

## OPEN SOCIETY JUSTICE INITIATIVE

### Publication of three new “Universal Jurisdiction Law and Practice Briefing Papers »: Essential tools to strengthen the knowledge of universal jurisdiction’s practice

Geneva, the 23rd of May 2022 – In the framework of the European day against impunity for crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, TRIAL International, in collaboration with the [Open Society Justice Initiative \(OSJI\)](#), REDRESS, Civitas Maxima, Center for Justice and Accountability (CJA) and Bruxelles Free University, publishes three new “Universal Jurisdiction Law and Practice Briefing Papers”, on Belgium, the United States as well as England and Wales. Those new reports are completing the [eight pre-exiting papers](#) on Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and The Netherlands. Those documents will provide legal practitioners and civil society actors with an in-depth analysis of national laws and practices of domestic authorities regarding investigations and prosecution of international crimes under universal jurisdiction. They help understanding this principle which has become a particularly useful weapon nowadays to fight impunity.

#### Universal jurisdiction: a powerful tool against impunity

An historical ruling in Germany against a high-ranking Syrian in January 2022, on-going trials in at least 16 different jurisdictions in 2021, investigations launched by 13 countries on the crimes committed in Ukraine since the beginning of the conflict: those results and so many others are made possible because of the use of universal jurisdiction. It allows the pursuit of alleged perpetrators of international crimes such as genocides, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, whatever the place where those crimes were committed, whatever the nationality of the victims or the authors to be prosecuted. Each country then delineates the scope of this competency.

“Universal jurisdiction is an important and increasingly used tool to fight against impunity of international crimes. Laws and practices can vary between countries which makes the use and understanding of this principal quite complex. The reports produced by TRIAL International, in collaboration with our partners, intend to assist lawyers and professionals in the different judicial systems”, says Giulia Soldan, Program Manager (International Investigations and Litigation).

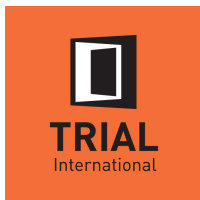
#### Essential tools to strengthen the knowledge and practice of universal jurisdiction

Born in 2019 as a collaboration between TRIAL International and OSJI, “Universal Jurisdiction Law and Practice” briefing papers have become benchmark documents for professionals of the fight against impunity through universal jurisdiction. The goal of those reports is to support lawyers and NGOs representing the victims of international crimes to seek justice in a country where they know nothing of the law nor the current procedures.

The three new publications analyze the systems and practices of England and Wales, the United States and Belgium. Built out of interviews with legal experts, prosecutors and specialized scholars, and an analysis of the legal texts, those reports contribute to the development of adapted and efficient judicial strategies. The report focusing on the United States was developed in collaboration with [CJA](#)

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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## MEDIA RELEASE

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as well as the participation of [Civitas Maxima](#), the document on England and Wales was drawn from the collaboration with [REDRESS](#), and finally the one focusing on Belgium was written with the Bruxelles Free University.

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