Transitional Justice

What is Transitional Justice for the United Nations?

Since 2004, the United Nations has defined transitional justice as “the full range of processes and mechanisms associated with a society’s attempts to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation.” It has noted that “these may include both judicial and non-judicial mechanisms, with differing levels of international involvement (or none at all) and individual prosecutions, reparations, truth-seeking, institutional reform, vetting and dismissals, or a combination thereof.”

Based on States’ human rights obligations, a wider notion of justice has been advanced in the field of transitional justice, in which further elements of redress complement and reinforce processes of criminal accountability. This has crystallized into four interrelated dimensions: truth seeking, criminal justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence. The concept of guarantees of non-recurrence refers not only to institutional reform and vetting, but also to measures in the societal, cultural and individual spheres.

The United Nations stands for a holistic approach to transitional justice, meaning that these four dimensions are part of a comprehensive policy.

UN Entities

- Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): [http://www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)
UN Conferences & Events

- Peacebuilding Commission: Ambassadressial-level meeting on Transitional Justice in Colombia, The Gambia and Timor-Leste (28 April 2023)
  - Webcast: https://media.un.org/en/asset/k1p/k1pfw4ifd1
- Security Council Open Debate on “Women, rule of law and transitional justice in conflict-affected situations” (18 October 2013)
  - Concept Note: http://undocs.org/S/2013/587
  - Meeting Record: http://undocs.org/S/PV.7044

Research & Documentation

  - Perspectives on Post-conflict Justice / by Mr. M. Cherif Bassiouni: http://legal.un.org/avl/ls/Bassiouni_CLP.html

Selected UN Documents

- A/77/162 (14 July 2022): Promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence: note / by the Secretary-General: https://undocs.org/A/77/162
  Transmits report of the Special Rapporteur, Fabián Salvioli, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 45/10.
  Contains: Sustainable Development Goals and transitional justice: leaving no victim behind.
  Links transitional justice with the Sustainable Development Goals process through a people-centred and victim-centred approach.
  Submitted pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 42/17.
- A/76/180 (19 July 2021): Promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence: note / by the Secretary-General: https://undocs.org/A/76/180
  Transmits report of the Special Rapporteur, Fabián Salvioli, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 45/10.
  Contains: Transitional justice measures and addressing the legacy of gross violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed in colonial contexts.
- A/75/174 (7 July 2020): The gender perspective in transitional justice processes: note / by the Secretary-General: https://undocs.org/A/75/174
  Transmits report of the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion of Truth, Justice, Reparation and Guarantees of Non-Recurrence, Fabián Salvioli, pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 36/7.


**Selected Publications available online**

Further Information

- **Sustainable Development Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions:**
  [https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16](https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal16)

- **UNRIC Library Backgrounder – Rule of Law:**

11 October 2023
not an official document - for information only