



Bld. Bischoffsheim 11, 8th Floor
B-1000 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32 (0)2 227 6140
Fax: +32 (0)2 227 6148
Email: brussels@ictj.org
www.ictj.org

23 January 2009

**Invitation: IFP Roundtable on Justice in Peacebuilding
5 March 2009, Brussels**

As you may know, the International Center for Transitional Justice is one of ten NGOs in an EC-funded consortium called the "Initiative for Peace-building" (IfP). Its aim is "to develop and harness international knowledge and expertise in the field of conflict prevention and peace-building to ensure that all stakeholders, including EU institutions, can access strong independent analysis in order to facilitate better informed and more evidence-based policy decisions" (www.initiativeforpeacebuilding.eu).

Under the IfP, the ICTJ is organizing a one-day *Roundtable on Justice in Peacebuilding*, on 5 March 2009, in Brussels. As someone closely involved with justice issues as part of the broad agenda of crisis management, conflict resolution and prevention, you are cordially invited to attend this roundtable. The event will last from 9:00 to 17:30 and will take place at Hotel Martin's Central Park, Boulevard Charlemagne, 80, Karel de Grotelaan, Brussels.

It is a given nowadays that successful peacemaking requires a comprehensive approach to conflict resolution and peace-building. It is also accepted wisdom that for any peace process and any break with repressive rule to be sustainable, human rights must be at its heart. "Justice" provides both the conceptual framework and the concrete means to do this:

- Justice should be done by bringing those responsible for mass abuse of human rights to account and so breaking the cycle of impunity.
- Justice should be equally done to victims and survivors so that civic trust can be restored and they become full rights-bearers in a new society.
- Basic safety should be restored and the security system (including the justice sector) reformed so that further abuses are prevented.
- Humanitarian and development assistance should benefit the most vulnerable with a view to building a just society.
- Divisive mechanisms should give way to governance that is based on the rule of law and equality for all, with public institutions that are responsive to citizens' needs.

This can be achieved instrumentally by providing concrete tools (prosecution, truth recovery, redress), and conceptually by setting an overarching goal (a law-based, "just" society). As a key ingredient as well as long-term objective of conflict resolution and peace-building, "justice" suits many purposes, but precisely because of that encompassing reach it is a concept that lacks clarity. The terms "international justice" and "transitional justice" can add to confusion and even controversy, especially when demands for justice (in the sense of criminal accountability) may seem to jeopardize peacemaking efforts and impede a broader development agenda.

"International justice" is still largely synonymous with criminal justice. However, even the epitome of international justice, the International Criminal Court, is based on a comprehensive instrument, the Rome Statute, which offers a much broader vision of justice, reflected in the principle of complementarity and by putting victims at the heart of the Rome Statute system. This vision has yet to be made operational.

“Transitional justice” is sometimes regarded as a soft option of justice. However, as a comprehensive framework for confronting past abuses combining judicial and non-judicial measures with processes of political and social transformation, it offers a way of integrating the needs of peace, stability *and* justice.

So what is justice? And how can justice contribute to conflict resolution and sustainable peace-building?

This roundtable will bring together key EU and NGO participants to explore the notion of justice in peace-building both conceptually and in terms of its application. The idea is to chart the territory between what is commonly but narrowly understood as international (criminal) justice, and the broader justice field including the whole range of transitional justice goals and instruments. The aim will be to develop a shared understanding of the broader notions of justice, as a basis for a wider range of more effective and coherent policies.

The roundtable will include around 30 participants with a good balance between institutions and civil society representatives. Participation should be limited to one representative for each organization. The discussion will be under Chatham House rules, in order to enable a free exchange of information on key issues. Well in advance of the meeting the ICTJ will circulate an agenda with a concept note drawing on the brief description above as a basis for the discussion at the roundtable. Apart from a broader discussion on the concept of justice, the agenda will also include room for concrete case studies examining how the issue of justice plays out in peacemaking.

The outcome of the roundtable should be a report reflecting the discussion and setting out directions for policy development as well as pointers for concrete implementation. The roundtable should also help in enhancing cooperation between civil society and EU institutions in the area of justice.

I am confident that these questions have your interest and hope that you will be able to accept this invitation.

Please confirm your participation by **February 16**, to Alexandra Nerisanu, at brussels@ictj.org or +32 (0)2 227 6146.

I look forward to hearing from you.

With best wishes,



Dick Oosting
Europe Director