016, <https://www.state.gov/j/gcj/transitional/257566.htm>; and Guidance Note of the Secretary-General: United Nations Approach to Transitional Justice, United Nations, March 2010, https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/files/TJ_Guidance_Note_March_2010FINAL.pdf.

² “Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes.” A Tool for Prevention,” United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, July 2014, http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/publications-and-resources/Framework%20of%20Analysis%20for%20Atrocity%20Crimes_EN.pdf.

³ “Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes,” 11.

⁴ “Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes,” 12.

⁵ “Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes,” 13.

⁶ “Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes,” 15.

⁷ “Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes,” 15.

⁸ For additional information, please see “Bloody Monday: The September 28 Massacre and Rapes by Security Forces,” published by Human Rights Watch in December 2009: <https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/12/17/bloody-monday/september-28-massacre-and-rapes-security-forces-guinea>.

⁹ For further reading on Camp Boiro, see May, Clifford D, “In Post-Coup Guinea, a Jail is Thrown Open,” New York Times, April 12, 1984: <https://www.nytimes.com/1984/04/12/world/in-post-coup-guinea-a-jail-is-thrown-open.html>.

¹⁰ “Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes.”

¹¹ “Framework of Analysis for Atrocity Crimes,” 13.

¹² For additional information, please see “Guinea probes killing at Vale-BSG iron ore mine protest,” Reuters, August 8, 2012: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-guinea-mine-protest/guinea-probes-killing-at-vale-bsg-iron-ore-mine-protest-idUSBRE8771JR20120808>.





International Coalition of
SITES *of* CONSCIENCE

1.646.397.ICSC (4272)

www.sitesofconscience.org

 [Facebook.com/SitesofConscience](https://www.facebook.com/SitesofConscience)

 [@SitesConscience](https://twitter.com/SitesConscience)

 [SitesofConscience](https://www.instagram.com/SitesofConscience)