

## Integration of mental health and psychosocial approaches in accountability mechanisms for atrocity crimes

### HYBRID KMF RESEARCH REPORT LAUNCH

Date: May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Venue: [Carlton Ambassador-The Hague / Online participation possible](#)

#### ***Background***

The role of victims and of victim-witnesses in national and international accountability mechanisms for atrocity crimes has progressively gained ground over the past two decades. This development increased the need for a better understanding of the potential psychological impact of the work of these mechanisms on survivors/victims and witnesses. It also triggered a heightened interest in how mental health and psychosocial (MHPSS) approaches can improve witness evidence and victim well-being and, ultimately, improve justice outcomes. However, notwithstanding the increased focus on victim-centred justice, the use of MHPSS approaches and trauma-informed methodologies is still underdeveloped and only scarcely integrated in the work of most justice mechanisms.

In addition, good practices that have been developed are often scattered and not readily available to mental health and justice practitioners, especially to those working in national justice mechanisms or conflict-affected settings. Generally, there is a limited exchange of know-how between mechanisms at international and at national levels. True multidisciplinary approaches are largely lacking. However, experience with implementing good practices, mainly at the International Criminal Court (ICC), and other mechanisms, as well as emerging research clearly show that the integration of a mental health focus and the promotion of multidisciplinary approaches directly contribute to enhanced quality and impact of evidence gathering. Integrating knowledge about trauma and its impact into the engagement with victims, including during formal procedures, has been shown to be beneficial to victims and to the justice process itself.

The *Integration of mental health and psychosocial approaches in accountability mechanisms for atrocity crimes* research project, supported by the Knowledge Management Fund and the Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law, aimed to fill this gap by making good practices and know-how widely

available to practitioners in the justice field through guidelines and by strengthening a community of practice around the topic. The key objective being that this project becomes a catalyst for further integration of mental health and psychosocial approaches in accountability mechanisms to make them truly victim and witness-centered.

To mark the release of the research report a launch event is co-organized by the lead researcher An Michels, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Knowledge Platform Security and Rule of Law at Carlton Ambassador Hotel in The Hague. There will also be a possibility to participate online (registration also needed). The event will bring together stakeholders, including legal experts, MHPSS practitioners, human rights advocates, policymakers, and representatives from affected communities, to discuss strategies, challenges, and best practices in ensuring meaningful and coherent use of MHPSS approaches and trauma-informed methodologies in accountability-seeking processes.

### ***Objectives***

- Highlighting the key arguments and recommendations from the report;
- Raising awareness about the importance of MHPSS approaches in accountability mechanisms;
- Starting dialogue among stakeholders to identify strategies for enhancing systematic and coordinated integration of MHPSS in accountability mechanisms for atrocity crimes;
- Building momentum around a multidisciplinary community of practice on MHPSS integration in accountability mechanisms for atrocity crimes.

### ***Target audience***

- Government representatives
- Embassies and International Organizations
- International judiciary bodies professionals
- Mental health and psycho-social support professionals (in particular those working with victims)
- Victims and Survivors advocates groups/NGOs
- SROL organizations/INGOs
- Media representatives
- General public

## ***Event Highlights***

1. Venue open, start of Registration **16.45h**
2. Welcome, followed by Keynote address **17.15h**  
Reflection on the significance of the report and its potential impact.
  - Ms Pascale Grotenhuis, Director General International Cooperation, Netherlands ministry of Foreign Affairs
3. Presentation of the Report  
Overview of the key findings, recommendations, and implications presented by the lead researcher.
  - An Michels, Psychologist, Team Leader Psychosocial Support Team, Victims and Witnesses Section, International Criminal Court
4. Panel discussion
  - [Megan Hirst](#), International criminal law expert (victims' representation and the post-conflict protection of human rights)
  - [Anna Sosonska](#), Head of the Division for investigation and prosecution of crimes of sexual violence, Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine
  - [Ahmad Helmi](#), Co-founder of the survivor-led organization Ta'afi, Founding Member of INOVAS

Facilitated Q&A session (online participants can ask questions via chat)

Moderator: [Marlies Stappers](#), Founder and Executive Director of Impunity Watch
5. Closing Remarks
  - Ms Nathalie Olijslager, Director Stabilization and Humanitarian Aid, Special Envoy Mental Health and Psychosocial Support, Netherlands ministry of Foreign Affairs
6. Networking drinks **19.00h**

## ***RSVP and Inquiries:***

To register for online or in-person attendance, please click [here](#).

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Join us as we promote mental health and psychosocial support as integral components of accountability mechanisms for atrocity crimes and post-conflict recovery.