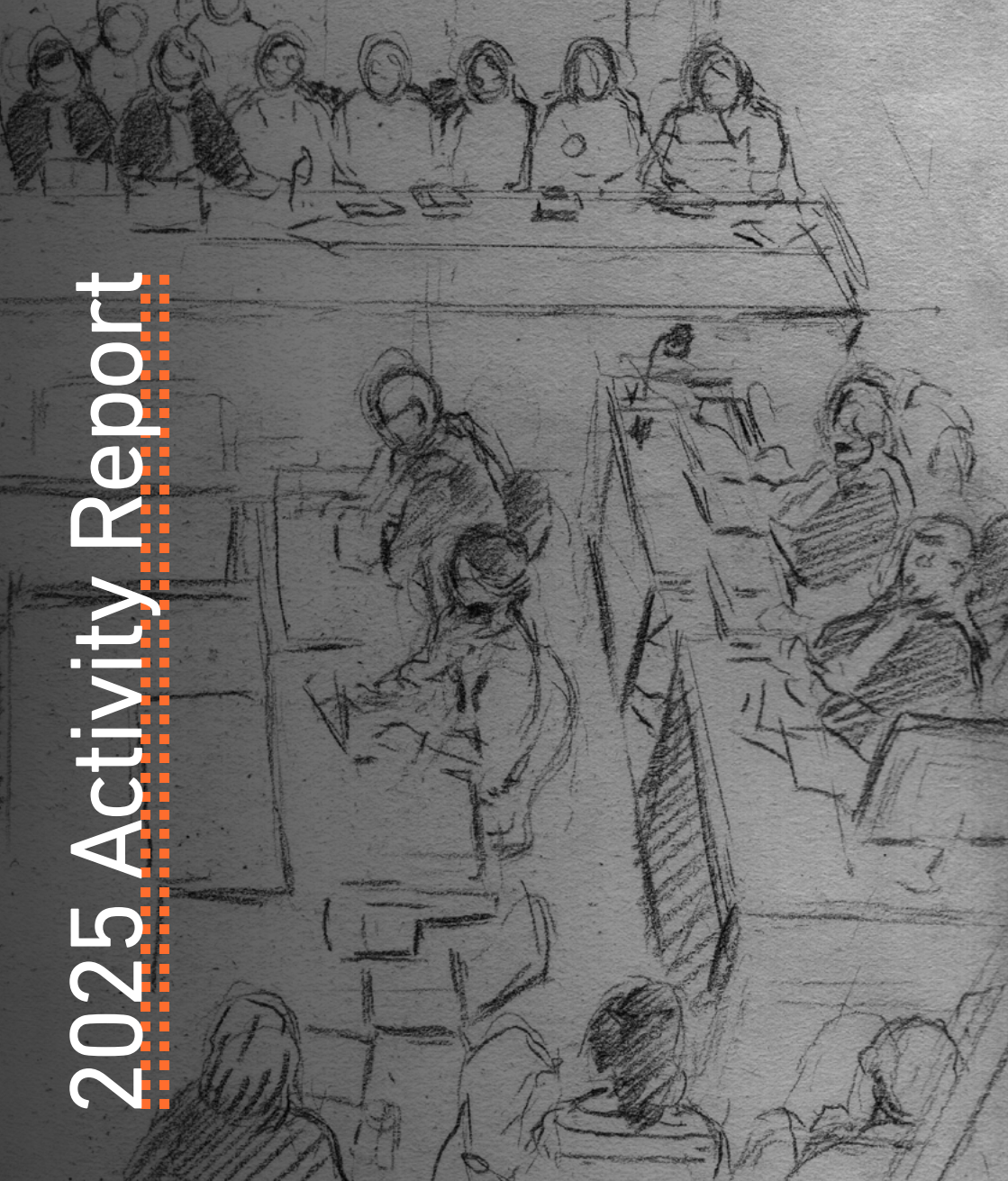




**TRIAL**  
International

Cover image: artwork from a series of court sketches created by Augustin Guichot for TRIAL International, during the trial of former Congolese Minister Roger Lumbala, which took place in Paris from 12 November to 15 December 2025.

# 2025 Activity Report



# RESISTING TODAY, SO THAT WE CAN REBUILD TOMORROW



Faced with the world today, it would be tempting to give in to discouragement. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the crime of aggression has become commonplace. Bombed, starved, displaced or massacred, civilians continue to suffer violations in Gaza, Sudan, eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and elsewhere. Powers that once claimed to defend the international order are now openly undermining it, in words as well as in actions. The International Criminal Court is under attack; NGOs are threatened or prosecuted. Double standards have become so blatant that the credibility of a rules-based international order is at stake. Impunity is no longer merely tolerated; it is organised.

We refuse cynicism. Not because we are naive, but because cynicism is a luxury that neither victims, nor any of us, can afford.

Beyond the noise we must also listen to the signs. In December 2025, Roger Lumbala, a former Congolese warlord turned minister, was sentenced to 30 years' imprisonment by the Paris *cour d'assises* for complicity in crimes against humanity. This is not an isolated case: it is part of a broader trend in which former officials are increasingly being held to account wherever they may be, thanks to the principle of universal jurisdiction. Impunity is receding, slowly but concretely, and other proceedings are advancing in several countries.

At the same time, States never commit their crimes alone: behind every conflict are companies that finance them, mercenaries who wage them, and intermediaries who profit from them. Increasingly, economic actors, companies, including private military companies, are the subject of complaints and prosecutions for their role in conflicts. Dismantling this architecture of impunity is one of the most urgent tasks of contemporary international law.

As major international institutions weaken, the response is not retreat but enforcement: strengthening national litigation, where we play a part. National courts, equipped in particular with the principle of universal jurisdiction, are now among the last places where justice can still deliver real convictions and meaningful recognition to victims. It is here that the resilience of the law is being tested.

And behind national trials, there are often organisations like TRIAL International. Working alongside judicial authorities, local civil society and affected communities, they operate on the ground for years. Training, documenting, supporting victims: this is the invisible work that makes visible justice possible.

Let us remember that during the Second World War, jurists were already laying the foundations for the Nuremberg Trials while bombs were still falling. They did not know whether it would stand, but they built it anyway, already shaping what would come after. We are making the same choice.

**Through law, we resist today. Tomorrow, we rebuild through it.**

**Leslie Haskell**  
*President*

**Philip Grant**  
*Executive Director*

# TRIAL INTERNATIONAL'S IMPACT IN 2025

TRIAL International conducts investigations, strategic litigation and advocacy to advance accountability for international crimes, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, and other serious human rights violations. In 2025, ongoing public work concerned crimes committed in The Gambia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Libya, Belarus, Ukraine, Syria, Bosnia and Herzegovina and across different jurisdictions. It also worked on a wide range of confidential cases in other contexts.

## TRIAL International has supported the representation of **11'790** victims in legal proceedings, including:



We have brought **13 new cases** before national courts, either alone or in partnership.



victims obtained favourable decisions



perpetrators convicted



proceedings ongoing



favourable rulings at national level



compensation decisions

### CUMULATIVE IMPACT SINCE 2002:

**13'296** victims supported in legal proceedings, including **2'353** survivors of sexual violence

**6'022** people trained

**500** cases supported



## CAPACITY BUILDING

In 2025, TRIAL International carried out essential yet often invisible work: strengthening the capacities of justice actors investigating international crimes. In contexts of fragile institutions and security constraints, technical skills development is a prerequisite for launching credible and sustainable prosecutions.

Throughout the year, TRIAL International conducted multiple specialised training sessions with judges, investigators, lawyers, human rights defenders, journalists and civil society representatives from different countries. The aim was to strengthen their ability to document international crimes, build robust legal cases and navigate often complex multi-layered accountability processes. Beyond skills transfer, these exchanges reinforce local ecosystems capable of documenting crimes, protecting victims and witnesses, and initiating judicial proceedings at the national or international level.

In a global context where civic space is shrinking and obstacles to justice are multiplying, this investment remains an essential lever. By supporting in-country actors, TRIAL International contributes to firmly anchoring the fight against impunity as close as possible to affected communities.

## Responding to evolving constraints: strengthening partners' capacities in insecure contexts

With the continued deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in eastern DRC, TRIAL International adjusted its capacity-building approach to respond to the challenges of its partners' evolving needs. The organisation prioritised technical support that could be directly mobilised to document human rights violations safely.

TRIAL International organised a specialised training session in a secure location outside the DRC for human rights defenders from partner NGOs in South Kivu. This training combined theory and practice, including simulations of documentation missions, incidents identification, and modules on physical and digital security. Participants were equipped with practical tools for the safe collection of data.

The organisation also supported capacity building sessions in Bukavu, enabling participants to share methods, tools and security protocols. These sessions extended the impact of the initial training while adapting documentation practices to local constraints.

### KEY FIGURES

**288** PEOPLE TRAINED,  
INCLUDING 86 WOMEN

**8** JOURNALISTS  
TRAINED

**17** LAWYERS  
TRAINED

**157** CIVIL SOCIETY  
MEMBERS TRAINED

**106** JUDICIAL ACTORS AND  
AUTHORITIES TRAINED



## INVESTIGATIONS AND DOCUMENTATION

In 2025, TRIAL International continued its investigation and documentation work on violations of international law. It documented crimes, identified victims, gathered evidence and tracked suspects through open-source intelligence (OSINT), field missions and witness interviews. The organisation also collaborated regularly with experts and partners in the countries where it operates.

To support these efforts, TRIAL International worked with 78 national and international partners, and carried out and supported nearly 36 investigation and documentation missions.

These activities aim to transform field-based information into legal cases capable of triggering investigations, contributing to the development of international law, and supporting victims in their pursuit of justice.

### Submission concerning the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation

TRIAL International's action concerning the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation (GHF) contributed to its formal dissolution in Switzerland. In May 2025, we requested the opening of administrative investigations by the Swiss authorities into the Swiss branch of GHF, which was then registered in Geneva.

GHF had been widely criticised by humanitarian actors for its aid distribution methods, which were allegedly in violation of the principles of humanitarian action and human rights.

These steps allegedly aimed to clarify the potential use of private security companies in aid distribution, to assess the impact of this system on the civilian population and to determine whether the foundation's activities complied with Swiss law and international humanitarian law. Following these submissions, the Swiss Federal Supervisory Authority for Foundations ordered the formal dissolution of GHF in early July.

KEY FIGURES

**36** INVESTIGATIVE AND DOCUMENTATION MISSIONS

**17** COUNTRIES WHERE INVESTIGATIONS WERE CONDUCTED

**21** NEW CASES EXAMINED



## STRATEGIC LITIGATION: JUSTICE ACROSS BORDERS

Strategic litigation is one of TRIAL International's core tools of action, involving the targeted use of judicial proceedings to advance accountability for international crimes and strengthen victims' access to justice.

In contexts where national judicial systems are unable or unwilling to act, the organisation relies on universal jurisdiction, which allows for the prosecution of alleged perpetrators of international crimes even when the acts occurred abroad. Such proceedings are based on long-term work, including: in-depth investigations, documentation of crimes, identification of chains of command and support for victims throughout the judicial process.

### Conviction of Roger Lumbala

Roger Lumbala's conviction by the Paris *cour d'assises* and his sentence of 30 years' imprisonment for complicity in crimes against humanity represent a major step forward in the fight against impunity. This verdict, rendered on the basis of universal jurisdiction, marks a significant development in addressing more than 20 years of impunity for crimes committed during the Second Congo War (1998–2003), which were never prosecuted in the DRC.

As the leader of the armed group RCD-N, Lumbala was found guilty of having supported and facilitated crimes committed during the military operation 'Effacer le tableau' in Ituri and North Kivu. This operation involved systematic attacks against civilians, including minorities and indigenous peoples, encompassing murder, rape, torture and looting.

This trial is the result of nearly a decade of work by TRIAL International and its partners. The organisation contributed to documenting the crimes, identifying chains of command and supporting victims through a complex judicial process. By joining as a civil party, TRIAL International helped ensure that victims' voices were heard throughout the proceedings.

This decision highlights the pivotal role of victims and civil society organisations in advancing justice, as well as that of international organisations in documenting serious crimes. It sends a clear message: crimes committed in the shadows of armed conflicts must not go unpunished. This message resonates particularly strongly as violence persists in eastern DRC and ongoing political processes overlook justice and human rights, reminding us that there can be no lasting peace without justice and accountability.

KEY FIGURES

11'790

VICTIMS REPRESENTED IN COURT, INCLUDING  
5'605 WOMEN AND 75 CHILDREN

13

NEW CASES  
SUBMITTED

5 TRIALS

630

VICTIMS OBTAINED FAVORABLE  
VERDICTS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

2

LANDMARK  
CONVICTIONS



## ADVOCACY AND LEGAL EXPERTISE: SHAPING TOMORROW'S LAW

Advocacy and legal expertise are central to TRIAL International's work. Drawing on its field experience and the cases it supports before courts, the organisation contributes to development of legal standards and the strengthening of accountability mechanisms for international crimes.

Since 2024, TRIAL International has been actively engaged in the drafting and adoption of a Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Humanity. In 2025, States entered formal negotiations. By engaging in this process, TRIAL International is helping to strengthen the international justice framework and ensure that the future Convention becomes an effective tool for prevention, prosecution and reparation for victims.

## Developing a global response to international environmental crimes

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In 2025, TRIAL International and its partners recognised the urgent need for a coordinated global response to international environmental crimes. In June 2025, in Geneva, TRIAL International brought together over 40 experts worldwide, including scientists, lawyers, human rights defenders and academics.

The fight against international crimes committed through, or resulting in, environmental harm ('international environmental crimes') in situations of conflict or widespread violence has traditionally been overlooked. This is due to the complexity of these crimes, the limited resources of frontline communities and the high requirements for data collection, analysis and preservation.

TRIAL International and its partners developed guidelines to assist investigators, civil society actors and affected communities in addressing these crimes and have begun organising targeted training sessions.

### KEY FIGURES

**44** MEDIA  
EVENTS

**77** BRIEFINGS FOR INTERNATIONAL  
AND NATIONAL ACTORS

**28** CONFERENCES ORGANISED OR  
CO-ORGANISED BY TRIAL INTERNATIONAL

# THANK YOU FOR YOUR TRUST!



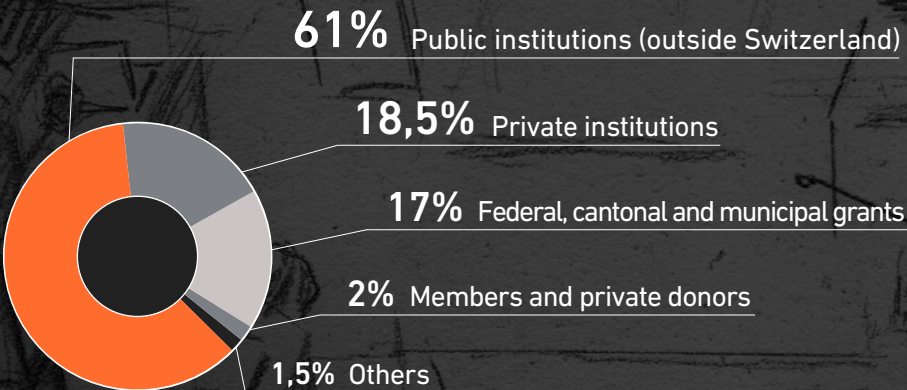
TRIAL International works **with numerous local and international partners, 30 institutional donors and 231 individual donors** to combat impunity.

We sincerely thank you for your trust, your collaboration and your support, which, once again this year, have enabled us to assist many victims in their pursuit of justice. **Thank you!**

**CHF 4'875'530**

**TOTAL EXPENSES**

## CONTRIBUTIONS FROM DONORS (as a percentage of income)



### SUPPORT OUR WORK!

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