



**A Decade of Working with Victims and Survivors
of Human Rights Violations and International Crimes**

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Message from LAW founder and Executive Director



Ten years ago, LAW was just an idea. An idea that came from working on the front lines. First as a criminal defence and refugee lawyer in the UK Courts, then working for the United Nations and Norwegian Refugee Council in Darfur; in Somalia, in occupied Palestine, and beyond.

I noticed that there was something missing – a space for gender sensitive lawyers, working and living in conflict affected areas, who placed survivors and victims of grave human rights violations at the forefront of their work, and who thought (and acted) outside of the box. This gap was leading to thousands of victims and survivors - being denied the access to justice they deserved. It also exacerbated further violence.

So, sitting at my table I sketched out a plan for a legal organisation of experienced advocates who could ask victims and survivors what kind of justice they needed.

Advocates who would be standing shoulder to shoulder with victims and survivors, and who would think creatively about legal redress and how to access it. After many discussions with my family, good friends, and consultations with more than 100 experts - a plan for an organisation to provide this essential advice and action was born.

But not everyone was supportive. People said to me, “This is crazy!” “This will never work!” “Do we really need another NGO?” and “Why do this to yourself?” I started LAW in my spare bedroom in Nairobi – with no employees and no funds. For the first six months we could not afford any salaries. My third daughter was born and between her and the birth of LAW I barely slept for three years, and holidays were a dream!

When you start a new organisation obtaining the first contract is one of the most difficult parts. We secured one of our first contracts with UNHCR, to address sexual violence committed by security forces in Somalia. In 2015, a panel hosted under this project resulted in a joint statement by the Special Representative of the Chair of the African Commission, and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia acknowledging for the first-time the allegations of sexual violence perpetrated by African Union forces and committing to a zero-tolerance policy.

We also commenced the drafting of the first piece of legislation to address sexual violence in the country– the Sexual Offences Bill - with the former Minister of Human Rights Development of Somalia. I remember the former Prime Minister of Somalia telling me, ‘there will never be sexual offences legislation in Somalia.’ In 2017, however, he stood before the UN General Assembly and pledged his commitment to the passage of the Sexual Offences Bill. The Bill was passed by Cabinet the following year. By the end of 2014, we were 20 staff working in Nairobi and we had expanded our work to South Sudan and occupied Palestine. And today LAW has secured an annual budget of more than \$10 million; employs almost 100 staff in 14 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Europe; and has advised tens of thousands of individuals.

We have supported legal action for victims and survivors in nine national courts; the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights; the International Criminal Court, the International Court of Justice, UN bodies, and under universal jurisdiction in domestic courts. I will never forget when one of our female Rohingya clients who testified in court said to me, “Who would have thought that it would be the Rohingya women to hold the Myanmar military to account.”

But legal action is not always possible, and our reports and advocacy have made a real difference. From supporting survivors to advocate at the top level – before the UN Human Rights Council and Security Council, and Governments – to publishing reports and articles on key questions of law and human rights. LAW will not shy away from the topics that matter to the survivors that we represent, even when the political climate can be hostile. In 2022 LAW published a report on the widespread and previously unreported use of sexual violence during the Lebanese Civil Wars. When one survivor was asked why she had never spoken of her rape before, she told LAW, ‘no one ever asked.’ So LAW will not stop asking.

We are proud today that the OAK foundation has called LAW a “leader in its field”; our partner Justice Rapid Response said that LAW is amongst one of the best civil society organisations in the sector in Geneva and other partners have called our reports “brilliant” and “a must read.” There are over 100 articles in the media about our work in multiple languages, including the New York Times, Al Jazeera, the BBC, The Guardian and ABC.

Why has LAW been successful?

I think there are four basic ingredients:

First: we have a dedicated and brilliant staff. We have an amazing, diverse team, with most of them being in the field in often very difficult situations. We are in their debt.

Second: an experienced, wise and supportive Board - many of whom have been with us for years - who advise and follow activities closely. A huge thank you goes to them!

Third: our committed donors. Who believed in our mission and then backed it up with the resources to execute. LAW has been exceptionally well supported by more than 15 governments, foundations and some individuals, which we hope to expand in the coming years. A huge thank you to all LAW donors.

And the **fourth:** the trust and confidence that victims and survivors show, who bravely share some of the most horrific times in their lives with us, in the pursuit of justice.

Sometimes, all we can offer is to listen to them, and to ensure that we will not forget. To all of those that we have had the privilege to work with – we salute your courage and your bravery. It is for you that LAW was established, and it is for you that we keep working.

Finally, a word on the role of legal support and action in this increasingly turbulent world. What I believe we are seeing is the widespread failure of the established international system to agree on effective political and security strategies to reduce conflict and protect civilians.

In all the major conflicts today – from Sudan to Ukraine to Gaza, and many others – we see overstretched humanitarian action trying to alleviate suffering and somehow to compensate for the failure of peacekeeping and mediation. Action that was never designed nor able to fill the greater void left by this failure. International accountability mechanisms, including the International Criminal Court, the International Court of Justice, and the UN all struggle to keep pace with the global epidemic of violence in conflict areas. And they cannot. Still justice for victims in conflict and survivors remains rare.

It is in this context that LAW has focused on providing comprehensive and onsite support for survivors to access either national or international legal avenues. By providing legal aid to victims and survivors, conducting strategic litigation, assisting national actors with legal technical expertise, and advocating before national and international bodies, LAW places survivors' needs for justice and accountability at the centre of its work.

In LAW's next decade, I hope we will support and participate in an international global network of like-minded legal action groups in all regions, building on the 28 national partners which we work with today.

Thank you for supporting LAW for the last 10 years!

Thank you for caring about a world where we have pushed the frontiers of justice to tens of thousands, and which in the next ten years will expand to hundreds of thousands more.

Antonia Mulvey

Antonia Mulvey
Founder and Executive Director,
Legal Action Worldwide



LAW's History

Legal Action Worldwide was founded in July 2013 by Antonia Mulvey, a British human rights lawyer, who sought to change the way that victims and survivors of human rights violations, especially gendered violations, in conflict contexts access justice. After years of living and working in war zones in Africa and the Middle East, Antonia decided to prioritise support for frontline, survivor-centred creative lawyering which could make a real difference, not only to survivors and their families but can also contribute towards peace, stability and security for the future.

Following three roundtables with over 100 brilliant UN staff, academics, INGOs, and relevant legal experts across three continents, LAW was born. This idea was supported by an in-depth mapping and scoping exercise to review legal work being undertaken by organisations on the ground in conflict contexts. More than one year of research identified the need for a non-profit organisation focused on creative avenues for legal redress in fragile and conflict affected areas. It was envisaged that the organisation would work on the ground, placing survivors and national lawyers in the driving seat and at the same time, linking them to highly innovative international lawyers around the world.

Working with **36 partners**, LAW has provided legal information to more than **100'000** individuals in conflict contexts and supported more than **4'000 individuals (73% of which are women)** with legal representation. LAW has initiated landmark cases, provided critical interventions, advocated for the views of our clients at the International Criminal Court, the International Court of Justice, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women – and in many other courts and justice mechanisms. LAW has submitted **2'855 pages of evidence** to National and International Courts and tribunals, and has provided training to **more than 11'120 community members**. **More than 1'588 justice actors** have received training or technical support across a wide range of topics relevant to their work. LAW supported **2'000 survivors** in establishing responsive networks. LAW's team now numbers almost **100 lawyers, jurists and support staff**.

Who we are and what we do

Legal Action Worldwide is an independent non-profit association comprised of creative human rights lawyers and jurists, unified in our belief that those who have experienced grave human rights violations, should receive targeted, survivor-centred, gender-competent and trauma-informed support to access the justice they deserve. LAW's team works on the ground in conflict contexts combining national and international expertise with a deep understanding of victim and survivor needs and wishes. This approach provides a unique opportunity to address violence experienced; to bring national, regional and international attention to the situation and to break the cycle of impunity and recurrence.

LAW places survivors at the centre of the drive for justice and empowers them in transforming from victim, to survivor to advocate. We work directly with survivors and their communities, building their capacity to meaningfully engage with justice and advocacy processes. Alongside this, we provide technical assistance to strengthen justice institutions to ensure they are equipped to deliver the justice that survivors need, and work with legislators to promote accountability and the rule of law.

In collaboration with survivors, their communities and national justice actors, LAW undertakes creative accountability strategies, including strategic litigation at national, regional and international levels. These initiatives are driven by victim and survivor justice priorities, whether this be criminal justice, state accountability, reparations or truth – transformative justice, tailored to the needs of those who need it most.



Our Vision

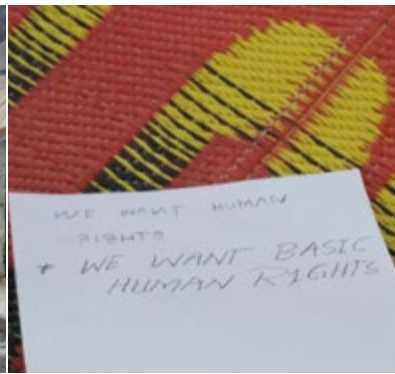
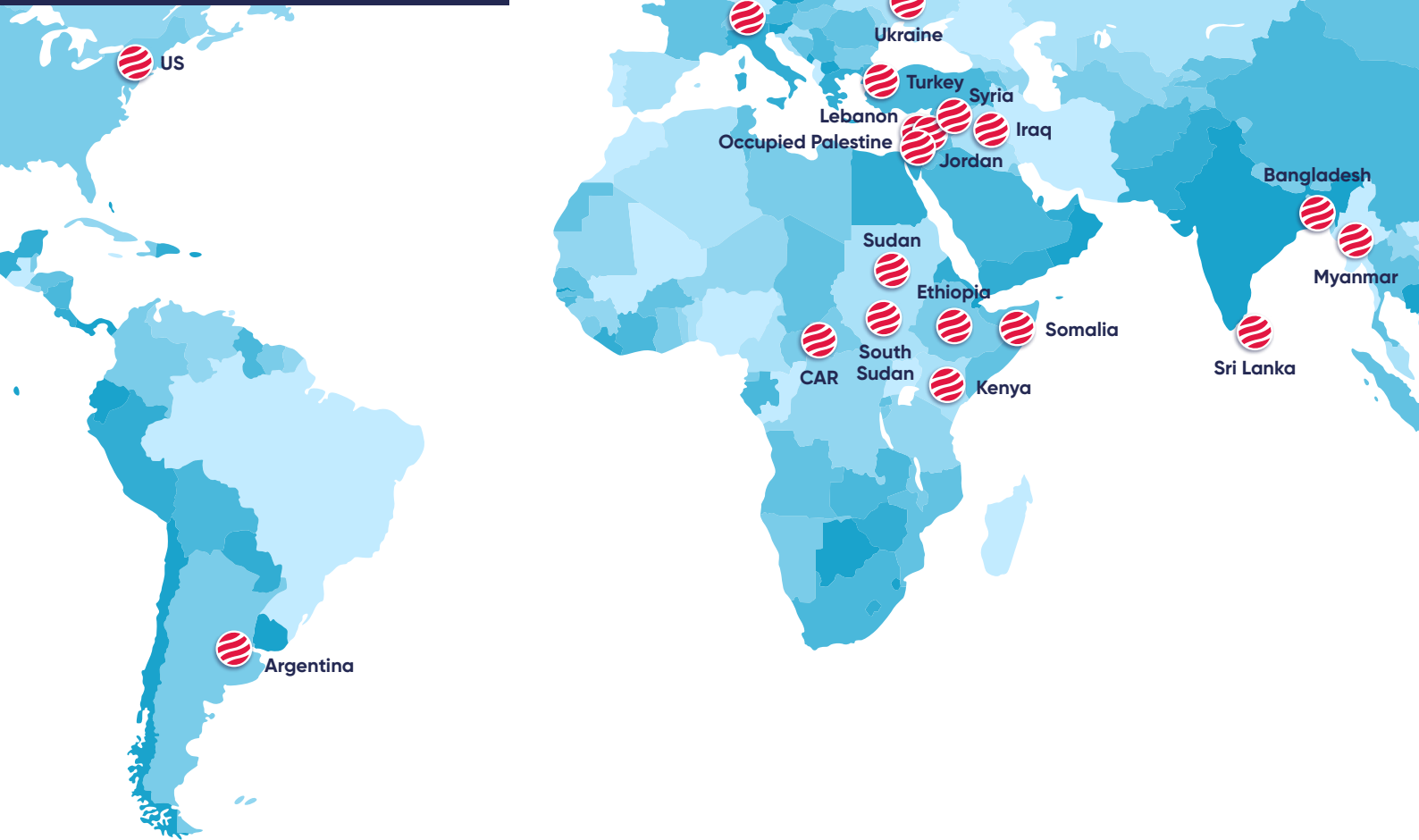
"All individuals are treated equally: With respect, dignity and meaningful access to justice".



Our Mission

"To empower individuals & communities who have suffered from human rights violations and abuses to obtain justice and strengthen institutions to deliver justice to them".

Where we work





How we work

Legal aid and empowerment

We empower survivors and their communities to regain agency by providing legal information, assistance and representation to those who have experienced serious human rights violations and abuses, including gender-based violence, in conflict-affected areas.

Strategic litigation

We seek to bring about transformative changes in the law, practice or public awareness by bringing carefully-selected cases in domestic, regional and international courts and other justice mechanisms. In doing so, the security and protection of claimants and witnesses is paramount.

Technical Assistance

We provide advice and mentoring to legal, justice and civil society actors, strengthening their ability to protect, assist, and represent victims and survivors. We work with justice institutions and national partners to strengthen their ability to deliver effective, survivor-centred, gender committed justice and to uphold human rights and the rule of law.

Advocacy and Policy

We amplify the voices of survivors and raise awareness and understanding of their issues, experiences, and their fight for justice. We place survivors at the centre of advocacy efforts and increase their capacity to design and implement their own initiatives. All of LAW's work is supported by in-depth research and policy analysis.

What we work on

LAW's key thematic focuses during its first 10 years include:

- Gender Equality and Gender-based Violence
- Accountability and the Rule of Law
- Transformative Justice
- Atrocities against Aid Workers

This framework does not adequately describe the fullness of LAW programming, nor the critical links between the thematic focuses. Moving forward LAW will be framing its thematic focuses as follows:

Discrimination:

Discrimination is frequently the root cause of the human rights violations experienced by the survivors and victims with which LAW works. Discrimination may be based on gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics – as well as age, race or ethnicity.

Ending Impunity:

The lack of accountability for perpetrators of serious human rights violations and international crimes is a central factor in the continuation of these acts. LAW will work to ensure

that where such conduct occurs, those most responsible are held accountable, be they state actors, military actors, non-state actors, humanitarian actors, other private individuals or corporate entities.

Transformative Justice:

Justice must bring about change for those who need it most – victims and survivors must not end up in a situation which is the same or worse than that in which they started.

Strengthening Access to Justice and the Rule of Law:

Removing barriers which prevent victims and survivors from accessing justice. This means not only adopting a survivor-centred approach in supporting LAW clients, but supporting other actors in adopting a survivor centred approach, and strengthening justice institutions to better accommodate survivors and victims, no matter their background or social status, gender, sexual orientation, nationality, race, ethnicity, age or other status.





Our approach and principles

Holistic and Trauma-informed:

LAW works in coordination with other organisations to build robust referral systems to ensure that survivors and victims receive a holistic set of services, including medical, psycho-social and other essential services. All legal services are trauma-informed.

Gender Proactive:

LAW recognises the different experience of women, men, girls and boys, as well as members of LGBTQI+ communities, affected by human rights violations and abuses. Their concerns and experiences are fundamental in the design, implementation, and approaches of LAW's legal assistance programmes. Additionally, LAW works directly on gender equality and gender justice issues – tackling head-on deeply rooted stereotypes and prejudices which prevent the meaningful participation of these groups in justice, transition or peacebuilding efforts. LAW recognises that without addressing gender discrimination, cycles of violence will continue – within families, communities and even on an international scale.

Intersectional and Feminist:

In addition to being gender proactive, LAW's approach is explicitly feminist. It seeks to dismantle patriarchal structures which perpetuate discrimination and inequality, and which undermine peace and security. Alongside this, LAW acknowledges that multiple identities, (including race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, disability) may shape individual experiences – we seek to centralise voices which have traditionally been marginalised, address other structural drivers of inequality and foster inclusivity at all levels.

Survivor and Victim-Centred:

Understanding the justice priorities and demands of the victims and survivors with which LAW works takes precedence and informs project design, including objectives, from retributive justice, through to reparations and non-recurrence. Moreover, where safe and appropriate to do so, LAW will seek to empower survivors and victims by enabling them to lead justice efforts.

This approach amplifies survivor voices in their fight for justice and ensures that they play a directing role in advocacy initiatives. Through this process survivors are empowered to act as advocates for themselves, their community, as Champions for Justice.

Locally driven:

LAW understands that, where possible, justice at home is often more tangible for a larger numbers of beneficiaries. Additionally, the impact of technical assistance to national justice institutions has far more impact on the reestablishment of the Rule of Law and plays a role in guarantees of non-recurrence of mass human rights violations and international crimes.

LAW prioritises working intensively over extensively:

With a long-term presence in the field, LAW forms significant and lasting relationships with survivors and victims. In doing so, these individuals and communities benefit from the ability to ask questions over time and to be continually consulted and updated (victims / survivors) and mentored and advised (justice actors). Equally, LAW benefits from an in-depth knowledge of community desires, needs and interests as they evolve over time, learning from their feedback and providing input into projects.

Collaborative and supportive:

LAW leverages existing expertise and seeks to foster impactful partnerships and networks – both externally and internally. By creating working groups, mentorships, and allowing for flexibility in work arrangements when possible, LAW strives to create an environment that balances the professional and personal lives of all who work for LAW and with LAW.

Environmental Impact:

LAW takes a strong stand for the protection of the environment as a necessary precondition for peace and to uphold the rights of peoples around the world. We, therefore, take proactive measures to protect the environment in all our offices and in the course of our operations.





Years Retrospective

For ten years, we have remained steadfast in ensuring that survivors and their needs are central in whatever action we take. We have become embedded in the communities we support and serve, our lawyers are at the frontline with victims and survivors to improve access to justice and provide legal redress for human rights violations and abuses. The dedication and commitment displayed by our team, together with the support and solidarity from partners, donors, and the survivors themselves, made our actions and interventions impactful and meaningful.

1

Somalia - Ensuring survivors have a voice to challenge entrenched impunity

LAW launched its first programme in 2013 in Somalia, addressing gender based violence (GBV). GBV, including rape, remains a significant issue in Somalia, with women, girls, and IDPs the most affected. Perpetrators are rarely prosecuted, and victims are reluctant to come forward and report for several reasons, including a lack of trust in law enforcement and formal justice mechanisms, fear of reprisals, cultural stigmas and taboo. When LAW started its work a woman reporting rape in Somalia was more likely to be arrested than the perpetrator.

It was clear that a multidimensional approach was needed.

In 2014, LAW began working with the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development to draft the country's first Sexual Offences Bill, which proposed to criminalise a wide range of sexual offences for the first time, including provisions on protection of victims and procedural safeguards. In 2018 the Bill was passed by cabinet, and its passage by Parliament has remained the UN Secretary General's primary recommendation for Somalia every year since.

During a panel in 2015 convened by LAW on addressing sexual violence by security forces in Somalia, Special Representative of the Chair of the African Commission Maman S. Sidikou, and Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia Nicholas Kay, issued a critical joint statement acknowledging for the first-time allegations of sexual violence perpetrated by AMISOM forces, and committing to a zero-tolerance policy.

At the same time, in order to address the immediate needs of victims and survivors, LAW established an Independent Complaints Mechanism and Civilian Oversight Board, supporting victims to report violations and abuses through safe and trusted channels, designed by the communities themselves.

Operating in six IDP camps in Mogadishu, LAW has received more than 1600 complaints, supported victims to report more than 400 of those to police, and secured more than 200 convictions for gender based violence, including gang rape and rape, and on behalf of child victims.

From victim, to survivor, to advocate - a network of 36 female community champions share information and advocate within their communities, empowering other victims to come forward and demand change.

In April 2022, one community champion said:

"I was a victim of SGBV, and yet I could not come forward for fear of how people would react and what would happen to me. But the LAW team empowered me through their awareness raising and trainings. They trained us and encouraged us to be courageous. Now, I tell others to feel powerful, rather than fearful."

Asba (pseudonym), female SGBV survivor, Somalia

LAW has also become a leading voice in the fight for the eradication of female genital mutilation/cutting (FGM/C) And has characterised it as a form of torture and in some circumstances, an international crime. In 2022, LAW's Executive Director, Antonia Mulvey, contributed a chapter to Gender and International Criminal Law (OUP2022, eds Rosenthal, Oosterveld, SáCouto) setting out LAW's arguments.

2

South Sudan - Delivering vital legal aid and groundbreaking strategic litigation

In January 2014, LAW launched its programme in South Sudan working with survivors, partners and justice institutions to pursue justice for human rights violations, as well as accountability of perpetrators. LAW launched a critical report, *Increasing Accountability of Armed Men for Sexual Violence in South Sudan*, described as a “must read.” This report laid the basis for LAW’s intervention in South Sudan.

On 6 December 2018, LAW submitted the **first ever communication against the Government of South Sudan** for the rape, mass rape and sexual slavery of thirty South Sudanese women and girls by members of the South Sudan army. The case was lodged at the UN Committee on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). LAW’s submission was accompanied by a request for the protection of the survivors’ identities from South Sudan, because of imminent risk of reprisal. LAW is engaged in an ongoing advocacy with UN Treaty Bodies to introduce this vital policy change.

Over the last 10 years, LAW has engaged in partnerships with eight national civil society organisations. Our impact in South Sudan has expanded to include the provision of direct legal aid to victims and survivors of gender-based violence and discrimination, as well as strategic advocacy for the implementation of gender equality legislation. Since 2022, in partnership with the South Sudan Law Society, **LAW has provided legal aid to 191 individuals** through three legal aid clinics. In late 2023, LAW and SSLS secured a groundbreaking preliminary ruling, for the first time in South Sudan, protecting an 18-year-old survivor from being forcibly married for a second time by her father.

With our partner the Center for Inclusive Governance Peace and Justice, we support groups of survivors of human rights violations to become survivor advocates and actively participate in the creation and implementation of transitional justice processes.

Our work has not stopped there. LAW has become a key actor in South Sudan in advocating for the priorities identified with our partners, including women-led CSOs and women lawyers. LAW’s red-lines on the Anti-GBV bill, endorsed by four national civil society organisations, were published in 2023. We requested a law fit for purpose, meeting the needs of survivors. This document is now used by various stakeholders to support discussions to re-open consultations on the bill. Through technical support to justice actors and advocacy with multiple stakeholders, LAW plays a critical role in advocacy efforts around the implementation of the Geneva Conventions Act 2012, which allows the domestic adjudication of war crimes. Other priorities have included the implementation of the Maputo Protocol, the implementation of the transitional justice mechanisms, submissions to the Committee on the Rights of the Child and CEDAW on the situation in South Sudan.

A client in the CEDAW case has said:

“[With] you coming here we felt supported, that we have people who stand with us and fight for us. You came to the ground to know the situation and feel our pain. [...] There are many organizations working in the camps, but none of them came to support survivors to raise their issue forward.”

KJ, who was just 22 years old when she survived a gang rape during the 2016 conflict in South Sudan







3

Lebanon – Challenging slavery and “Dealing with the past”

LAW established its programme in Lebanon in 2018, initially providing legal assistance and representation to Syrian and Lebanese women and girls in Beirut, Mount Lebanon, North Lebanon, Akkar, and the Bekaa, with a focus on domestic violence cases. Our early work resulted in an 100% success rate in obtaining protection orders for women that requested assistance. In total to date, the programme has provided over 6,347 individuals with legal information, 2,735 people with legal assistance, 239 clients with legal representation, and 508 judicial actors with training and capacity building. The vast majority of those provided with legal help have been women and girls.

As LAW’s work developed, it became apparent that women and girls from outside Lebanon, working as migrant domestic workers (MDWs) were targeted with systemic and widespread abuse with little accountability. Lebanon operates a “Kafala System,” where MDWs benefit from very few labor safeguards. The system is a legal vacuum where recourse to relief when employment issues arise is absent. It is estimated that 99% of MDWs are women. Therefore, the injustice embedded in the Kafala System particularly impacts women and girls. Understanding this, LAW began engaging the MDW community in a holistic manner, providing legal information, assistance, and representation.

In October 2020, LAW filed the first ever criminal case on behalf of an MDW in Lebanon alleging slavery, slave trading, racial discrimination, gender discrimination, and torture. The case involves ‘MH,’ an Ethiopian woman who came to Lebanon through the Kafala System and spent eight years as a victim

of the abusive framework. MH was locked indoors, went unpaid for years at a time, verbally abused, threatened, and physically assaulted. She eventually made contact with LAW, which facilitated her return to Ethiopia and filed the landmark case on her behalf. The case remains ongoing before an investigative judge.

On 4 August 2020, a massive explosion in the Beirut Port killed over 220 people, injured thousands, and rendered 300,000 homeless with the destruction of 77,000 apartments. LAW’s office, approximately one kilometre from the blast, was destroyed. We produced the first comprehensive report on the incident’s impact on survivors and their demands for justice. It highlighted survivors’ call for an international, impartial, and independent fact-finding mission into the explosion in order to hold those responsible to account and provide reparations to the victims and their families. In August 2021, LAW published an updated report highlighting how Lebanon’s domestic legal system has failed the survivors of the tragedy. LAW has continued work with 120 survivors and families of those injured and killed in the explosion to pursue justice and accountability, particularly within UN human rights mechanisms.

LAW also works on the lasting impact of Lebanon’s 15-year civil war through raising public awareness for the forcibly disappeared and giving voice to those impacted by sex and gender-based violence. In a **pioneering report, LAW worked with 36 victims and eyewitnesses, while surveying 150 individuals and interviewing 23 experts**, to uncover and analyse incidents of sexual violence and other gendered crimes during the conflict. In tandem with the report, LAW commissioned the documentary, “Mu’ajjal,” which examines the plight of five women who lost loved ones during the war. The film won four international awards and was a finalist for three others, including a prize at the Paris Women Festival.



4

Sri Lanka – Centring survivors and supporting reform

LAW opened its office in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 2017. At that time there was backlog of 15,000 cases of sexual violence against children sitting with the Prosecutors office. After discussion with state prosecutors and a review of their needs, LAW commenced a training on how to better engage with survivors in line with international standards and guidelines to reduce the risk of re-traumatisation. Following LAW's engagement, the Sri Lankan courts amended their procedures to make victim impact statements admissible in court proceedings, allowing survivors to express their grievances during court proceedings and the harms they suffered acknowledged in court. This enabled courts to become more sensitive to the needs of victims and survivors, especially to women and girls who experienced gender-based violence. Victim impact statements were also especially important for victims and survivors to obtain gender sensitive reparations for the harms they suffered, and to raise awareness about the impact the war had on women in Sri Lanka.

LAW is proud to work with many partners in Sri Lanka, including the Centre for Equality and Justice in Colombo, which provide essential assistance to survivors of gendered crimes.

A huge milestone was reached on 7 October 2020, when **LAW Sri Lanka launched the first Gender Justice Legal Network**. The Network connects survivors of gender-based violence with lawyers who assist them to access justice and advocate on their behalf in interactions with the justice system. As well as direct assistance to victims, the Network promotes the use of survivor-centred practices in Sri Lankan courts and builds the capacity of the domestic legal system to address widespread gender-based violence. **The network has provided legal information to more than 900 survivors and represented more than 300 in court proceedings.** The vast majority are women and children, some as young as eight years old, who have suffered from a range of crimes including sexual slavery, gang rape, rape, torture and attempted murder.



"CEJ is humbled by the support we continue to have from LAW for our work. For instance, the work on women and reparations is an area that not many women's organizations are engaged in and CEJ has been fortunate to have LAW as a partner to carry out interventions on this much neglected aspect of transitional justice. The partnership has also provided us with opportunities to build linkages with the Office for Reparations and other stakeholders to advocate for gender sensitive reparations and to raise awareness among war affected communities and women affected by political violence on their right to reparations. "

Shyamala Gomez, Executive Director of Centre for Equality and Justice (CEJ)



Fact Sheet:

LAW's Work in Sri Lanka

Key Facts:

- 255
People whose cases have been referred to LAW for legal assistance
- 87
Prosecutions of the government process based on outstanding SCIV
- 13
Victims whose cases have been referred to LAW for legal assistance
- 280
Suits that have been referred to LAW for legal assistance
- Over 900
Hours of legal advice and representation provided to survivors
- 91
Hours taken to help other stakeholders of LAW's work to understand its contribution
- 137
Public events, including traditional public consultations
- 3,633
People participating in traditional public consultations and other events
- 272
Other legal services referred to LAW for legal assistance

LAW is an independent, non-profit organisation comprised of human rights lawyers and jurists working in Europe and conflict-affected areas of South Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. LAW focuses on gender equality and transformative justice, working to bring justice to those who need it most. LAW brings long-term, legal change with a focus on survivor empowerment and legal representation of survivors.

In Sri Lanka, LAW focuses on strengthening national justice institutions and enabling justice actors to effectively prosecute serious crimes of sexual violence while protecting the rights of victims. LAW is also working with Sri Lankan civil society organisations to prevent SCIV and to end the culture of impunity for SCIV crimes.

Support to National Justice Actors

- LAW is working with the Attorney-General's Department to improve the ability of government attorneys to bring prosecutions of SCIV to justice. LAW has provided six training workshops to eighty-seven government attorneys on:
 - International best practices in the prosecution of complex sexual violence cases
 - The psychology of vulnerable witnesses and sexual offenders and challenges for obtaining rape myths of fact

As a result of these training events, written impact statements were made admissible in Sri Lankan courts.

The Gender Justice Legal Network (GJLN)

LAW is supporting a groundbreaking network of public interest lawyers throughout the GJLN to support survivors of gendered crimes and civil abuses. Through their engagement with the justice system, LAW provides funding, ongoing advice, and regular capacity-building training to the network, which ensures the effectiveness of proceedings, legal assistance and procedures by courts, and preparing the next generation of public interest lawyers to end impunity at all levels.

Promoting Sustainable Justice and Human Rights

LAW has provided capacity building to the Office for Reparations, strengthening its ability to deliver a gender-sensitive approach to public awareness of transitional justice and capacity-building training to the public. Thousands of traditional justice and community-based mechanisms have been strengthened and modernised through LAW's support. LAW also works with private and public sector organisations and civil society to promote human rights and sustainable development and to ensure the digital inclusion of grassroots human rights groups.

5

Bangladesh – Collaborative and creative lawyering for Rohingya survivors of genocide

Nearly a million Rohingya live in the camps in Cox’s Bazar in Bangladesh, the majority of whom were forcibly displaced from their homes in Myanmar during the 2017 “clearance operations” by the Myanmar military. At least ten thousand Rohingya were killed; brutal and large-scale sexual violence, and destruction of nearly four hundred Rohingya villages took place during the “clearance operations.”

Since 2018, LAW has worked closely with the Rohingya community living in Cox’s Bazar to secure their meaningful participation in the ongoing international justice proceedings seeking accountability for the serious crimes committed against them inside Myanmar. **LAW provides legal representation and assistance to over 500 Rohingya survivors and witnesses** including in: the case between The Gambia and Myanmar at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) pertaining to Myanmar’s violation of the Genocide Convention, the ongoing International Criminal Court (ICC) investigation, and more recently, before an Argentinian federal court which is investigating into the serious international crimes committed against the Rohingya in Myanmar under the principle of universal jurisdiction. LAW maintains an ongoing dialogue for information-sharing with the Independent Investigative Mechanism on Myanmar (IIMM), and constantly pursues legal interventions and strategies to address the crimes against Rohingya in Myanmar. For instance, in December 2020, **LAW filed the first ever complaint with the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission** on behalf of a Rohingya widow whose husband was one of 10 men killed during the ‘Inn Din Massacre.’

LAW has adopted a survivor-centred and trauma-informed approach across all aspects of its work in Cox’s Bazar – including legal representation, research, awareness raising and advocacy. LAW has a field office located next to the camps where its network of 62 Rohingya community volunteers – the “Survivor Advocates” – attend trainings, discuss their advocacy priorities in a safe space, and engage in art therapy and well-being activities. Equipped with the skills to share up-to-date and accurate legal information, the Survivor Advocates in turn hold awareness sessions on international justice in the camps for their communities. In 2023 alone, they reached over 13,000 individuals in the camps through their information sessions.

LAW’s Survivor Advocates serve as a reliable and valuable peer-support network for survivors participating in legal proceedings and play a critical role in ensuring that victims and survivors, including survivors of gender-based violence and Hijra survivors (third gender, transgender, intersex) remain at the heart of the ongoing accountability efforts.

All of LAW’s 45 female survivor advocates are part of a wider network, Shanti Mohila (Peace Women) founded in 2018. LAW has worked hand-in-hand with Shanti Mohila over the years, who have emerged as key women-centric voice in the community - recently acknowledged by the UN Office of the Special Advisor for Prevention of Genocide as the “Raphael Lemkin Champion of Prevention.”

“The trainings I received from LAW have made me more courageous. I used to feel very uninspired before, but after I became a Survivor Advocate for LAW, I feel happier and more hopeful. I enjoy doing information sessions with my community. My community members feel uplifted after listening to my sessions on the ongoing international justice processes. Many of them suffer from depression, stress, and hopelessness, but the fight for justice keeps them motivated. I also inspire them to educate their daughters and allow them to participate and contribute to the society in an equal manner just as their sons.”

Fatemah, 28, Shanti Mohila





LAW's field office also serves as a critical safe space for the Rohingya clients especially GBV survivors whom we represent and assist. In 2020, LAW gathered more than 330 pages of witness testimony for The Gambia's legal team (Foley Hoag LLP) to use in its memorial for the case against Myanmar at the ICJ. LAW contributed to the body of publicly available analytical evidence by undertaking complex, multi-disciplinary research that links the long-term physical and psychosocial impact of GBV against Rohingya with the crime of genocide.

Five victim submissions have been made to the ICC and the ICC Prosecutor on behalf of LAW's Rohingya clients across all key stages – from supporting Prosecutor's request for jurisdiction in the Bangladesh/Myanmar situation in 2018, to submitting a communication to the ICC Prosecutor in support of the Myanmar's National Unity Government (NUG) declaration of acceptance of ICC jurisdiction, which can expand the scope of the Court's investigation.

In June 2023, marking a historical step for Rohingya community, LAW led the mission to support seven Rohingya survivors to travel from the camps in Cox's Bazar to Argentina to testify before a federal court investigating the role of Myanmar authorities into the crime of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes committed against the Rohingya.

This was the very first time that any Rohingya survivors of the "clearance operations" testified before a court of law.

"I could not believe I could tell an international court about my sufferings. I could not believe it until I stepped into the courtroom. It was difficult for me to speak about the death of my family and their names, but I did it for justice, for my grandchildren, for a future where we can return home with dignity. They [perpetrators] targeted women first to break our community, our morales. Who would have thought that we, the Rohingya women, would be taking the Myanmar military to the court one day."

Salima, 33, Rohingya survivor.*

6

Syria – Empowering the marginalised and amplifying calls for action

In 2019, as a result of its grassroots engagement in Lebanon with Syrians, LAW began working on the Syrian context, building a programme rooted in the Middle East and serving the largest Syrian refugee communities. Our work responds to survivors of gendered crimes' demands for justice and accountability.

In the initial phase of the programme, LAW mapped 38 Syrian survivors' groups in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, and Iraq to understand their justice goals and accountability needs. The preliminary assessment identified key priorities: (1) access to legal documentation, including civil registration, academic records, and housing, land, and property documents; (2) assistance for families of the missing and disappeared; (3) the need to address gendered crimes and human rights violations, including conflict related sexual violence; and, (4) protection for at-risk survivors facing intersectional and layered vulnerabilities, such as members of the LGBTQI+ community.

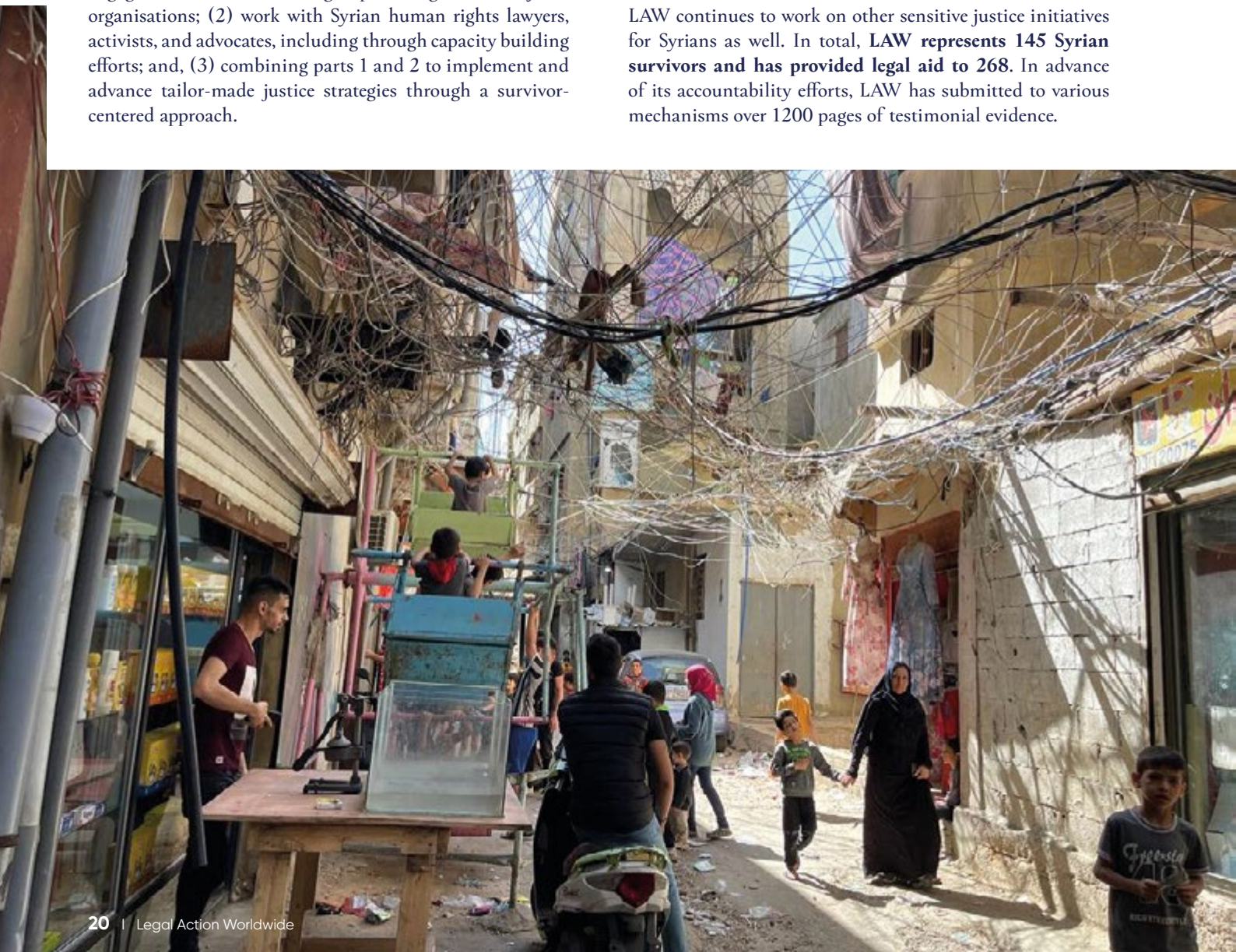
LAW built its Syria programme to directly respond to these needs and embarked on a three-part approach: (1) direct engagement with survivors groups and grassroots Syrian organisations; (2) work with Syrian human rights lawyers, activists, and advocates, including through capacity building efforts; and, (3) combining parts 1 and 2 to implement and advance tailor-made justice strategies through a survivor-centered approach.

In 2020, LAW began working with 41 Syrians seeking information on the truth and whereabouts of loved ones who disappeared during the conflict. To this end, LAW submitted 477 pages of testimonial evidence to the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, asking for its assistance. Simultaneously, LAW produced a policy brief outlining the unique impact of enforced disappearances on Syrian children.

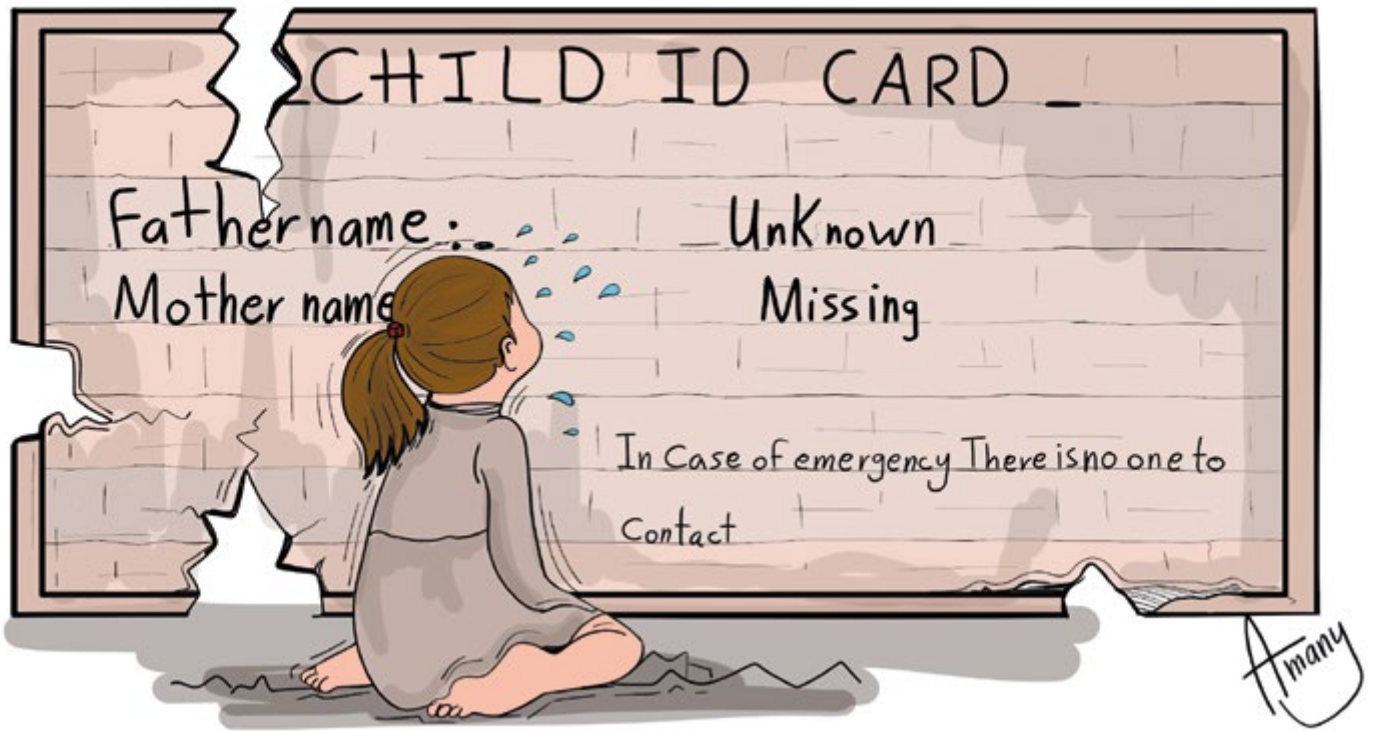
In 2021, LAW provided legal representation to 20 survivors of deportation, persecution, sexual violence, and torture, as they sought to open an International Criminal Court investigation into cross-border international atrocity crimes in Syria-Jordan. Over the past two years, LAW has added 19 new survivors to the casefile and has begun seeking a state party referral of the situation by a Rome Statute State Party to the Court's Office of the Prosecutor.

In terms of capacity building, LAW has conducted strategic lawyering trainings in Jordan, Iraq, and Turkey for 93 legal practitioners as well as human rights advocates and activists. A select few of these individuals are mentored by LAW long term and directly assist in the collection of evidence and development of casefiles. As part of its partnership and mentoring efforts, in 2022 LAW assisted in producing a ground-breaking, survivor-led call to action to address sex and gender-based violence in Syria.

LAW continues to work on other sensitive justice initiatives for Syrians as well. In total, **LAW represents 145 Syrian survivors and has provided legal aid to 268**. In advance of its accountability efforts, LAW has submitted to various mechanisms over 1200 pages of testimonial evidence.



In Syria 000



Women
Empower
Generations



M.A.T





7

Myanmar – Providing specialised support to civil society to document human rights violations

For decades, the perpetration of serious human rights violations and international crimes has been a hallmark of consecutive military regimes in Myanmar. Murder, torture, destruction of property, forced displacement, unlawful deprivation of liberty, and brutal sexual and gender-based violence committed against civilian populations have been consistently documented by United Nations actors, international and national civil society, and the media.

In February 2021, the military (sit-tat) initiated an unlawful coup d'état to seize power from the elected civilian government. Since then, the country has faced its most significant period of armed conflict. As of December 2023, post-coup period displacement figures surpassed 2,3440,000 individuals, 60,500 of whom have been displaced to neighbouring countries, leaving 18,6 million people within Myanmar in need of humanitarian assistance. Despite unprecedented levels of insecurity – fuelled by the regime's direct and systematic attacks on civilians, persecution of civil society actors, and dwindling financial and technical resources – Myanmar civil society continues its work to uncover serious human rights violations and advocate for accountability.

To contribute to addressing these emerging needs, in 2022, LAW established a programme to support national civil society actors in documenting gender-based crimes and applying a gender lens to investigating human rights violations which continue to take place across the country. LAW provides a wide-range of services and support, spanning from improving the understanding of the impact of gender-based crimes in conflict to strengthening trauma-informed, survivor-centric technical interviewing and analysis skills. Additionally, building on its work on the Rohingya crisis, LAW works to complement Myanmar transitional justice dialogues by providing specialised legal advice and information on how to engage with international accountability venues, with an overall goal to support and empower survivors in pursuing justice.

LAW, together with partners, provided technical assistance and capacity building services to 99 civil society representatives and human rights defenders working on gender justice and CRSV priorities, most of whom are women.

LAW's Myanmar programme works with our Rohingya Crisis team to build consensus and support collaboration between the Rohingya and the other peoples of Myanmar. The programme collaborates with and supports other actors involved in initiatives pursuing justice for serious human rights violations and international crimes perpetrated inside Myanmar, including strategic litigation.



8

Ethiopia – Seeking justice for victims of one of the worst conflicts in the world

The conflict in the Tigray, Ethiopia, which began in November 2020, remains one of the bloodiest wars in recent years. Estimates put the death toll at 600,000, with widespread reports of brutal massacres, and conflict-related sexual violence including gang rape, mass rape, rape, and sexual torture. At the height of these reports, LAW was approached by survivors' groups with one question – what can be done to pursue accountability for these violations and abuses?

Despite the egregious violations and abuses that were widely reported, it was clear that very little was being done to pursue justice and accountability in this context. In response, **LAW coordinated with the Pan-African Lawyers Union (PALU) and Debevoise & Plimpton LLP, to file a landmark complaint on behalf of Tigrayan victims and survivors of the conflict, against the state of Ethiopia, before the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACPHR).**

This complaint remains the first and only complaint against the state itself, alleging it is responsible for violation of its obligations under the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, committing serious human rights violations including military targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure, mass and extra-judicial killings, gender-based and sexual violence, arbitrary arrest and detention, mass displacement of civilians, destruction of property, foodstuffs, and religious and cultural heritage sites, ethnic discrimination and enforced information blackouts.

In October 2023, the ACPHR issued provisional measures against Ethiopia, calling for it to ensure an end to all allegations of violations, and to allow humanitarian access in Tigray. The deadline for the implementation of these provisional measures coincided with the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement, in November 2022, which brought an end to active hostilities.

Victims and survivors of the conflict, bravely sharing the horror that they experienced, have stepped forward to contribute to the record of this conflict. They refuse to allow their experiences to be forgotten.

"LAW is the first international team of lawyers who paid attention to the agonies of the millions of ethnic Tigrayans when the whole world turned a deaf ear... in you and your colleagues, I have a huge trust. I hope other international organisations that care for humanity will follow suit."

The complaint remains open before the African Commission, but as regional unrest continues in Ethiopia, and patterns of ENDF violations and abuses are repeated, it is essential that independent truth and justice processes are established and supported.



9

Occupied Palestine – Creative lawyering and vital collaboration

Our work on occupied Palestine has been ongoing since LAW's foundation in 2013.

LAW works closely with Palestinian, Israeli and international organisations and lawyers to develop and strengthen collaborative efforts to secure human rights in occupied Palestine. Each year, LAW chairs a closed-door roundtable of legal experts focused on human rights initiatives, challenges and opportunities. Participants have described the discussions as “inspiring, illuminating and purposeful.”

In 2013, LAW and its partners lodged a complaint to the UN Human Rights Committee against Canada on behalf of the residents of Bil'in village, Palestine. The complaint argues that Canada has violated its extra-territorial obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (1966) based on its failure to regulate Canadian companies supporting the forced displacement of the village residents. Though the complaint was ultimately unsuccessful, the Human Rights Committee affirmed that failure to effectively prevent corporate actors from facilitating serious human rights abuses, may amount to a violation of treaty obligations and accepted the extra-territorial application of the ICCPR.

Over the past ten years, LAW has also delivered high level technical assistance to key actors on the ground in occupied Palestine, including human rights organisations and humanitarian actors. Assistance has ranged from targeted input in development of case files in human rights cases, to advice on the provision of legal assistance where this may contravene humanitarian principles.

In October 2023, following a horrific terrorist attack by the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in which approximately 1200 Israelis are estimated to have been killed, Israel initiated 'Operation Iron Swords' in Gaza. Following an unprecedented aerial bombardment and a ground invasion of the territory, tens of thousands of Palestinians have been killed and 1.9 million Gazans have been displaced (more than 80% of the population). Since October 2023, LAW has identified and collated key legal developments and analysis. These documents are publicly available on LAW's website.

In 2024, LAW will begin a vital new initiative working with local partners to better understand the gendered impacts of ongoing armed conflict and the occupation of Palestine.

10

Ukraine - fostering cooperative legal action for the social change and peace

As Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine reaches its second year, the fighting has killed thousands of civilians and displaced millions. Amid the constant violence, the UN and local and international civil society have produced consistent, credible reports of widespread and systematic crimes committed by Russian forces: executions, sexual violence, torture – the list is nearly endless. Russian missile attacks kill civilians on a weekly basis, and there is no end to the war in sight.

Ukrainian authorities are committed to prosecuting Russian war crimes domestically, but limitations of the criminal justice system undermine their efforts. Local courts are overwhelmed – over 100,000 incidents are under investigation, and cases are advancing slowly, if at all. Further, a lack of substantive law on command responsibility and crimes against humanity makes pursuing accountability for those most culpable impossible at this time.

LAW's new Ukraine programme seeks to close the impunity gap and hold the most culpable to account.

From its office in Kyiv, set to open in early 2024, LAW is spearheading the programme alongside a consortium of local and international organisations. The key objective is to file at least three criminal cases abroad under the principle of universal jurisdiction.

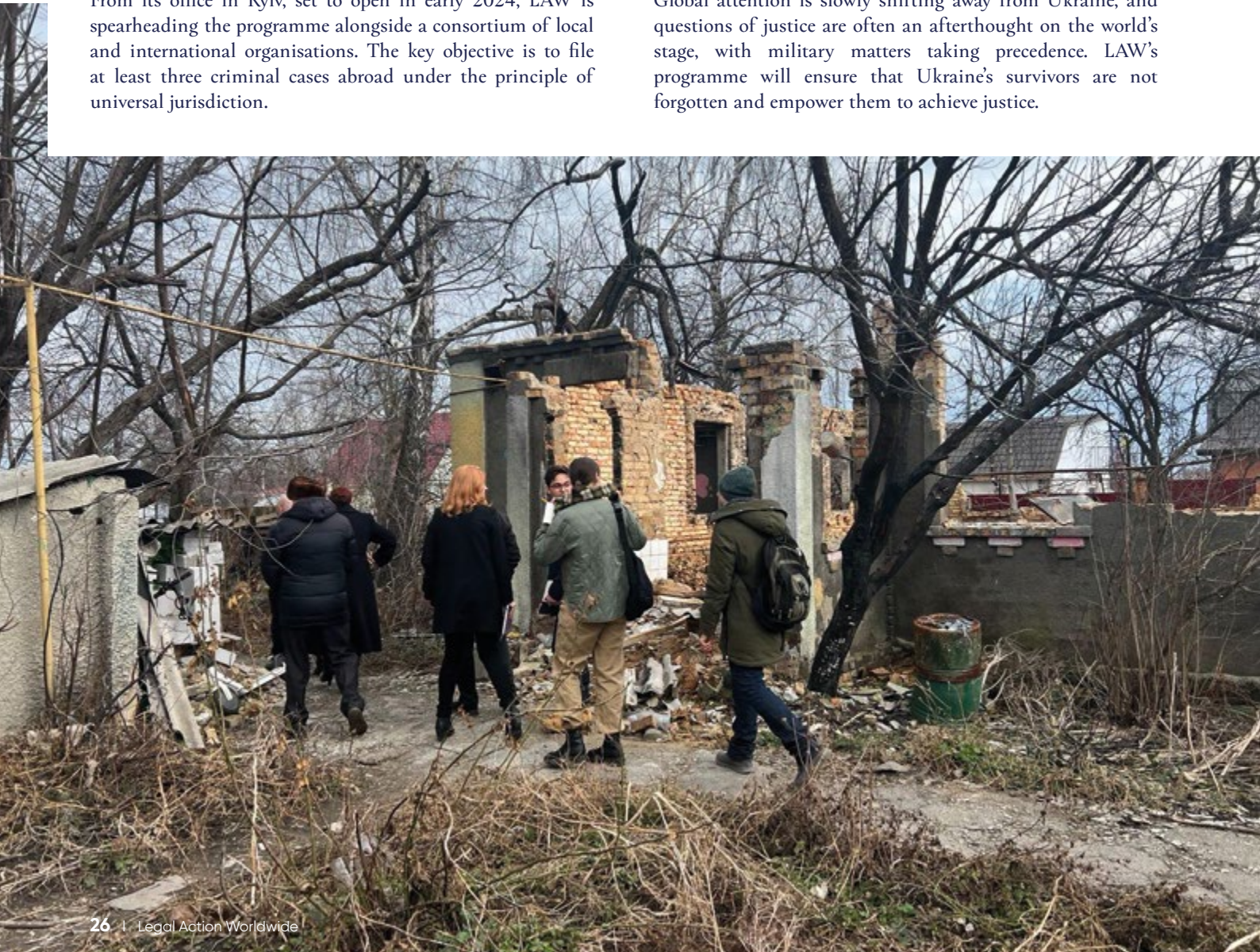
These cases will focus on mid-to-high-level perpetrators that are beyond the reach of Ukrainian courts but unlikely to reach the level of the International Criminal Court.

As with all of LAW's programs, each case will put survivors at the centre of accountability processes, strengthen local capacity, and advocate for long-term change.

An essential aspect of LAW's work in Ukraine is our collaboration with JurFem, the primary recipient of capacity-building support. The women-led legal organisation is at the forefront of documenting gender-based crimes, including conflict-related sexual violence. JurFem has a comprehensive network of 300 practitioners assisting women and gender-diverse people across Ukraine. LAW will draw on its longstanding experience working on gender-based crimes in armed conflict to train women lawyers in trauma-informed approaches to documenting international crimes.

LAW's other partners include OPORA, a Ukrainian civil society organisation that currently provides support for Ukrainians abroad who fled the war; Yale's Humanitarian Research Lab, a pioneering open-source evidence centre; as well as the Clooney Foundation for Justice, a consultative partner with experience building universal jurisdiction cases. The consortium brings together an unprecedented amount of expertise in every aspect of international criminal justice work.

Global attention is slowly shifting away from Ukraine, and questions of justice are often an afterthought on the world's stage, with military matters taking precedence. LAW's programme will ensure that Ukraine's survivors are not forgotten and empower them to achieve justice.







Global projects – thinking big, ensuring impact

Many of the issues addressed by LAW's work go beyond a single country or context. Often, our projects address global issues arising in conflicts around the world.

Gender Equality and Gender-Based Violence

Since its inception, LAW has promoted gender equality and undertaken countless projects seeking to address gender-based violence.

- **Sexual Exploitation and Abuse:** LAW advocates for sexual exploitation and abuse perpetrated by security forces against protected persons be recognised as rape and in certain circumstances as international crime – namely a war crime and/or crime against humanity. The current approach to sexual exploitation and abuse, at UN, regional and State level, must change drastically to ensure serious crimes are not treated as minor offences, and that survivors receive justice. Demonstrating that sexual exploitation and abuse can amount to the war crime or crime against humanity of rape could: increase access to justice for survivors by altering the discourse and treatment of sexual exploitation and abuse; reduce the impunity of perpetrators, and those who permit or enable these crimes; deter potential perpetrators and change the way security forces address sexual exploitation and abuse; and ultimately contribute to peace and security in conflict-affected contexts through the reduction of international crimes against vulnerable populations.
- **Ensuring LGBTQI+ voices in discussion around gender:** LAW champions inclusion wherever possible. Through high level advocacy, LAW has called for increased service provision and protection in humanitarian contexts for LGBTQI+ survivors of gender-based violence. As part of its work in Lebanon, LAW produced Hidden Identities, Broken Lives and No Access to Justice - a groundbreaking report on marginalisation of LGBTQI+ communities from larger society and the lack of access to justice. On 29 November 2022, LAW and the All Survivors Project organised a panel event at the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative Conference in London. The panel was attended by more than 100 conference participants from around the world. The panel, Overlooked and Underserved: Improving responses to conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence against LGBTQI+ people, brought together victims/survivors and experts to consider national and international responses to gender-based violence perpetrated against LGBTQI+ survivors – with a particular focus on healthcare and justice. In 2023, LAW provided inputs to the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC during the revision of its policies on children and on gender-based crimes. In both sets of input, LAW prioritised LGBTQI+ issues as a key area of focus.



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- **The Gender Justice Practitioners Hub:** This initiative explores the establishment of a Gender Justice Practitioner Hub (GJP Hub) – a centre mandated to support and connect practitioners involved in securing gender justice for core international crimes. Through collaboration, coordination and by leveraging decades of experience at national and international levels, the GJP Hub would provide practical tools and assistance to practitioners to help strengthen efforts in pursuit of gender justice. Over the course of two years, LAW is conducting a series of roundtables and bilateral discussions with experts and practitioners to explore and formulate the mandate and structure of a GJP Hub, and to better understand how it could support grassroots, national, regional and international gender justice efforts.
- **Gender and International Criminal Law Conference:** LAW, together with Women’s Initiatives for Gender Justice, Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies, UN Women, the Australian Embassy in The Hague and the International Gender Champions Network, was very pleased to co-host the Gender and International Criminal Law conference on 16 and 17 January 2024 in The Hague. The two-day conference convened more than 200 key gender justice actors to share knowledge, inspire practical solutions, and renew energy to inform the future of a more equitable International Criminal Law field. The impetus for the conference was the publication of the comprehensive book *Gender and International Criminal Law* in July 2022 by Oxford University Press, edited by Indira Rosenthal, Valerie Oosterveld, and Susana SáCouto, and the Gender Justice Practitioner Hub initiative to support and connect practitioners involved in securing gender justice for core. The book included a chapter by LAW’s executive director, Antonia Mulvey.
- **Technology and Conflict Related Sexual Violence:** In February 2018, LAW and OHCHR hosted “Making Technology Work for Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence” in Geneva, an expert roundtable bringing together technology, legal and human right sectors. Participants mapped out cutting-edge software and techniques being used to support survivors of gender-based violence in conflict – and identified areas where technology advancement could fill existing gaps. Topics included open source investigation techniques, early-warning systems, group DNA analysis, and software which could be used to track perpetrators.

Atrocities Against Aid Workers:

Since 2022, LAW, with the support of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has implemented a flagship project to support humanitarian organisations and aid workers to obtain justice for crimes committed against them. LAW works closely with humanitarian organisations, key actors focusing on the security of aid workers, and humanitarian donors, and provides free legal aid to humanitarian aid workers in East Africa, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Central African Republic and Ukraine. In January 2024, LAW launched a helpline that can be reached by aid workers at aidworkers@legalactionworldwide.org, or on WhatsApp or Signal at + 41 76 396 28 58. The project is piloted in East Africa, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Central African Republic and Ukraine, where there are the some of the highest rates of violence against aid workers.

Sexual Violence Against Children:

The deterioration in respect for international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and international criminal law deterioration in respect for humanitarian standards has disproportionately impacted children, from birth through adolescence. International responses to armed conflict must now deal with the reality that children are ten times more likely to become victims of conflict-related sexual violence than they were thirty years ago. LAW, with the support of the Oak Foundation is taking the lead to strengthen the international response to all survivors of sexual violence through targeted and impactful legal support responding to survivors’ stated needs and priorities. LAW’s inclusive approach will deliver high quality services to some of the most marginalised victims of gender-based violence, by focusing on children, and particularly boys and LGBTQI+ survivors.

I want justice because ...

1. Injustice we find peace and in peace we can return to our *suw gulan*. I want to go back home because in my village I will be treated with dignity.
2. I don't want what happened to me to happen to my sisters, brothers and other women anywhere.
3. I want each individual to be treated equally, power struggle between tribes is the root cause of the war.
4. To maintain the security in our country event at night.
5. They have destroyed our property, I want reparations to when peace comes, and for my children and to be treated for their mental and physical injuries.
6. The leaders should understand the incident that happened during the conflict and have a record of what happened.
7. Reconciliation allows for people to come together and interact with the government. Justice will allow me to forgive.
8. So our voices will be heard outside.
9. Justice will give me freedom to speak out.
10. I want the perpetrators to face the court.
10. I want my family to know it was not my fault and that I was ~~not~~ ~~found~~ I can get peace in my heart.

LAW's timeline 2013–2023

2013

- **LAW** is founded in Geneva, Switzerland, opens an office in Nairobi, Kenya, and launches its programme in Somalia
- LAW and partners lodge a complaint to the UN Human Right Committee against Canada on behalf of the residents of Bil'in village, Palestine. The complaint argues that Canada has violated its extra-territorial obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966).

2014

- **Global:** LAW launches the No Safe Haven Project, aimed at using Universal and Extraterritorial Jurisdiction to end international impunity for serious international crimes and human rights violations.
- **South Sudan:** LAW begins its work in the country, supporting survivors of human rights violations.
- **Somalia:** LAW works with the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development to draft the Somali Sexual Offences Bill
LAW establishes the Somali Legal Aid Network and publishes the first comprehensive report about legal aid services for survivors of gender-based violence in Somalia

2015

- **Global:** LAW launches "The Women Lawyers Network: Working in Conflict", a network of women lawyers from the Americas, the Middle East, Europe, Asia and Africa.
- **United Kingdom:** LAW establishes its presence in the UK. As part of a series of launch events, LAW hosts a panel on Special Mission Immunity and the use of Universal and Extraterritorial Jurisdiction.
- **Somalia:** LAW submits the draft Sexual Offences Bill to the Cabinet in Mogadishu. LAW provides technical legal assistance the Government on the Female Genital Cutting/Mutilation Bill and on the ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
Following LAW advocacy, AMISOM and the UN SRSG issue their first joint statement condemning sexual violence in Somalia.

2016

- **South Sudan:** LAW releases 'a must read' report "Increasing Accountability of Armed Men for Sexual Violence in South Sudan" - the most comprehensive public document on gender-based violence in the country.
- **Lebanon:** Following a LAW-UN SGBV Working Group roundtable in Beirut, Lebanon, discussing challenges and strategies to increase accountability for gender-based violence, LAW establishes an initiative to address GBV through creative legal intervention.
- **Myanmar:** Antonia Mulvey, LAW's Executive Director, is appointed by the UN Human Rights Council to be an investigator on the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar.

LAW's timeline 2013–2023

2017

- **Global:** LAW launches new campaigns seeking to re-frame Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) perpetrated by security forces against protected persons as international crimes.
- **Somalia:** LAW establishes a Civilian Oversight Board (COB) in Mogadishu and working with local civil society and communities in Somaliland and Puntland, it also sets up Land Dispute Tribunals.
- **Sri Lanka:** LAW opens its office in Colombo, Sri Lanka and begins work with local partners

2018

- **Lebanon:** Legal Action is launched in Beirut, Lebanon.
- **Myanmar/ Bangladesh:** LAW begins working with Shanti Mohila, an inspirational group of more than 400 Rohingya women displaced from Myanmar into Bangladesh during the 2017 'clearance operations.' Shanti Mohila collect 400 thumbprints from Rohingya women in the Cox's Bazar camps in support of their first submission to the International Criminal Court.
- **Somalia:** The Cabinet approves the Sexual Offences Bill and moves it to Parliament for final adoption.
- **South Sudan:** LAW submits the first ever communication on behalf of 31 women to the UN CEDAW Committee for rape, mass rape and sexual slavery committed by members of the South Sudan army and the Presidential Guard.

LAW starts work on ensuring the UN Security Council Women, Peace & Security Agenda (UNSC Resolution 1325) is fully incorporated into South Sudan's peace process and that women and girls, including survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, can effectively participate.

2019

- **Global:** LAW establishes its presence in The Hague, Netherlands.
- **Myanmar/ Bangladesh:** LAW supports Rohingya refugees, displaced from Myanmar during the 'clearance operations' in travelling to Geneva, for the UN Human Rights Council, and to The Hague, for hearings in the ICJ case between The Gambia and Myanmar on the Genocide Convention – the first Rohingya from the camps to be able to travel.
- **Somalia:** LAW and its partner Witness Somalia set up the first Independent Complaints Mechanism in IDP camps in Mogadishu and Kismayo. Following the work of the COB, a new police outpost, established to serve IDP camps, has three women police officers who support cases of gender-based violence.
- **Sri Lanka:** Following advice from LAW, the Attorney General's Office begins admitting victim impact statements in GBV court proceedings.
- **Syria:** LAW starts a new programme on the country and establishes a regional justice network of survivors from five countries: Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Turkey.

2020

- **Lebanon:** LAW files the first Migrant Domestic Worker slavery and slave trading criminal case in Lebanon. The lawsuit is filed against the former employer and recruiter of MH, an Ethiopian woman who came to Lebanon in 2011 and was enslaved for nearly a decade in Beirut.

LAW publishes the first comprehensive report on the 4 August 2020 Beirut explosion.
- **Myanmar/ Bangladesh:** LAW and McDermott, Will and Emery LLP submit the first ever complaint by a Rohingya complainant to the Myanmar National Human Rights Commission on behalf of a widow of the 'Inn Din Massacre'.
- **Sri Lanka:** LAW establishes the Gender Justice Legal Network in Sri Lanka.
- **Syria:** LAW submits a general allegation and communication to the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances on behalf of 18 Syrian families.

LAW's timeline 2013–2023

2021

- **Ethiopia:** LAW launches its work in Tigray and Northern Ethiopia. LAW convenes the first high-level panel event on the humanitarian and human rights situation in Tigray.
- **Global:** LAW supports dozens of survivors and witnesses of international crimes committed during armed conflict in filing communications to the ICC prosecutor, requesting preliminary examinations in the situations of Syria and South Sudan.
- **Lebanon:** LAW commissions and exhibits photos to raise public awareness of forced disappearances that occurred during the 15-year civil war. LAW also produced in collaboration with Justice Without Frontiers and the Committee of the Families of the Kidnapped and Missing, "Mu'ajjal", a documentary that reveals the experiences of five women who lost loved ones during the Lebanese Civil Wars.
- **Myanmar/Bangladesh:** LAW submits a communication to the Prosecutor of the ICC on behalf of more than 500 Rohingya refugees who survived the 2017 "clearance operation," requesting that the scope of the investigation be extended based on the recognition of ICC jurisdiction by Myanmar's civilian government in exile.
- **South Sudan:** LAW submits a report to the CEDAW Committee, along with a request for a General Recommendation on the protection of victims' identities by CEDAW's individual complaint mechanism. LAW requests the CEDAW Committee adopt a General Recommendation on the protection of women and girls' identities.
- **Syria:** LAW submits communications on behalf of 41 Syrians to the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.

LAW co-hosts with EuroMed Feminist Initiative (EFI) the first survivor-led international conference on "Supporting a Survivor-led Justice Movement in Syria" in Paris.

2022

- **Lebanon:** LAW publishes two historic reports "They raped us in every possible way, in ways you can't imagine: Gendered Crimes During the Lebanese Civil Wars." (with UN Women) investigating gendered crimes during the Lebanese Civil Wars between 1975 and 1990, and "Hidden Identities, Broken Lives and No Access to Justice", on human rights violations experienced by members of the LGBTQI+ community.
- **Myanmar/Bangladesh:** LAW, on behalf of hundreds of Rohingya submit a letter to the President of the International Court of Justice requesting the Court reject the agent appointed by the military junta in the case between The Gambia and Myanmar.
- **South Sudan:** LAW and its partner, the South Sudan Law Society, open three legal aid clinics in Juba, Wau, and Malakal.
- **Sri Lanka:** LAW concludes its unique Technology for Gender Justice pilot project - the first to document and analyse online gendered violence in Sri Lanka.
- **Tigray:** LAW, the Pan-African Lawyers Union (PALU) and Debevoise & Plimpton LLP submit a landmark complaint against Ethiopia before the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) on behalf of Tigrayan survivors of the conflict for serious human rights violations against Tigrayan civilians. The ACPHR subsequently orders Provisional Measures against Ethiopia.

2023

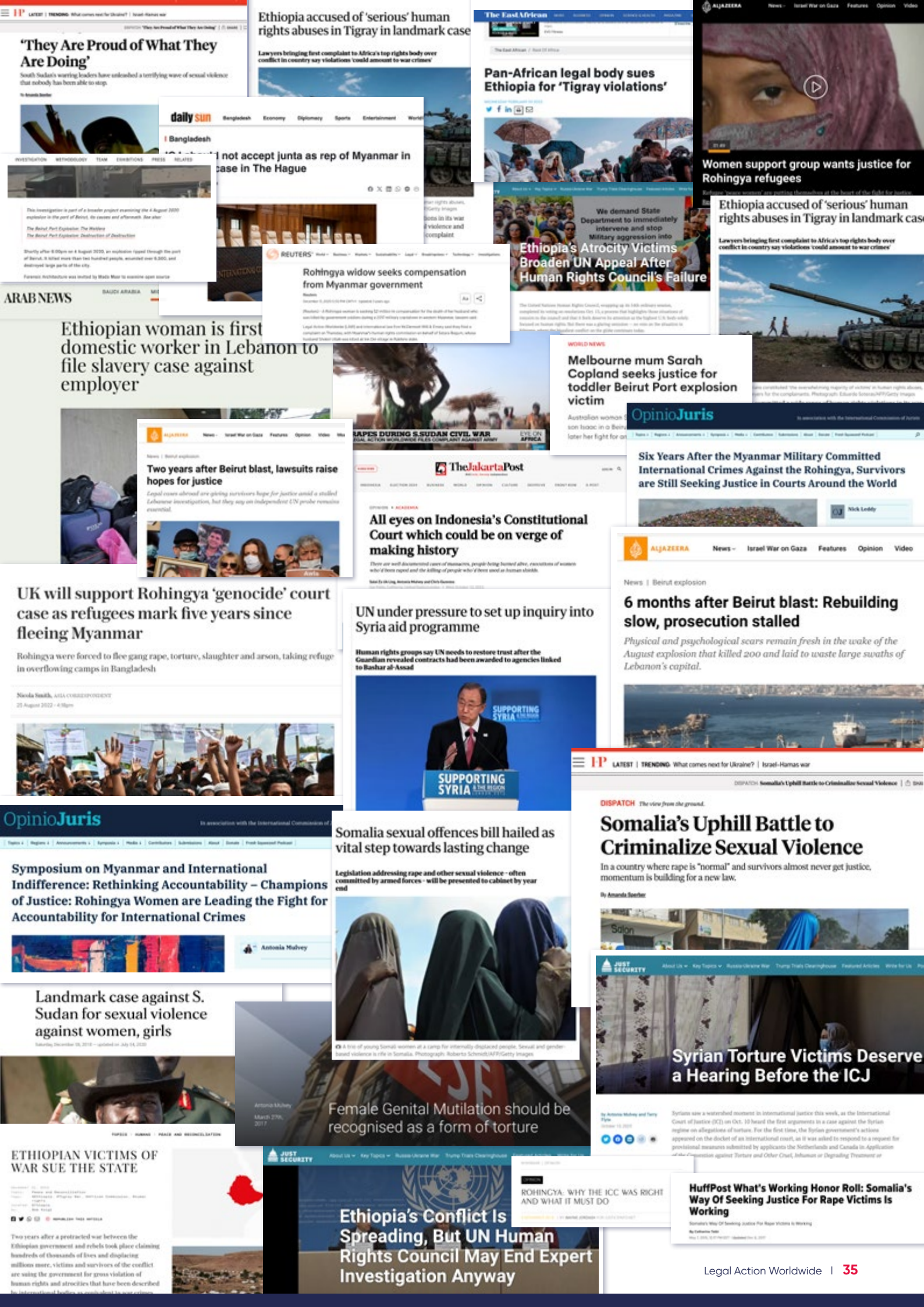
- **Ethiopia:** Oral submission to UNCAT on behalf of Tigrayan torture survivors advocating that the SGBV they experienced constituted torture.
- **Global:** LAW leads on a new global initiative to strengthen the international response to child survivors of sexual violence and convenes the first roundtable on "Effective Investigations of Sexual Violence Against Children and Support for Child Victims".

LAW develops its first Survivors Advocacy Training that will be used across programmes to foster and encourage survivor-led influencing.

LAW begins the Gender Justice Practitioners Hub initiative, undertaking roundtables in key locations around the world.

LAW's submission of briefs to ICC's OTP in developing their policies on gendered crimes and children, and seeing some of our suggestions implemented.
- **Myanmar/Bangladesh:** LAW starts a project focusing on empowering survivors and grassroots actors to document conflict-related sexual violence in Myanmar.

LAW supports six Rohingya women in travelling from the camps in Cox's Bazar to Argentina to provide witness testimony in person to the Court in Buenos Aires, in a Universal Jurisdiction case of Genocide against the Rohingya
- **South Sudan:** Obtaining a groundbreaking court ruling in South Sudan on behalf of a teenage client to prevent her forced marriage.
- **Syria:** Advocating for ICC state-party referral of the situation of Syria, so the OTP can investigate crimes against humanity committed against Syrian civilians during the civil war; this included publishing a legal brief on the topic and holding roundtables in Beirut, Berlin, Paris, and The Hague.



"They Are Proud of What They Are Doing"

South Sudan's warring leaders have unleashed a terrifying wave of sexual violence that nobody has been able to stop.

Ethiopia accused of 'serious' human rights abuses in Tigray in landmark case

Lawyers bringing first complaint to Africa's top rights body over conflict in country say violations 'could amount to war crimes'

Pan-African legal body sues Ethiopia for 'Tigray violations'



Women support group wants justice for Rohingya refugees

'We demand State Department to immediately intervene and stop Military aggression into Myanmar'

Ethiopia accused of 'serious' human rights abuses in Tigray in landmark case

Lawyers bringing first complaint to Africa's top rights body over conflict in country say violations 'could amount to war crimes'

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...not accept junta as rep of Myanmar in case in The Hague

This investigation is part of a broader project examining the 4 August 2020 explosion in the port of Beirut, its causes and aftermath. See also: The Beirut Port Explosion: The History The Beirut Port Explosion: Destruction of Destruction

Rohingya widow seeks compensation from Myanmar government

Sheffield - A Rohingya widow is seeking £2 million in compensation for the death of her husband who was killed during the 2017 military operations in eastern Myanmar. Her claim...

Ethiopia's Atrocity Victims Broaden UN Appeal After Human Rights Council's Failure

The United Nations Human Rights Council, comprising up to 48 UN member states, completed its voting on resolution 47/1, a process that highlights these allegations of rape and sexual violence and that it took down to zero on the highest U.S. level...

Ethiopian woman is first domestic worker in Lebanon to file slavery case against employer

Sheffield - A Rohingya widow is seeking £2 million in compensation for the death of her husband who was killed during the 2017 military operations in eastern Myanmar. Her claim...



Melbourne mum Sarah Copland seeks justice for toddler Beirut Port explosion victim

Australian woman's son Isaac in a Beirut explosion later her fight for justice

Two years after Beirut blast, lawsuits raise hopes for justice



RAPE DURING S. SUDAN CIVIL WAR

Legal Action Worldwide (LAW) and international law firm McDermott Will & Emery filed a complaint on Thursday with Myanmar's human rights commission on behalf of South Region women...

All eyes on Indonesia's Constitutional Court which could be on verge of making history

There are well-documented cases of massacres, people being burned alive, executions of women who'd been raped and the killing of people who'd been used as human shields.

Six Years After the Myanmar Military Committed International Crimes Against the Rohingya, Survivors are Still Seeking Justice in Courts Around the World



UK will support Rohingya 'genocide' court case as refugees mark five years since fleeing Myanmar

Rohingya were forced to flee gang rape, torture, slaughter and arson, taking refuge in overcrowded camps in Bangladesh

UN under pressure to set up inquiry into Syria aid programme

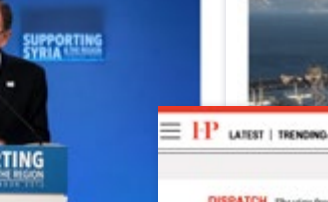
Human rights groups say UN needs to restore trust after the Guardian revealed contracts had been awarded to agencies linked to Bashar al-Assad

6 months after Beirut blast: Rebuilding slow, prosecution stalled

Physical and psychological scars remain fresh in the wake of the August explosion that killed 200 and laid to waste large swaths of Lebanon's capital.

Somalia sexual offences bill hailed as vital step towards lasting change

Legislation addressing rape and other sexual violence - often committed by armed forces - will be presented to cabinet by year end



Symposium on Myanmar and International Indifference: Rethinking Accountability - Champions of Justice: Rohingya Women are Leading the Fight for Accountability for International Crimes

Legal cases around are giving survivors hope for justice amid a stalled Lebanese investigation, but they say an independent UN probe remains essential.

Somalia's Uphill Battle to Criminalize Sexual Violence

In a country where rape is "normal" and survivors almost never get justice, momentum is building for a new law.

Landmark case against S. Sudan for sexual violence against women, girls

A line of young Somali women at a camp for internally displaced people. Sexual and gender-based violence is rife in Somalia.

Syrian Torture Victims Deserve a Hearing Before the ICJ

Syrians saw a watershed moment in international justice this week, as the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on Oct. 10 heard the first arguments in a case against the Syrian regime on allegations of torture.

Female Genital Mutilation should be recognised as a form of torture



Ethiopian Victims of War Sue the State

Two years after a protracted war between the Ethiopian government and rebels took claim hundreds of thousands of lives and displacing millions more, victims and survivors of the conflict are suing the government for gross violation of human rights and atrocities that have been described by international bodies as equivalent to war crimes.

Ethiopia's Conflict Is Spreading, But UN Human Rights Council May End Expert Investigation Anyway

ROHINGYA: WHY THE ICC WAS RIGHT AND WHAT IT MUST DO

HuffPost What's Working Honor Roll: Somalia's Way Of Seeking Justice For Rape Victims Is Working

Somalia's Way Of Seeking Justice For Rape Victims Is Working





Ways forward - the next ten years

The past 10 years have been tumultuous, and marked by significant social and political upheaval. A series of new armed conflicts, coinciding with a wave of authoritarianism, technological advancement, and the ever-growing impact of climate change, has reshaped the landscape for human rights protection. The obstacles facing survivors, their families and communities, human rights defenders, and civil society continue to grow and grow. Meanwhile, the need for justice and accountability has never been greater.

We cannot, must not, give up in trying to secure transformative justice for those who have experienced human rights violations and abuses - and those at risk of facing such violations. Traditional, narrow approaches no longer suffice - we must think creatively and collaboratively to ensure the impact of our work. Looking forward at the next decade, LAW will adopt a strategic approach, that centres survivors and their communities, that is gender pro-active and embeds feminist principles - with a view to seeking fundamental change, and lasting peace and security. Alongside this, and recognising the clear nexus between climate change, scarcity of resources and armed conflict, LAW commits to ensuring environmental impact is a core consideration across our work - both in through our legal interventions and an operational level.

LAW will reframe its thematic focuses to capture the breadth of our work and the multifaceted perceptions of justice sought by our clients and those we support. Through the prism of (i) Addressing Discrimination (including gender inequality), (ii) Ending Impunity, (iii) Transformative Justice, and (iv) Strengthening Access to Justice and the Rule of Law, we hope to be able to better address the root causes and consequences of grave human rights violations and serious international crimes in at-risk and conflict-affected contexts.

In amplifying survivor voices and community engagement, we will harness the power of art and culture. We are excited to announce **the LEARN initiative** - this will bring together - Legal Education, the Arts and Responsive Networks - to ensure that survivors have a platform to share their stories, reclaim their narratives, and set out their vision for the future through art, writing, music and other creative outlets. At the same time, this initiative will support the next generation of feminist lawyers.

We are tremendously proud of everything LAW has achieved in its first ten years. Looking forward, our clients will remain at the core of our work - being on the ground in conflict-affected contexts with survivors, communities, human rights defenders and national lawyers provides LAW with invaluable insight into the needs and aspirations of those we support and represent. We commit to stand by them, to empower them and to ensure that their justice is secured.

Over the next 10 years, we will continue to fight for Dignity. Accountability. Justice. No matter who, where or when.

We would like to thank...

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Witness Somalia
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And all LAW staff





Head office:

Legal Action Worldwide (LAW)
Rue de Varembe 3
1202 Geneva
Switzerland

✉ info@legalactionworldwide.org

✂ @LegalActionWW

www.legalactionworldwide.org

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Marking 10 years of fighting for victims and survivors