



**TRIAL**  
International



**Activity report** | 2015

# Who we are

**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.**

**TRIAL International believes in a world where impunity for international crimes is no longer tolerated. Only when victims are heard and perpetrators held accountable can the rule of law prevail.**



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# A year in action

2015 has been a year of intense action for TRIAL International. Each month has brought its share of successes, opportunities and encounters. We are pleased to look back on this year's milestones, all of which highlight the importance of partnerships and coordinated efforts to fight impunity.



Juan José Lozano and Nicolas Wadimoff followed TRIAL International in its criminal investigations. The documentary, released in 2014, highlights the long and arduous process of gathering evidence to bring perpetrators to justice.

[Buy Crimes Hunters online](#)

## A DVD about TRIAL International



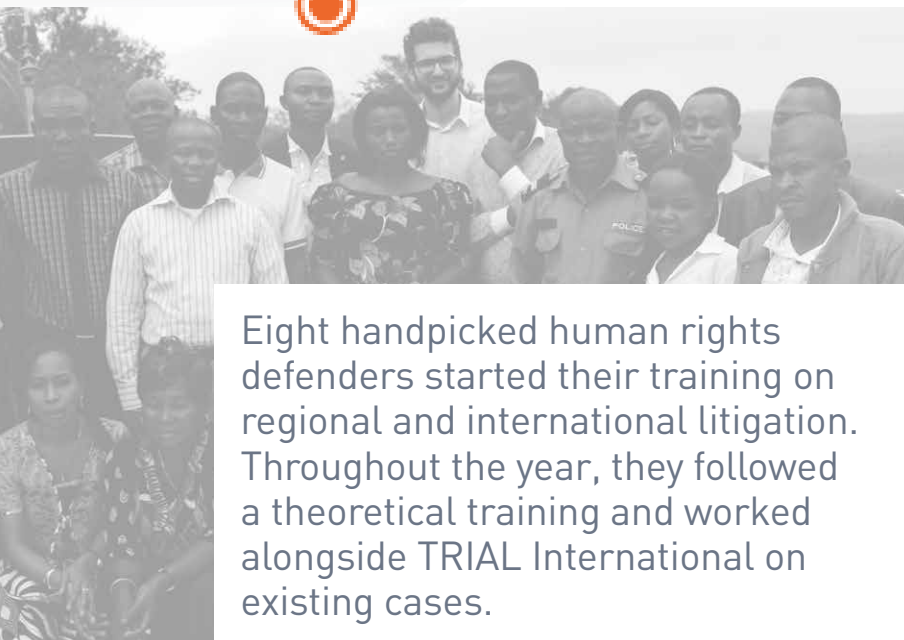
The staff travelled to Burundi to meet NGO workers and journalists, weaving tighter bonds and opening the way to new collaborations. As the political crisis worsened later in the year, many of those activists were arrested, threatened or forced to flee.

## Meeting Burundian civil society

## TRIAL International rewarded

The city of Geneva awarded the NGO its annual prize for outstanding contributions to human rights. Director Philip Grant dedicated the prize to all the victims defended by TRIAL International.

## DRC training kick-off



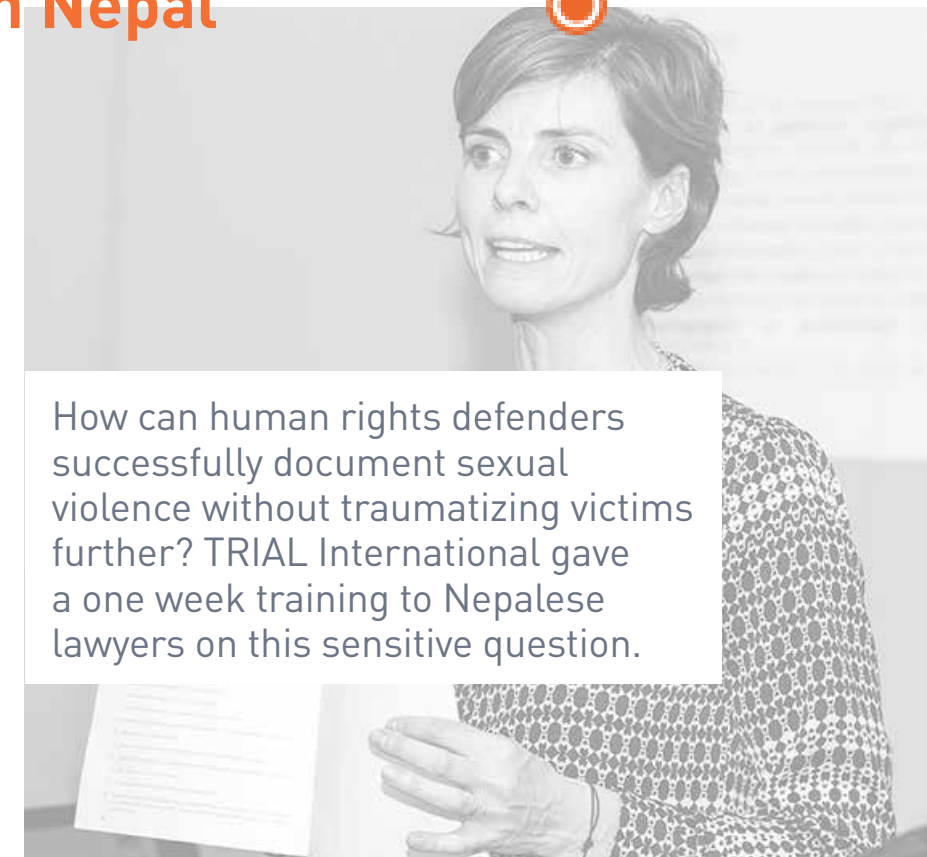
Eight handpicked human rights defenders started their training on regional and international litigation. Throughout the year, they followed a theoretical training and worked alongside TRIAL International on existing cases.

## Press conference in Sarajevo



TRIAL International held a joint conference with MyRight and Justice Network to remind BiH of its international obligations. The three NGOs demanded greater support for victims and for women in particular.

## Raising awareness on sexual violence in Nepal



How can human rights defenders successfully document sexual violence without traumatizing victims further? TRIAL International gave a one week training to Nepalese lawyers on this sensitive question.

1  
2  
3

TRIAL International took part in a UN-organized event on the fight against torture, addressing the victims' right to redress and their immense difficulties to uphold it.



In one of the highest-level cases ever taken up by TRIAL International, the Geneva Court of Justice sentenced Erwin Sperisen to perpetuity for the murder of ten prisoners in Guatemala.

4  
5  
6

Denouncing the authorities' clampdown on civil society since April 2015, TRIAL International called on the [United Nations Special Procedures](#) to inquire over rampant human rights abuse.

**Torture victims' rights under the spotlight**

**Erwin Sperisen receives life sentence**

**Denouncing mounting violence in Burundi**

**First report on universal jurisdiction**

**Bosnian Criminal Code finally amended**

**Historic precedent for Bosnian victims of sexual violence**

MAKE WAY FOR JUSTICE

Universal jurisdiction is a ground-breaking yet little-known legal tool. TRIAL International, [FIDH](#) and [ECCHR](#) published their first [publication](#) highlighting the potential this principle offers to fight impunity.

4  
5  
6

After years of efforts, the lobbying conducted by TRIAL International and its partners finally bore fruits: Bosnia amended its laws on torture, enforced disappearances, wartime rape and sexual violence to align with international human rights standards.

For the first time in the history of BiH, two victims of wartime sexual violence were awarded compensation for their suffering. Both had benefited from TRIAL International's free legal assistance.



The director of the prominent [RPA](#) radio, Bob Rugurika, paid a visit to TRIAL International's team in Geneva. He gave a tragic testimony of the media's muzzling since the beginning of the year.



In the face of rampant impunity in DRC, TRIAL International and 11 Congolese NGOs reported the State's failures to the United Nations and proposed solutions in the fight against sexual violence.



A much-expected [Protocol](#) on the documentation and investigation of sexual violence in conflict was presented by the NGO to prominent stakeholders. TRIAL International is in charge of the Protocol's implementation in DRC ever since.

## Burundian activist visits head office

## Report highlights DRC inertia on sexual violence

## International Protocol presented in DRC

## International justice day

## International day against enforced disappearances

## No safe havens for criminals



Celebrating international justice on 17 July, the NGO took part in the [International Criminal Court's #Justicematters](#) campaign. TRIAL International's staff members shared their vision of justice.

Over 1'300 individuals have been forcefully disappeared in Nepal's conflict. On 30 August, TRIAL International commemorated these victims and urged the government to finally listen to their families' plight.

The organization published a comprehensive handbook on international crimes under Swiss law. At its launch's press conference, it highlighted Switzerland's need to fight impunity more actively.

[Read the handbook](#)







TRIAL International delivered a training at the [International Commission on Missing Persons](#) on the crime of enforced disappearances. It shared with the assisting NGOs its extensive experience in defending families of the disappeared.

## Defending the rights of Bosnian disappeared



TRIAL International's experts were invited to a conference on dirty gold trafficking, presenting its case against [Argor-Heraeus SA](#). Other panelists included the former president of the Swiss Confederation and [Dirty Gold War](#) film director Daniel Schweitzer.

## Raising awareness on worldwide corporate crime



On International human rights day, TRIAL International published its first legal handbook aimed at lawyers in Burundi. This very hands-on publication builds upon and reinforces the NGO's efforts to train human rights defenders in the region.

## A tool against impunity for Burundian lawyers

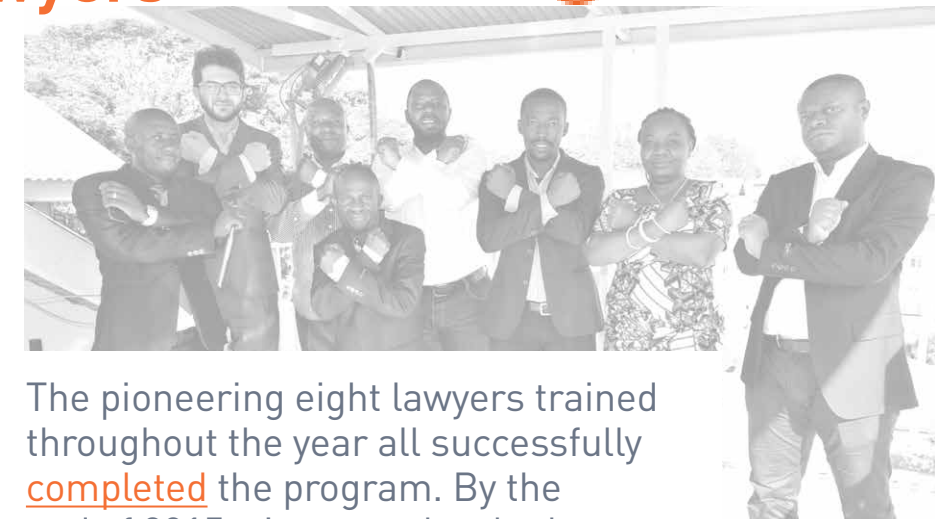
## Nepal faces Universal Periodic Review

The United Nations concluded Nepal's [Universal Periodic Review](#) by formulating a number of recommendations, including on transitional justice and the fight against impunity. TRIAL International had closely monitored the process and urged Nepal to implement these decisions.

## New logo, new identity

After 13 years of existence, TRIAL International adopted a new logo that would reflect its evolution into an international NGO. The logo is to be made public in 2016 along with the new corporate branding.

## Training completed for eight Congolese lawyers



The pioneering eight lawyers trained throughout the year all successfully [completed](#) the program. By the end of 2015, six cases they had been working on were submitted to international bodies.





# “The victims’ courage is humbling”

Interview with the TRIAL International’s President and Director

**TRIAL International has become an important actor in the fight against impunity. What has been for you the highlight of 2015?**



**Philip Grant, Director (PG):**

Sharing our expertise with local human rights defenders has been fantastic. We see lawyers trained last year taking up cases and bringing them on their own initiative to international bodies. Seeing the spread of good practice and the hope it brings to

victims is an immense satisfaction.

**What difficulties do you expect in the years to come?**



**Giorgio Malinverni, President (GM):**

It is clearly an uphill battle. Take Syria, Iraq, Colombia, Mexico, Nepal, Sri Lanka and so many other situations. There is an increasing awareness of the need for justice, but how to achieve it? Unsurprisingly, the power-hungry and the dictators also strongly resist the idea of international

justice. We have to show that it is indeed an achievable goal, if NGOs, international bodies, victims and lawyers coordinate their efforts.

## How has the perception of international justice evolved?


**GM:** Since the International Criminal Court came into being, a perception has crystalized that fighting impunity is a task for well-funded international jurisdictions alone. That is wrong: local authorities should be the first actors involved against impunity. It is very important that all stakeholders, from victims to human rights defenders and officials, understand that international courts are only part of the solution – the rest lies in the hands of the States.

**PG:** We need to overcome the idea that justice will come from afar and start believing in our own capacities to make a change: victims, NGOs, lawyers, prosecutors or judges all have a role to play in tackling fear and brutality. Only when local courts make fighting impunity their priority will authors of atrocities be deterred.

## What goals to you set yourselves for the future?

**PG:** Our ambition should not just be to bring justice to individuals, but to bring about structural change to all victims. That means we have to test the systems, break new legal grounds and find alternative ways around existing obstacles.



**Nobody should think they are untouchable – not even the heads of State, not even the most powerful armies.** 

**GM:** International justice cannot be confined to trying militiamen or lower-rank policemen. Nobody should think they are untouchable – not even the heads of State, not even the most powerful armies in the world. Otherwise, the fight against impunity will remain marginal and fail to prevent future atrocities.

## What message would you like to share with the victims TRIAL International works with?

**PG:** Their courage is humbling. Engaging in such legal battle is a long, lonely and sometimes dangerous path. But for many victims we have worked with, justice – if only partial – has been achieved, giving other victims the courage to speak up too. I hope the trust they place in TRIAL International is therefore well rewarded.

A woman with short dark hair, wearing a black legal robe with a white collar, stands in front of a brick building with large windows. She is holding a large black book open with both hands. The background shows the building's facade and some greenery.

# Legal programs

**TRIAL International's groundbreaking legal actions constitute the core of its work. Two divisions work distinctly:**

- The Human Rights Division, which supports victims before domestic courts and international bodies;
- The Investigations and Criminal Law Division, which seeks to bring perpetrators to justice on the basis of universal jurisdiction, and prepares cases against corporations engaged in international crimes.



# Bosnia and Herzegovina

A photograph of a woman wearing a blue patterned headscarf and a dark jacket, kneeling in a cemetery. She is looking down at a small book or notebook in her hands. The cemetery is filled with tall, white, rectangular tombstones with pointed tops. The ground is covered in green grass with some yellow wildflowers. In the background, other people can be seen standing among the tombstones under a clear blue sky.

"My fight for justice would not have been possible without TRIAL International's engagement and support. This means a lot to me."

(Protected witness in a sexual violence case)



It has been 20 years since the war ended, yet the road to justice remains a rocky one in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Some positive measures were adopted in 2015, such as an agreement to reform the judicial system, but their implementation remains to be seen. There is still neither a comprehensive reparations program nor a free legal assistance scheme for victims of international crimes. Ethnic divisions continue to plague Bosnian political life, hindering long-term reconciliation and closure.

## FIGHTING SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

Since its launch in 2007, TRIAL International's program in BiH has supported 32 [sexual violence](#) victims and contributed to the domestic criminal prosecution of 8 perpetrators.

In 2015, TRIAL International won 5 cases before the [UN Human Rights Committee](#) (HRC) on behalf of 11 victims whose relatives were [forcefully disappeared](#). After over 20 years of uncertainty as to their loved ones' fates, the HRC finally recognized their suffering. TRIAL International now calls on BiH authorities to promptly implement the Committee's recommendations on impunity, reparations, health care and social services.

**20**

years since the war ended

**32**

victims of sexual violence helped

**5**

cases won domestically

**11**

human rights defenders trained

## STRATEGIC LITIGATION

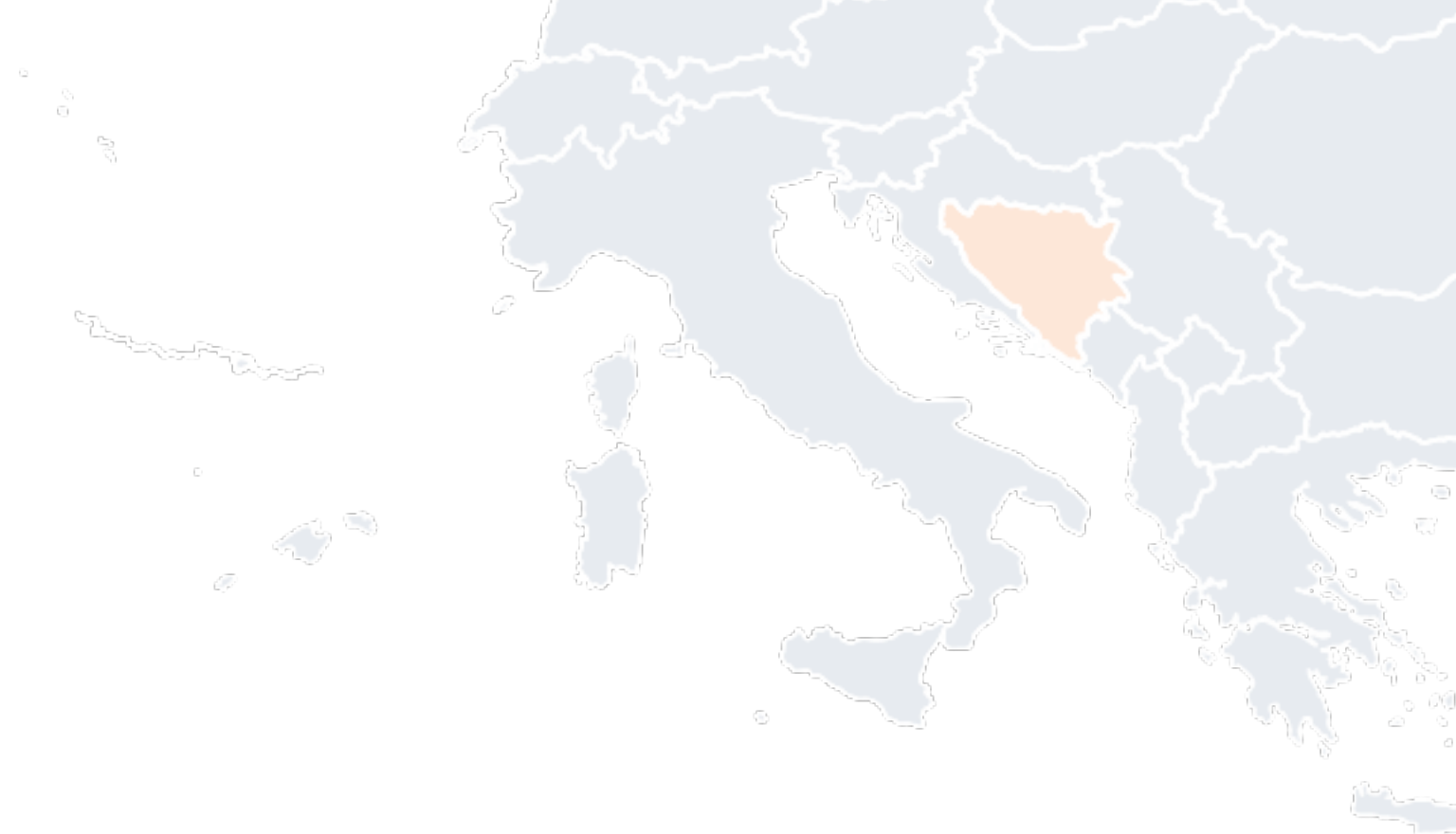
In June 2015, the Court of BiH granted reparations to 2 war crimes victims represented by TRIAL International. It was the first time in Bosnian history that compensation had been awarded in wartime-related criminal proceedings. This precedent will benefit many victims in the region, who so far have been forced to undertake a separate procedure before civil courts in order to obtain compensation – a complex and costly option that very few victims were able to pursue.

## OUR ADVOCACY EFFORTS REWARDED

In May 2015, after years of lobbying from TRIAL International and its partners, BiH's Criminal Code was finally amended and aligned with international human rights standards. This significant victory will ensure that victims of torture, enforced disappearance and rape are better protected during proceedings and can access reparations more easily.

## SENSITIZING TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE

This year, TRIAL International focused its capacity-building efforts on sexual violence. The stigma still attached to this crime, as well as victims' extreme vulnerability, make it very difficult to document and prosecute. For this reason, TRIAL International's staff trained 11 NGO workers and legal practitioners on international protection standards mechanisms in November, and chaired conferences in Bosnian universities on wartime sexual violence, with over 100 students attending.





# The story of Elma Z.

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*In 1993, a member of the Army of the Republika Srpska (VRS) barged into Elma Z.'s house (pseudonym) pointed a gun at her and raped her. The same thing happened again later that year. Elma feared she or her daughter would be killed if she resisted her rapist.*

*Years later, Elma found the courage to seek justice and contacted TRIAL International. The trial took place in 2015, during which Elma's own daughter testified against the accused.*

*In June 2015, the Court of BiH found him guilty of the rape of Elma and sentenced him to eight years imprisonment. In its guilty verdict, the Court allowed the victim to receive 30'000 KM as a compensation to the harm suffered.*



# Nepal



"I kept filing complaints but all I obtained in return was silence and denial."

(Anonymous relative of an enforced disappearance victim)



Nine years after the signature of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), Nepal established in 2015 a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a Commission on Investigation of Disappeared Persons, beckoning hope for victims of the decade-long conflict. Unfortunately, these commissions fall short of international standard, and there is still a long way to go for survivors to access justice and reparation. More alarmingly still, international crimes at the hand of the State continue to be reported.

## NEW VICTORIES BEFORE INTERNATIONAL BODIES

In 2015, TRIAL International won 2 cases before the United Nations Human Rights Committee (HRC) on behalf of victims, bringing the total of favorable decisions from that body to 5. One of those decisions was particularly important as it regarded crimes occurred after the end of the conflict – an encouraging precedent for many survivors still seeking justice.



36

human rights defenders trained



2

cases won at international level



2

capacity-building programs



2

new cases submitted to the United Nations

## NEPAL UNDER THE UNITED NATION'S SCRUTINY

Nepal underwent in November its [Universal Periodic Review](#) under the close scrutiny of civil society organizations, amongst which TRIAL International. The UN echoed the NGO's concern in its 195 recommendations to Nepal, many of which referred to the fight against impunity. Through a proactive media and online campaign, TRIAL International called on the government to implement all recommendations.

## TRAINING AND INFORMING

In 2015, TRIAL International led two [capacity-building](#) programs in Nepal. The first offered a tailor-made, year-long training to 4 lawyers on international litigation. In addition to theoretical classes delivered by national and international experts, all participants were able to exercise their new knowledge on real cases.

The second training targeted human rights defenders, including NGO representatives, lawyers, journalists, and government officials. Over 30 of them were trained over 6 days to document sexual violence as international crime, and to provide adequate support to survivors.





# The story of Ang Dorje Sherpa

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*Ang Dorje Sherpa was a trek carrier and cook when he was unlawfully arrested in 2007. Repeatedly beaten by police officers and denied food and water, he was kept for hours in an overcrowded cell.*

*Despite a doctor certifying the severity of his state, he received no treatment until his release the following day. M. Sherpa never knew why he had been arrested. The police officer who had tortured M. Sherpa never faced any charges and was actually promoted.*

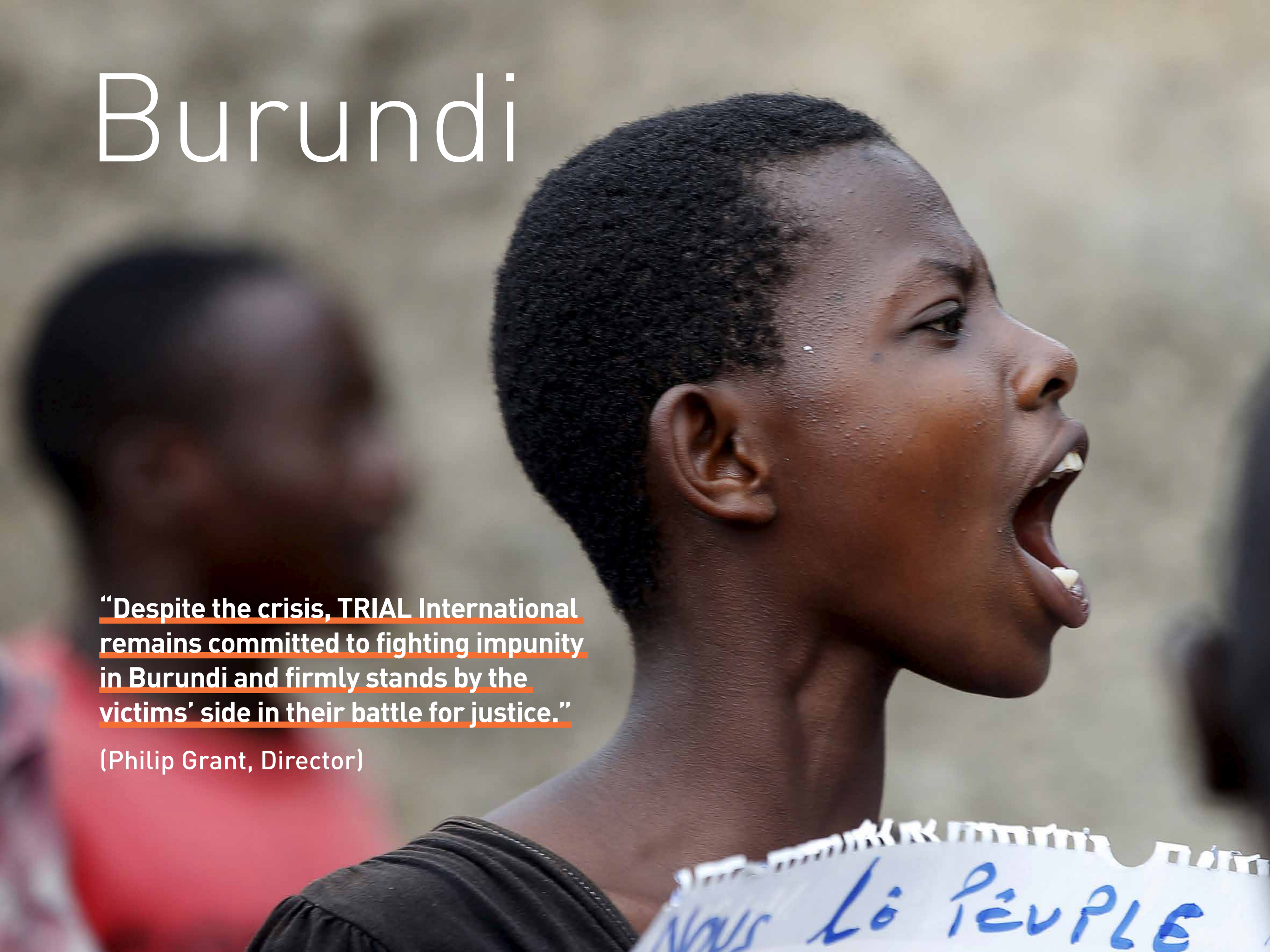
*Seized by TRIAL International, the UN Human Rights Committee recognized in November 2015 Nepal's responsibility in the arrest and torture of M. Sherpa. This was the first time the State was condemned for a case that occurred after the conflict.*



# Burundi

“Despite the crisis, TRIAL International remains committed to fighting impunity in Burundi and firmly stands by the victims’ side in their battle for justice.”

(Philip Grant, Director)





**2015 has witnessed a renewal of violence in Burundi. In April, President Pierre Nkurunziza announced he would be running for a third consecutive term, triggering demonstrations throughout the country. The State's violent repression further worsened the situation and gradually entrenched the country in a deep crisis. In March 2016, the United Nations recorded almost 500 casualties and 250'000 internally displaced people.**

## DEFENDING THOSE WHO DEFEND OTHERS

Political opponents, journalists and human rights defenders remain extremely exposed to violence. Out of the 8 individuals and 6 families TRIAL International helped in 2015, 9 were civil society activists who suffered (amongst others) from enforced disappearances, extrajudicial executions and torture. Among those cases, 4 have been brought before the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights. They are still pending.

In 2015, the UN Committee Against Torture and the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ruled favorably in respectively 4 and 1 case submitted by TRIAL International in the previous years.

**9**

lawyers trained

**9**

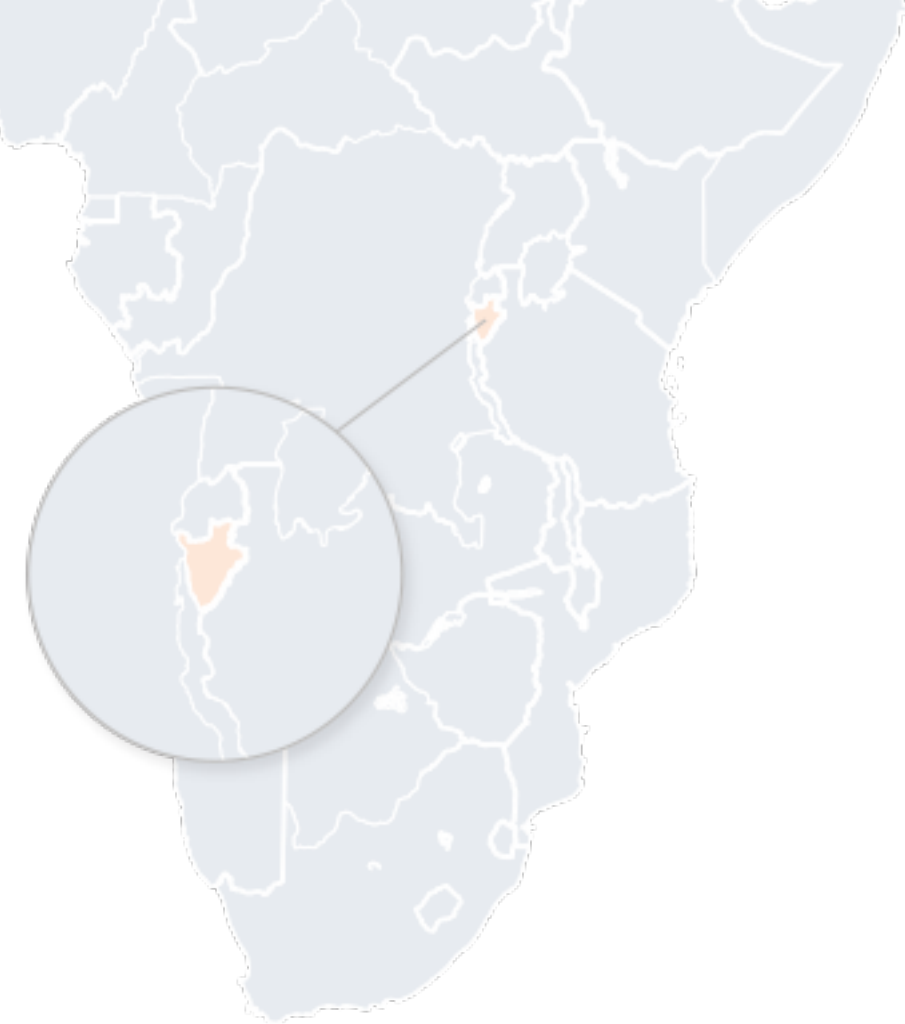
civil society activists defended

**4**

cases litigated regionally

**5**

cases won before the United Nations



## AN INCREASINGLY INFLUENTIAL VOICE

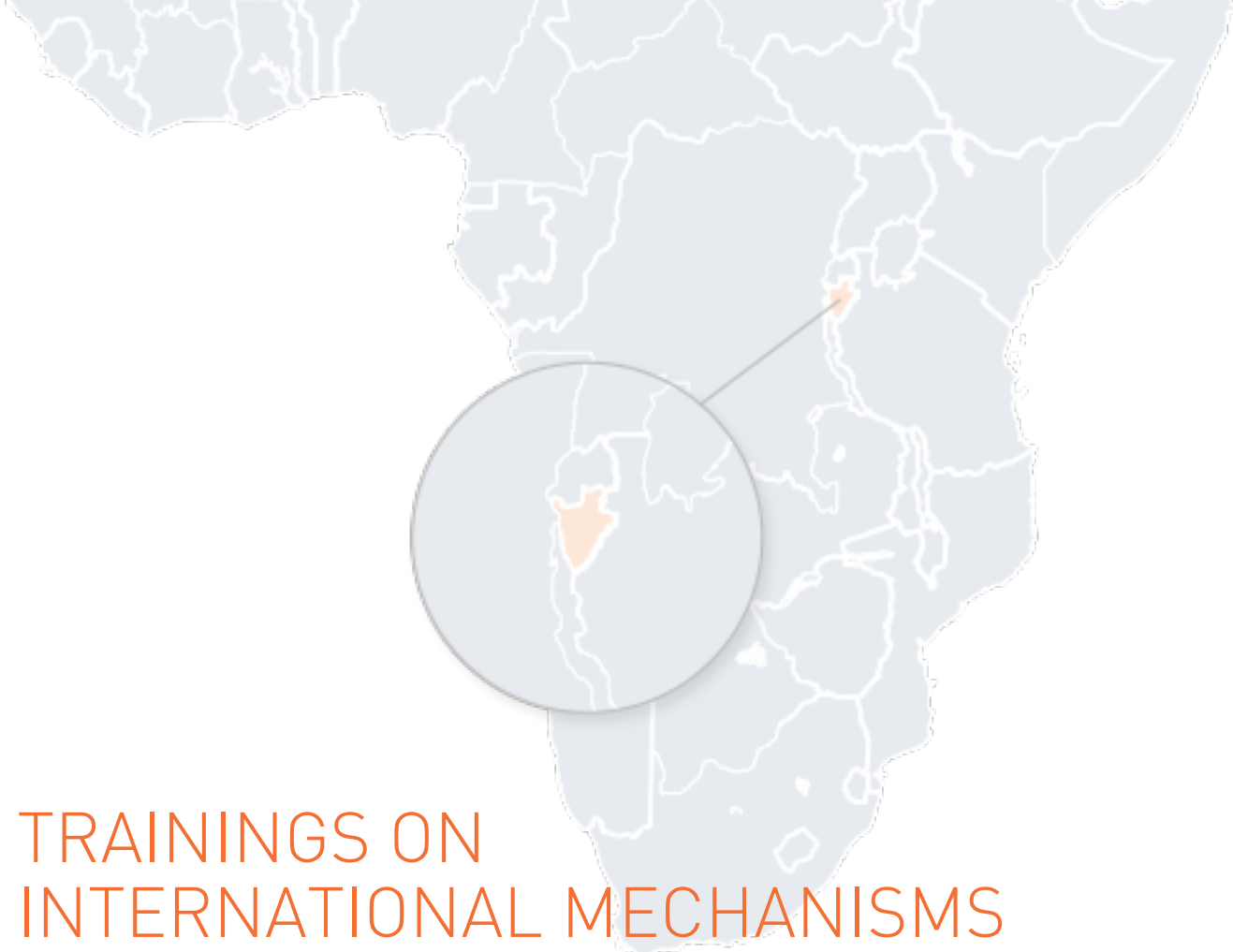
TRIAL International has gradually become a prominent actor in victims' rights defense and the fight against impunity in Burundi, endorsing a leading role in discussions between international decision-makers and civil society. This year, TRIAL International has addressed a follow-up report to the [UN Committee against Torture](#), highlighting Burundi's shortcomings in the investigation and prosecution of [torture](#).



## TRAININGS ON INTERNATIONAL MECHANISMS

TRIAL International conducted 2 [capacity-building](#) sessions for Burundian lawyers respectively in March and December, focusing its efforts on international litigation. 9 lawyers, amongst which 4 women, were comprehensively trained to use international law in domestic litigation as well as to submit cases to international institutions.

To widen its reach, the organization has also published a legal guide in French and Kirundi, explaining how to file cases before international bodies. Thanks to its very practical approach, this unique publication can be used by any legal practitioner in Burundi, with or without prior knowledge on the subject.





# The story of Isidore V.

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*Isidore V. (pseudonym) was a 22 years old Burundian activist, member of a youth opposition group. He started receiving death threats after openly declaring his defiance to President Nkurinziza's party.*

*Fearing for his life, Isidore went into hiding but fell after a few months into a police trap. His strangled body was found a few days later in the neighboring countryside. 3 years after Isidore's murder, no inquiry had been opened in Burundi.*

*After 7 months of research, TRIAL International took the case before the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, alleging that Burundi had violated the victim's rights to life, freedom, non-discrimination and freedom of expression as well as his family's right to know the truth and receive reparations. The case is still pending.*



# Democratic Republic of the Congo

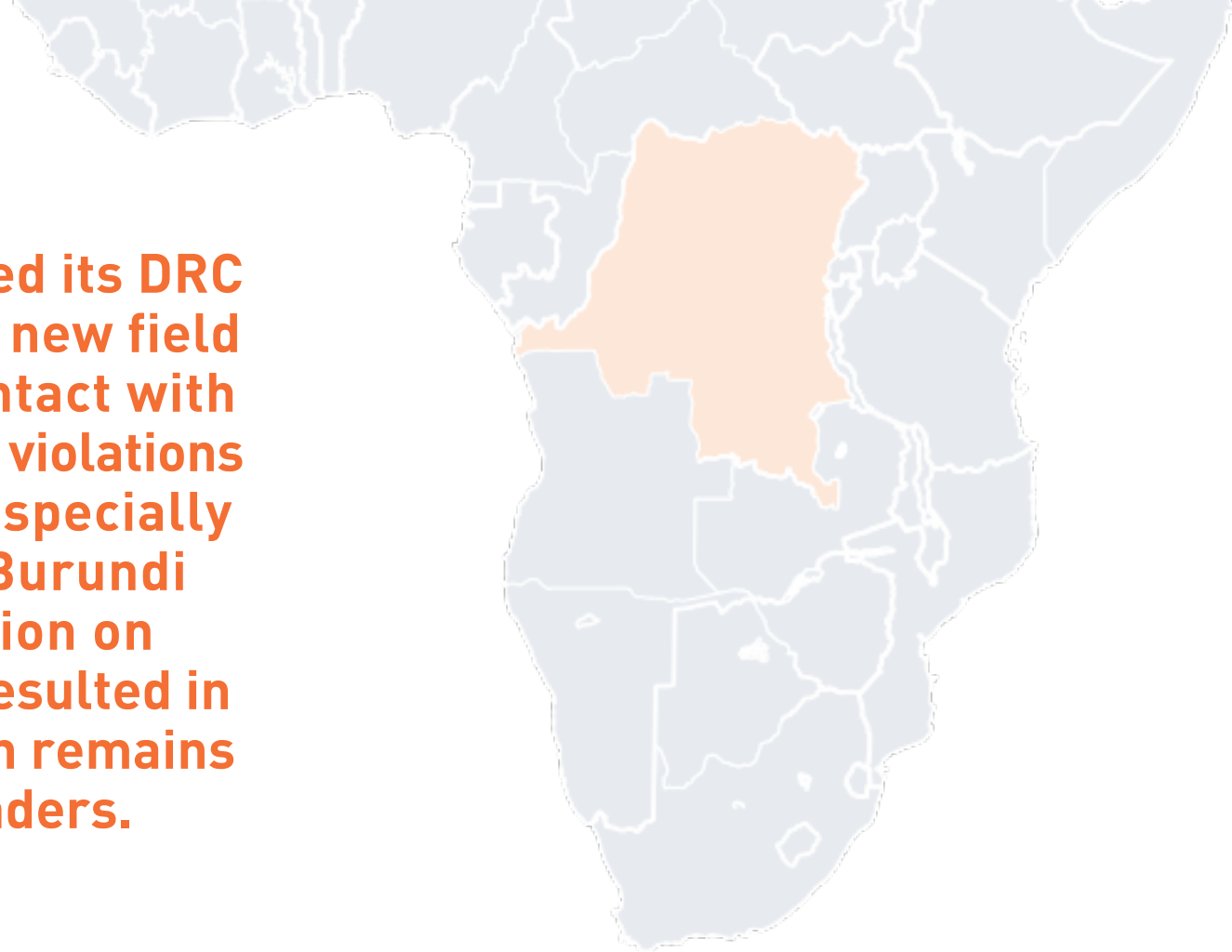
A large group of people, including children, are walking along a dirt path in a rural area. Many of them are carrying heavy loads on their heads and backs, including bags, baskets, and bundles of fabric. The people are dressed in simple, everyday clothing. The background shows a hilly landscape with some trees and a clear sky.

“I trained with TRIAL International to finally bring justice to victims of international crimes and to deter others to commit such crimes.”

(Charles Cubaka, trainee in a legal capacity-building program)



**TRIAL International is proud to have launched its DRC activities in January 2015. Its local staff and new field office in South Kivu guarantee it a close contact with victims and local partners. Both human rights violations and impunity remain rampant in DRC, especially in the Eastern regions bordering Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. Throughout the year, speculation on President Kabila's running for a third term resulted in violent outbursts in the country. The situation remains extremely dangerous for human rights defenders.**



## FIRST LITIGATIONS

In 2015 alone, TRIAL International submitted 18 cases to national and international bodies on behalf of 58 victims of grave human rights violations, 52 of them women. 8 cases of torture, arbitrary detention and extrajudicial killings were submitted to international bodies such as the UN Human Rights Committee and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. The other 10 cases, involving sexual violence, pillage and other war crimes, were litigated by TRIAL International before Congolese jurisdictions.

**58**

victims helped

**10**

cases of sexual violence

**8**

lawyers trained

**3**

domestic trials opened

## ALREADY A FEW OUTSTANDING OUTCOMES

In less than a year, 2 cases of [arbitrary detention](#) have been won before the United Nations. A victim of torture has also recovered his freedom and was granted access to medical care. Finally, 3 criminal trials for [sexual violence](#) opened in 2015 thanks to the involvement of TRIAL International. These crimes remain notoriously difficult to prosecute because of the taboo and stigma attached to them.

## INVESTING IN CIVIL SOCIETY'S CAPACITIES

TRIAL International led its first year-long [capacity-building](#) program for 8 Congolese lawyers. Throughout 2015, they learned how to best defend victims before domestic courts and international bodies. Each of them worked on real cases, assisted and supported by TRIAL International all along.

Moreover, the organization trained 35 local human rights defenders on how to document sexual violence as an international crime. Throughout the training program, the participants undertook 10 documentation missions to gather evidence on existing cases.

## NEW PARTNERSHIPS FOR TIGHTER COLLABORATION

Over the year, TRIAL International has developed partnerships with many DRC-based NGOs. Those have already proved valuable supports to advocate for legal reforms in the domains of accountability, protection of human rights defenders and support for sexual violence victims. These partnerships have also extended to all relevant stakeholders, such as the human rights section of the [United Nations mission in the country](#) (MONUSCO), the [UN Development Program](#), the local police and judicial authorities.





# The story of Antoine

*Early in the morning on a December day, three unknown men stormed into Antoine's (pseudonym) apartment in Bukavu. Wrongly accused of theft, he was arrested on the spot.*

*He stayed in detention for a month, during which he was systematically tortured. After domestic justice failed to act, TRIAL International and a lawyer from Bukavu brought Antoine's case before the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. Relentlessly, the NGO asked for the victim's release, given the arbitrary nature of his detention and the violation of his most fundamental rights.*

*In June 2015, Antoine was finally released and could reunite with his family. Now the fight for justice has entered a new chapter: Antoine's torturers must be brought to face trial and the victim must be granted full reparations. TRIAL International will continue to assist Antoine until both happen.*



# Mexico





**For the last few years, Mexico has been the theatre of widespread enforced disappearances, especially in the so-called “war on drugs and organized crime”, in which the State uses forceful – and sometimes illegal – methods to curb crime in Mexico. Migrants seeking to cross the Mexican borders to reach the USA are also particularly exposed to enforced disappearances, as well as arbitrary executions and torture.**

Mexican authorities have set up no efficient system to search for the disappeared persons and have systematically failed to identify, investigate, prosecute and sanction those responsible for these crimes, thus reinforcing the existing climate of impunity. Countless families remain in the dark as to the fate and whereabouts of their loved ones and do not receive adequate support and redress.

In 2015, TRIAL International and its partner organization Fundacion para la Justicia, and a coalition of Latin American NGOs submitted several reports to the United Nations bodies,

including the Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED) and the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID), to raise awareness on this situation and to advocate in favor of victims.

- Report to the Committee on Enforced Disappearances in view of Mexico’s examination (December 2014 – in Spanish)
- Follow-up report to the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances on its recommendations’ implementation (March 2015 – in Spanish)



# Tunisia

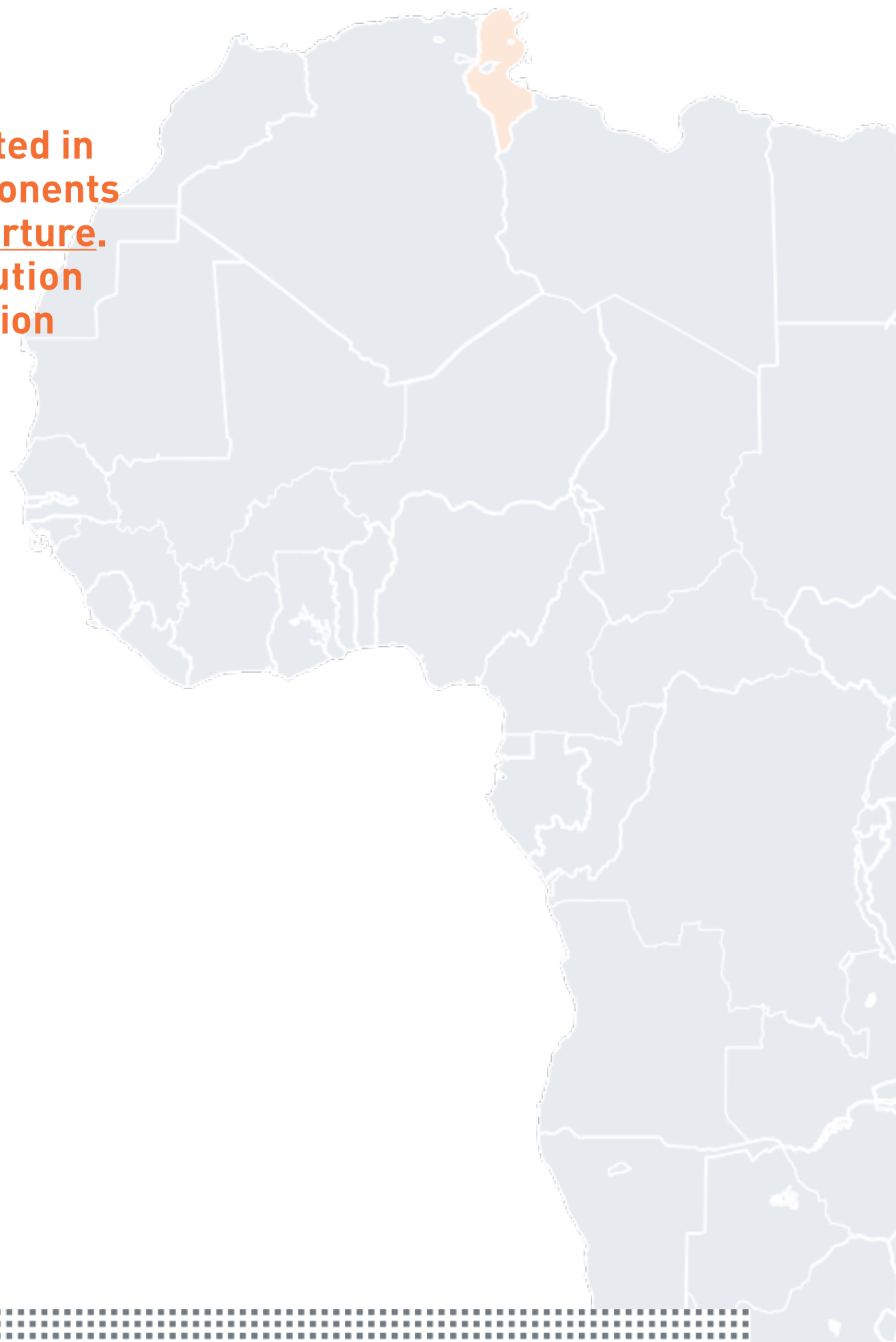




**Under the rule of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, ousted in 2011 by the Tunisian Revolution, political opponents were the targets of arbitrary detention and torture. Unfortunately, over 5 years after the Revolution impunity remains widespread and the conviction of torturers are extremely rare.**

Wrongly suspected of inciting an attack against the party in power, Rached Jaïdane was arrested in Tunisia in 1993. He stayed there until February 2006, after 13 long years of abuse. Among the acts of cruelty that he suffered during his detention, M. Jaïdane was punched, kicked and beaten with truncheons all over his body; his nails were ripped off and his fingers crushed. Seized by the victim, the Tunisian judiciary acquitted all the accused apart from the former President Ben Ali, who was sentenced to a five-year prison term – which he never served.

In partnership with [ACAT-France](#), TRIAL International brought M. Jaïdane's case before the [United Nations Committee against Torture](#) in January 2015. The case is pending.





# Investigations and Criminal Law

A high-angle photograph of a large-scale manual excavation site. Numerous workers, mostly men, are scattered across a muddy, hilly landscape, engaged in digging and earthmoving. They are using various tools like shovels and pickaxes. The ground is a mix of brown earth and muddy water. In the foreground, the back of a person wearing a yellow tank top and a camouflage helmet is visible, looking down at the site. The background shows more workers and some simple structures on a hillside.

“Swiss criminal law enables the prosecution of companies for international crimes, even if they are committed abroad.”

(Benedict de Moerloose, Legal Adviser)



**2015 marked major successes in several criminal cases led by TRIAL International. The NGO also continued its field investigations on 3 ongoing cases and further established its expertise on universal jurisdiction, notably with the publication of its first report on the subject.**

## ERWIN SPERISEN VERDICT CONFIRMED

In the latest episode of a 7-year long procedure, former chief of Guatemalan police Erwin Sperisen was sentenced to life imprisonment on 12 May. The Appeals Chamber of the Geneva Court found him guilty of the murder of ten prisoners in Guatemala – overturning a first instance verdict finding him guilty of seven assassinations. It was TRIAL International and its partners who denounced M. Sperisen to the Swiss authorities in 2008, and later produced before the courts substantial evidence against him. The case was met with considerable media attention and is considered a major victory against impunity in Guatemala.

## FORMER MILITIAMAN FINALLY FACES JUSTICE

In September 2015, TRIAL International helped securing the conviction in Bosnia of former militiaman “Pango” (pseudonym) for sexual violence committed during the war. 2 years ago, TRIAL International had launched a double strategy to convict him, submitting both a denunciation in Switzerland, where he lived, and a complaint in Bosnia. This led the accused to surrender to Bosnian authorities, where he received a prison sentence and was ordered to pay the highest ever compensation in Bosnia for sexual violence in conflict.

**2**

perpetrators convicted

**3**

ongoing cases

**2**

legal publications



## INVESTIGATIONS ON BAHRAINI PUBLIC FIGURE

The Swiss prosecuting authorities opened a [criminal investigation](#) against Bahrain's Attorney General, accused of torture against British citizen Jaafar Al-Hasabi. M. Al-Hasabi was tortured in Bahrain in 2010 and held incommunicado for two months. In September 2015, TRIAL International and its partners [ECCHR](#), [REDRESS](#) and [BIRD](#) supported the victim's complaint in anticipation of the Attorney General's visit to Switzerland. The case is pending.

## ARGOR CASE ENDS WITH A LETDOWN

Frustratingly, TRIAL International's case against metals company [Argor-Heraeus SA](#) was closed in March 2015 by the Swiss Office of the Attorney General. The case started in 2013 when TRIAL International and its partners [Conflict Awareness Project](#) and [Open Society Justice Initiative](#) accused Argor of illegally processing several tones of pillaged gold from DRC. While the Swiss authorities acknowledged that Argor had refined looted gold and failed in their due diligence obligations, they concluded that the company could have been unaware of the gold's criminal origin – an astonishing claim, given illegal trade in DRC had been widely reported on for years.

## BUILDING UP EXPERTISE ON INTERNATIONAL PROSECUTION

TRIAL International published a revised edition of its legal handbook on international prosecution in Switzerland, with the support of [Amnesty International Switzerland](#). The 187-pages book, entitled [The fight against impunity under Swiss law](#), was co-authored by prominent lawyers and TRIAL International's staff, comprehensively covering Swiss law on international crimes and witness protection.

In April 2015, TRIAL International also published its first report on [universal jurisdiction](#), in partnership with [ECCHR](#) and [FIDH](#). [Make Way for Justice](#) examined 37 outstanding cases of 2014 in which universal jurisdiction played a part, highlighting the principle's potential to fight impunity. The study was broadly distributed among NGOs and practitioners, including judicial authorities, and received shining reviews.



# Trial Watch

**Trial Watch is the only database to centralize information on international criminal law proceedings. A unique inventory of on-going or completed criminal cases, it was 1'300 profiles strong at the end of 2015.**

TRIAL International strives to make the international justice accessible to all, and this starts with understanding iconic criminal cases such as that of Slobodan Milosevic, Augusto Pinochet or Hissène Habré.

In 2015, thanks to its 63 committed volunteers, the database was further enriched with 114 new profiles, as well as hundreds of updates on existing ones. Trial Watch has become a reference for many journalists, students, lawyers, NGOs and the general public seeking reliable and up-to-date information on international criminal law proceedings.

[Visit Trial Watch today!](#)



**1'300** profiles



**63** volunteers







# External relations

Donors and supporters are an invaluable cornerstone in the work of TRIAL International. Thanks to the growing support of donors, decision-makers, media and activists, the NGO can convey its message across the world and help more and more victims every year.



# Outreach

Strategic and accessible communications contributes to TRIAL International's mission of informing, raising awareness and mobilizing in favor of international justice. The NGO has progressively expanded and retained its reach on several continents. Beneficiaries, legal practitioners, partners, decision-makers, civil society representatives and media: many are those who follow TRIAL International's work and convey its messages with an ever-increasing interest. In 2015, TRIAL International has prepared the transition to its new corporate identity, launched in 2016.

## TRIAL INTERNATIONAL ONLINE

TRIAL International's website had become antiquated and the time had come to give the NGO a new display window that would reflect its scope and expertise. In 2015, TRIAL International has therefore initiated a vast operation to rebuild its website completely, as part of the larger shift to its new corporate identity.

[Visit our website!](#)



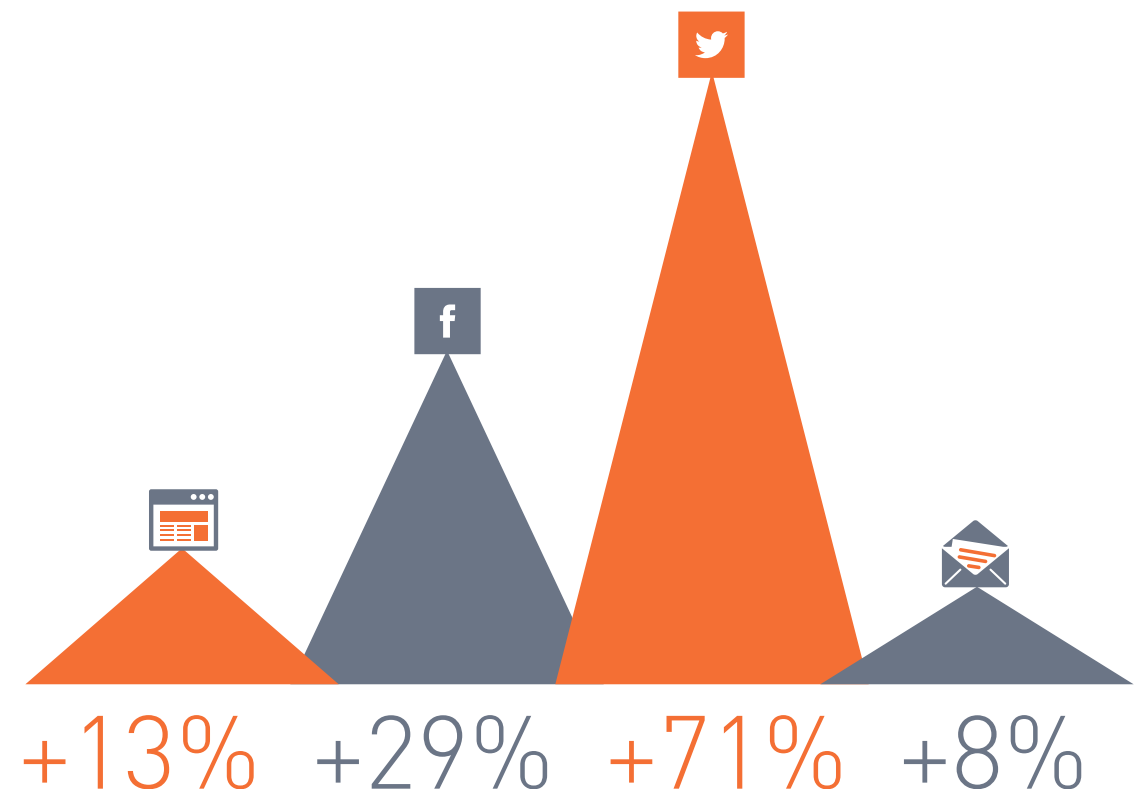
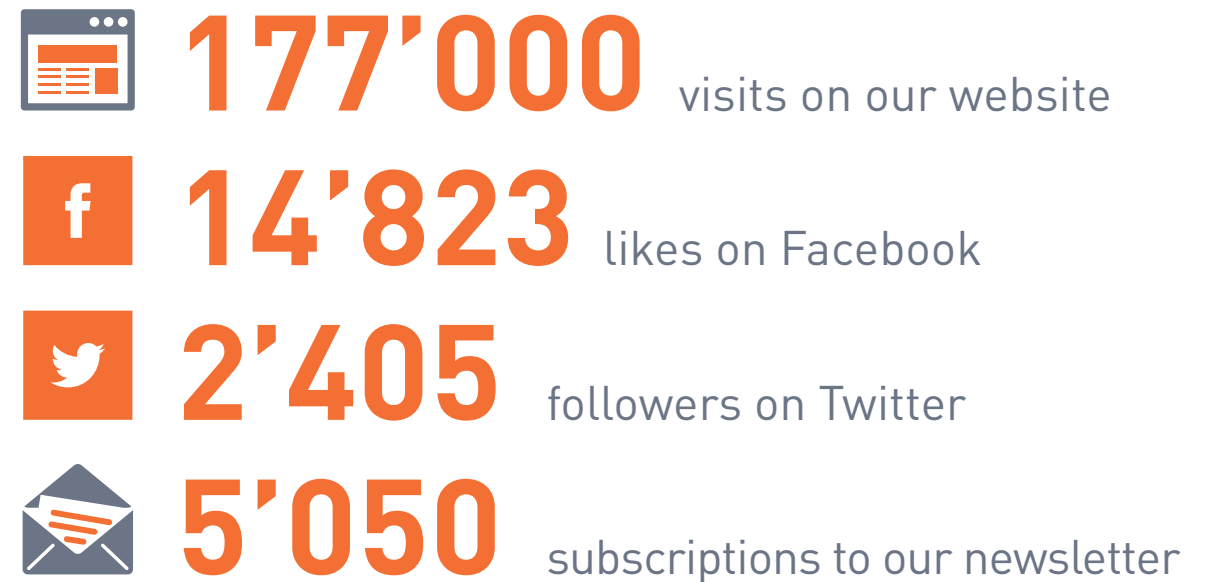
## NEWSLETTER

The newsletter, launched in 2014, is met with increasing success: it is now sent to over 5'000 subscribers in French and English. A monthly milestone for TRIAL International's members, partners and supporters, it provides an overview of the organization's activities and the latest developments in international justice.

[Sign up to our newsletter!](#)

## SOCIAL MEDIA

TRIAL International has continued in 2015 its digital strategy, launched the previous year with a double aim: improve the quality of its online publications and increase its mobilization on social networks. The main platforms used by TRIAL International are [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Youtube](#). Since 2015, TRIAL International is also on [Storify](#), a tool that allows to put forward the victims' stories. The increase in traffic on all these platforms prove that the objectives have been amply met.



Dec. 2014 to Dec. 2015

## MEDIA

TRIAL International has experienced unprecedented media coverage in 2015, notably thanks to highly mediatized topics such as Erwin Sperisen's trial or the first-ever compensation granted to a victim of sexual violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina. While preserving the confidentiality necessary to its mission, the NGO is aware that media are a fantastic outreach tool to denounce – and fight – impunity.

In 2015, over 1'000 articles from media all over the world covered TRIAL International's actions.



**Balkan Wartime Rape Victims Continue to Face Hardships Decades After Conflict**



**Procès Sperisen: la loi est la même pour tous, en Suisse comme au Guatemala**



**Bosnia rape victims may claim compensation for first time**



**Crimes de guerre: un ancien paramilitaire serbe arrêté en France**



**Erwin Sperisen anuncia segundo juicio para próximo 4 de mayo**



**La RDC bénéficie d'un protocole international relatif aux enquêtes sur les violences sexuelles**



**Vergewaltiger nach Umwegen verurteilt**



**Des ONG dénoncent une décision de la justice suisse**



**British-Bahraini asks Swiss to probe Bahrain attorney general for torture**



**Bosnia grants landmark pay-out to wartime rape victim**



**Int'l day for the disappeared  
Govt ignores UNHRC recommendations**



**SWITZERLAND EXAMINES TORTURE CASE AGAINST BAHRAIN ATTORNEY GENERAL**



**"L'ancien porte-parole de l'UPD assassiné lundi obtient gain de cause auprès du Comité contre la Torture"**



# Donor's support

**TRIAL International could not carry out its mission without the help of its institutional sponsors. We thank these partners for their generous and loyal support.**

Amnesty International,  
Swiss Section

Antenna Technologies  
Foundation

City of Geneva

City of Lausanne

Foreign and Commonwealth  
Office, British Government

Loterie Romande

Magna Carta Foundation

MISEREOR

Municipality of Bernex

Municipality of  
Pregny-Chambésy

Nuhanovic Foundation

OAK Foundation

Open Society Foundations

Pro Victimis Foundation

Sigrid Rausing Trust

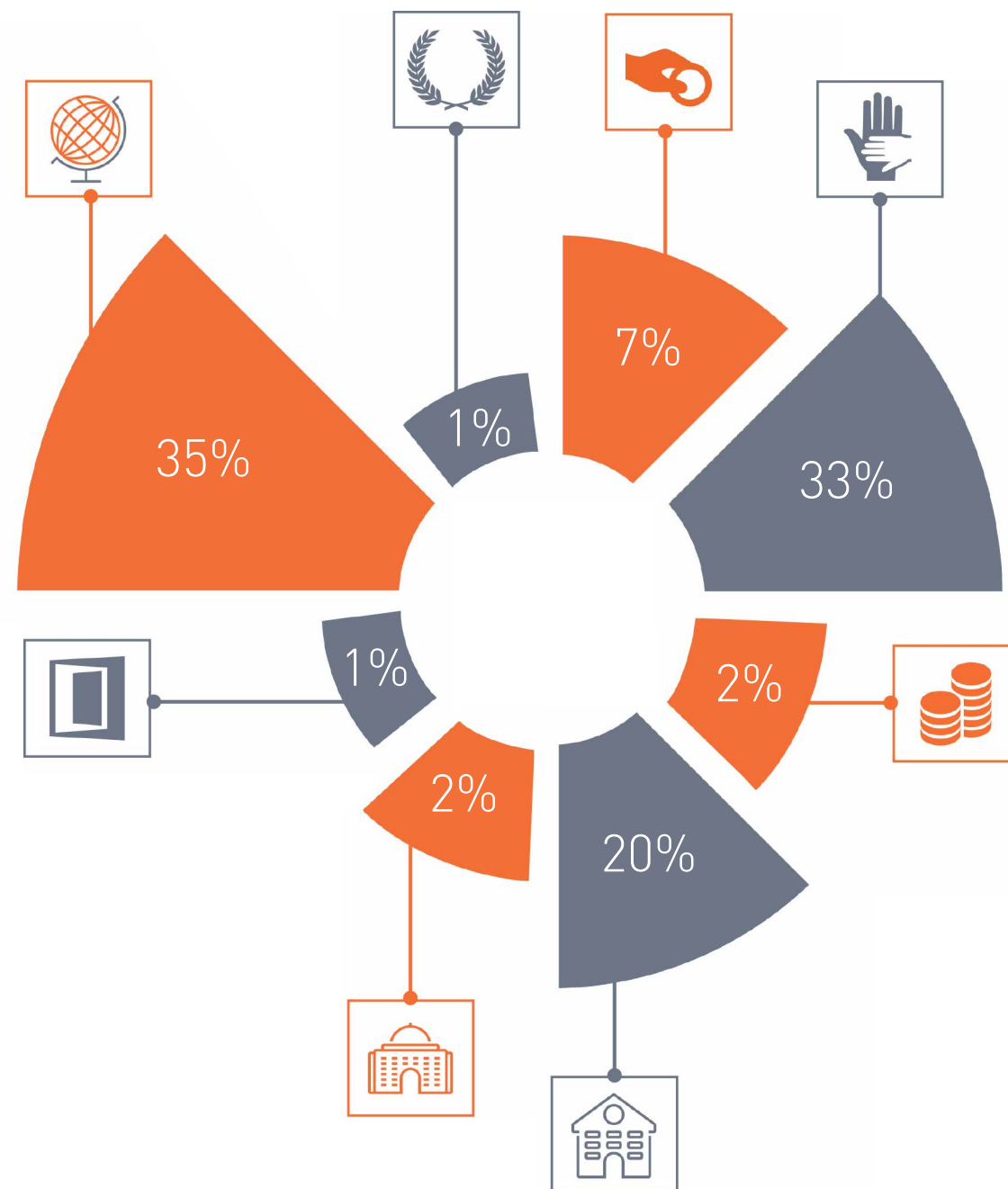
Swiss Embassy in Sarajevo

Swiss Federal Department  
of Foreign Affairs

Republic and Canton  
of Geneva



# Donor's contributions



**Swiss  
Confederation and  
other States**  
CHF643'737



**Other  
products**  
CHF34'556



**International and  
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organizations**  
CHF10'000



**Foundations**  
CHF612'531



**Private  
donors**  
CHF123'908



**Other public  
institutions**  
CHF30'999



**Cantons and  
municipalities**  
CHF366'029



**Members of TRIAL  
Interntational**  
CHF18'935

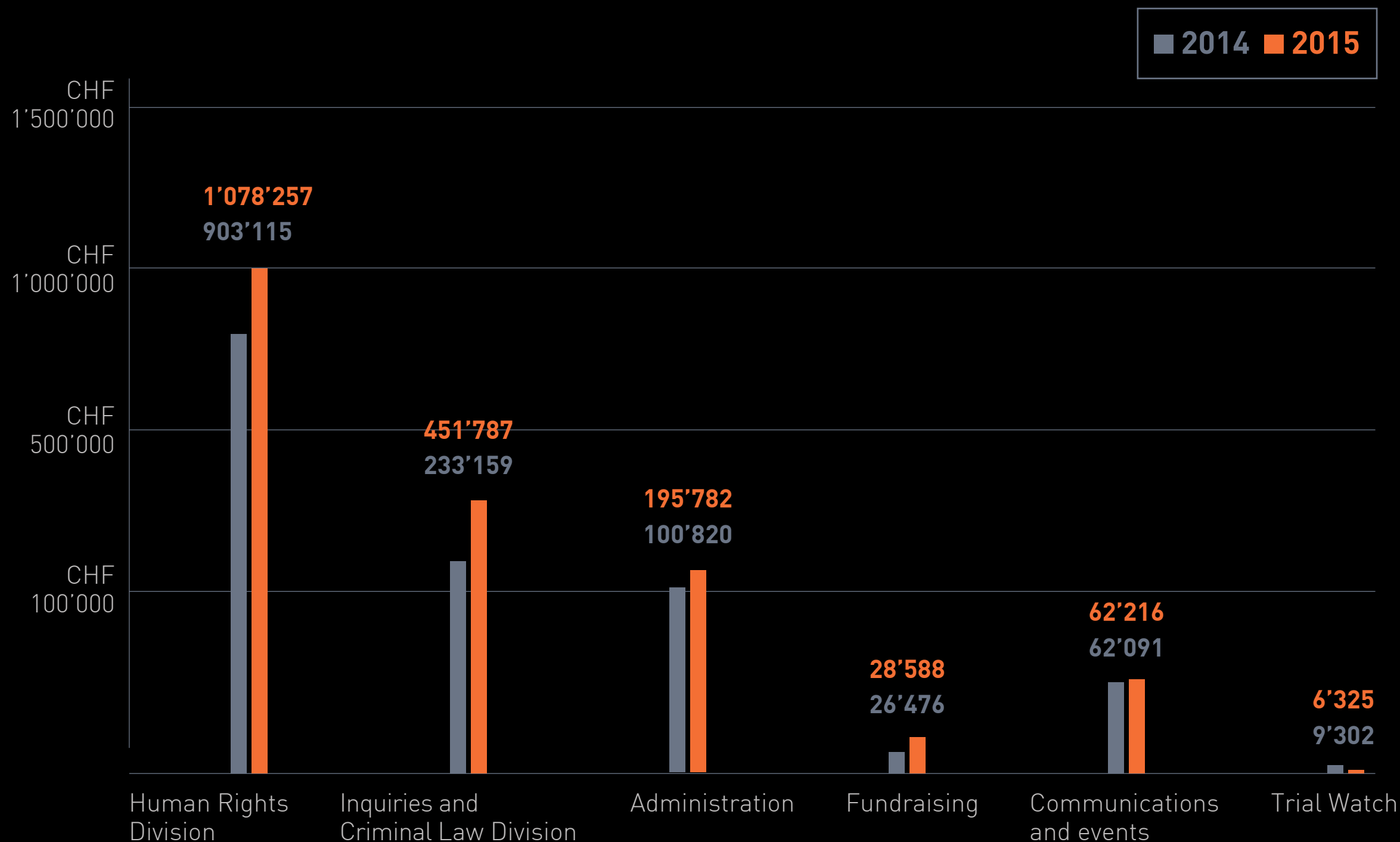




# 4 Finances and administration

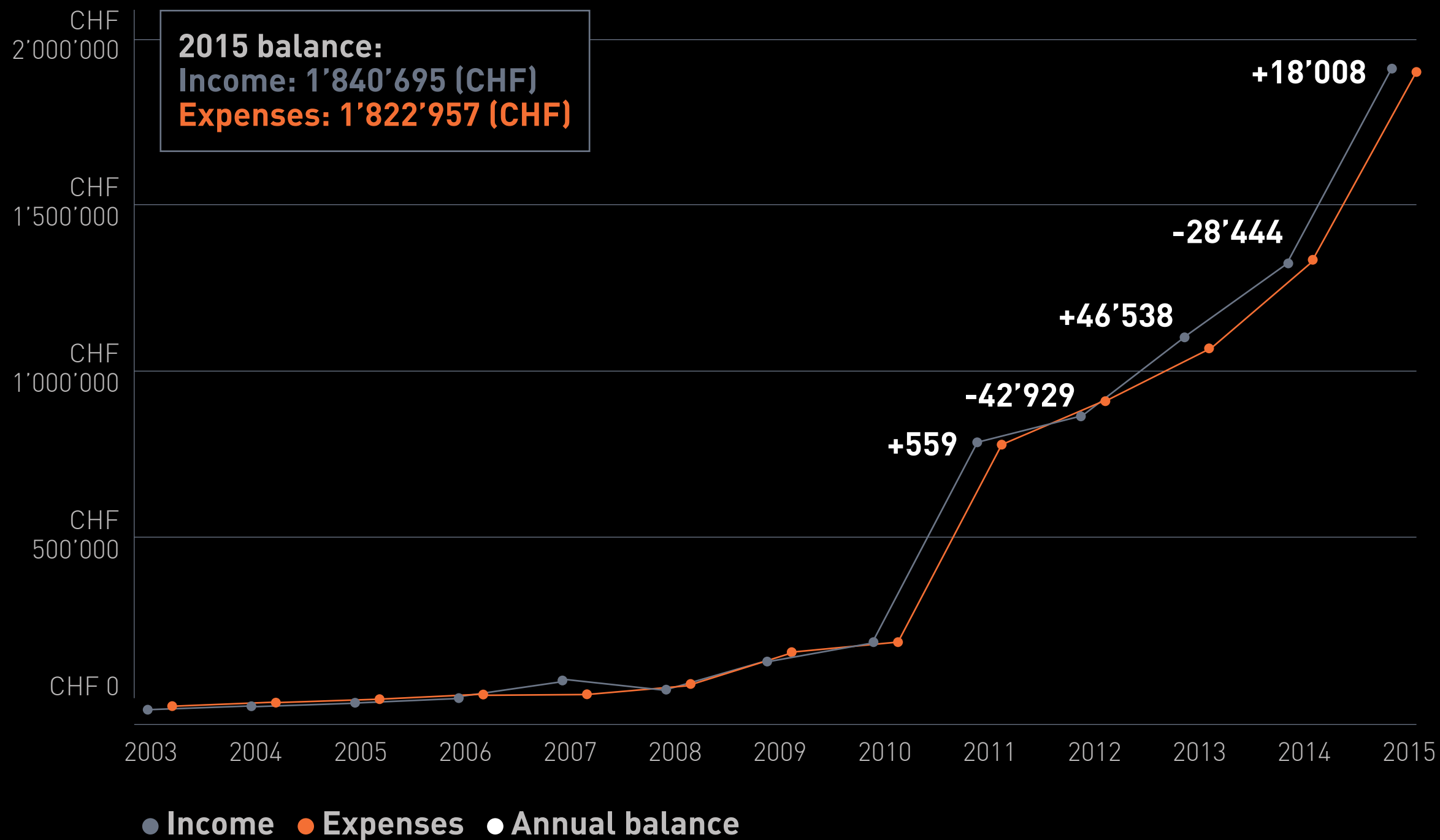
With a positive balance sheet for 2015, TRIAL International continues its successful expansion. The organization takes pride in its multicultural staff and its many volunteers, whose skills and passion are invaluable assets for the organization.

# Annual expenses





# Budget balance evolution



# Team

## Committee

Giorgio MALINVERNI,  
President

Sacha MEUTER,  
Vice President

Jean-Jacques MARTIN,  
Vice President (until April) /  
Treasurer (since April)

Pancho GONZALEZ,  
Treasurer (until April)

Jean-René OETTLI,  
Secretary

Daniel BOLOMEY

Benoît CHAPPUIS

Sandrine GIROUD-ROTH

Miriam LEVY-TURNER  
(since April)

Héloïse RORDORF

## Staff

### **DIRECTOR**

Philip GRANT,  
Director

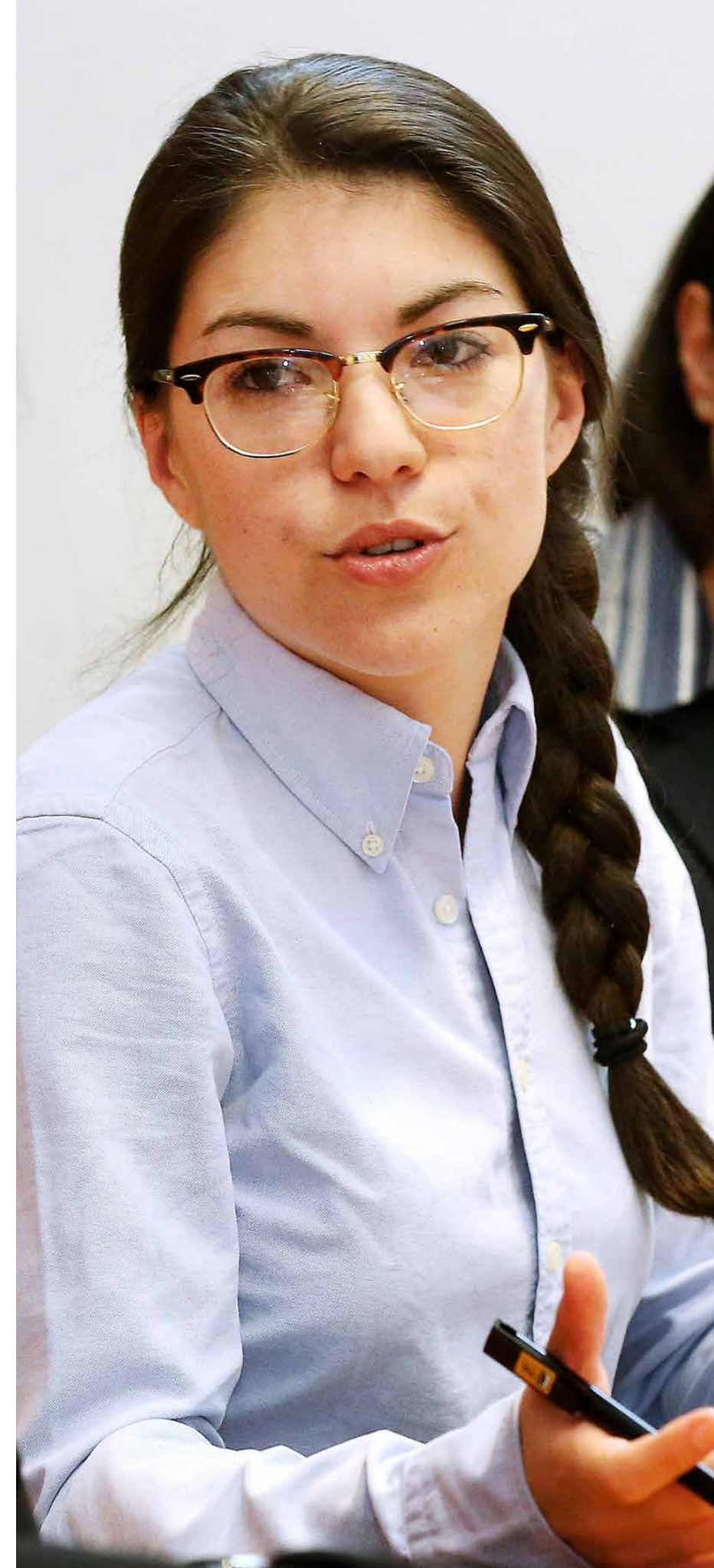
### **MANAGEMENT**

Emanuela MELIS,  
Human Resources and  
Administrative Manager

Marie-Romaine  
MICHELET SAAS,  
Executive Assistant

Sophie FAVRE,  
Executive Assistant

Guylain MONGENGO,  
Administrative Assistant





**EXTERNAL RELATIONS**

Solange BAGUTTI,  
Junior Fundraiser

Chloé BITTON, Head of  
Communications

Karin FOCKENS, Junior  
Communications Officer

Camille JOSEPH, Head  
of Development

Khadidja LAHLALI,  
Fundraising Consultant

Robin METRAL, Civil  
Service assignment – Junior  
Communications Officer

Matthias RAST, Civil  
Service assignment

**HUMAN RIGHTS DIVISION**

Sanela BRCIC, Finance  
and Administration Officer  
(Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Pamela CAPIZZI, Legal  
Adviser (Burundi)

Gabriella CITRONI,  
Senior Legal Adviser

Adisa FISIC, Legal  
Officer – Public Relations  
Assistant (Bosnia and  
Herzegovina)

Adrijana HANUSIC,  
Legal Adviser (Bosnia  
and Herzegovina)

Patient IRAGUHA,  
Local Project Manager  
(Democratic Republic of  
the Congo)

Selma KORJENIC,  
Sexual Violence Project  
Coordinator (Bosnia and  
Herzegovina)

Innocent MUSAFIRI,  
Finance and  
Administration Officer  
(Democratic Republic  
of the Congo)

Guy MUSHIATA, Human  
Rights Coordinator  
(Democratic Republic of  
the Congo)

Marcellin MUZIRIGERA,  
Driver (Democratic  
Republic of the Congo)

Daniele PERISSI, Legal  
Adviser (Democratic  
Republic of the Congo)

Armela RAMIC, Legal  
Adviser (Bosnia and  
Herzegovina)

Helena RODRIGUEZ  
BRONCHU CARCELLER,  
Legal Adviser (Nepal)

Elsa TAQUET, Junior  
Legal Adviser  
(Democratic Republic of  
the Congo)

Danaé VAN DER  
STRATEN PONTHOZ,  
Legal Consultant

Orlane VARESANO, Legal  
Adviser (Burundi)

Marie-Lou VEILLON,  
Junior Legal Adviser  
(Burundi)

Lajla ZAIMOVIC  
KURTOVIC, Fundraising  
Officer (Bosnia  
and Herzegovina)

**INVESTIGATION AND  
CRIMINAL LAW DIVISION**

Laura CES, Junior Legal  
Adviser

Bénédict DE  
MOERLOOSE,  
Legal Adviser

Julie MEYLAN, Junior  
Legal Adviser

Valérie PAULET, Legal  
Consultant

**INTERNS**

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Joëlle COUTAMA

Lisa COYLE

Chiara GABRIELE

Kevin KARLEN

Valentine LARICI

Clara LE

Berivan OZER

Roberta SERRENTINO

Safi VAN'T LAND

**TRIAL WATCH**

Iain GAW, Coordinator

Valérie Paulet,  
Coordinator

Juliette FERRON, Intern

Evanthia REVEL, Intern

Subhan ABBAS

Yasmine AKKAD

Kymberleigh ALBITES

Safi ALJADAAN

Laura ALLEN

Cassandre AMAH

Rocío ARREDONDO

Leoni AYOUB

Simon BIANCHI

David BOISAUBERT

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Madeline BOTTICELLO

Clara BRUHMANN

Alexandra BÜCHLER

Berta CASAS ROCHEL

Romain CUTTAT

Bárbara DE LA GARZA

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Elise FILO

Marie-Laure GAMBINO

Elena GONZALES

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Tom GRANT

Julia GUERIN

Brigitte HAMADEY

Sabrina HETTRICH

Neli HRISTOZOVA

Valeria HORVATH

Emma HUGHES

Delphine JAOUEN

Marine JULLIER

Corinna KROMM

Anita KUNATH

Marion LAYDEVANT

Marie LUGAZ

Marta LYS

Claire MAGNOUX

Noémi MANCO

Elsa MARIE

Inga MATTHES

Sara PEÑA GALERA

Manuela PEQUEÑO

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Taylor RAIVEN

Nurenia REICHLING

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Lindsay STALLINGS

Jéréemie SWINNEN

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Vanessa THOMSEN

Hannah TIEFENGRABER

François TILLETTE DE  
MAUTORT

Gaëlle TOUITOU

Jessica TROPEA

Una SCHAMBERGER

Stéfanie UJMA

Laeka VALIMAMODE

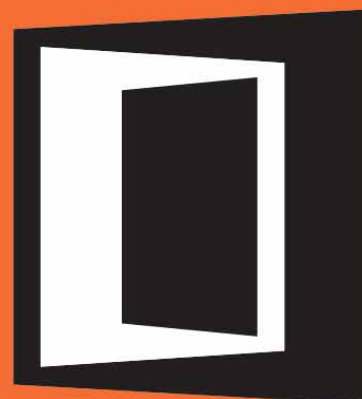
Alexia VERCROYSSSE

Diego VILLAFÁÑEZ  
SAGARDOY

Hannah WILSON

TRIAL International would not be able to conduct its mission without the invaluable help of its volunteers. We take this opportunity to warmly thank them all.





**TRIAL**  
International

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[@trial](https://www.instagram.com/trial)

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