

MAKE WAY FOR JUSTICE #4: MOMENTUM TOWARDS ACCOUNTABILITY

Universal jurisdiction is here to stay. In their annual report [Make way for justice #4](#), [TRIAL International](#) and its partners [FIDH](#), [ECCHR](#), [REDRESS](#) and [FIBGAR](#) illustrate the international momentum towards accountability through 58 cases, involving 126 suspects.

126 MADE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE GRAVEST CRIMES

Rarely has the fight against impunity been so dynamic. In 2017, countries in Africa, Europe, North America and Latin America have tightened the net on war criminals by resorting to [universal jurisdiction](#).

This principle enables States to prosecute alleged authors of international crimes such as [genocide](#), [war crimes](#), or [crimes against humanity](#), regardless of their nationality or where the crime was committed.

To overcome the specific challenges of universal jurisdiction, a wide number of States have set up specialized war crimes units (WCU). Last year alone, these units reportedly investigated, prosecuted or brought to justice 126 suspects of the gravest crimes.

Many more investigations are ongoing. “States who commit sufficient means to specialized units are leading the fight against impunity today by turning the word justice into action” says [Valerie Paulet](#), [Trial Watch](#) coordinator and author of the report.

STRENGTHENING THE MEANS TO FIGHT AGAINST IMPUNITY

The [Make way for justice #4](#) report also points to these achievements’ prerequisites. Strong WCUs have in common sufficient resources and staff and enjoy a high degree of autonomy as well as specialized and diversified State expertise from departments such as the police or immigration.

In contrast, the United Kingdom has, for instance, merged its WCU with counter-terrorism and the work of Swiss’ WCU is weakened by having to share its resources with the mutual judicial assistance’s unit.

[Philip Grant](#), TRIAL International’s director, underlines the need for improved coherence and efficiency in investigating and bringing to justice universal jurisdiction cases. *“Prosecution of war crimes requires sufficient resources and independence. States that are lagging behind in implementing universal jurisdiction must step up efforts to equip prosecutors accordingly.”*

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TRIAL International is a non-governmental organization fighting impunity for international crimes and supporting victims in their quest for justice. TRIAL International takes an innovative approach to the law, paving the way to justice for survivors of unspeakable sufferings. The organization provides legal assistance, litigates cases, develops local capacity and pushes the human rights agenda forward.

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