



SPOTLIGHT : National Accountability Developments

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MESSAGE FROM HEAD OF THE IIIM

Eleven years after the start of events in Syria and the conflict continues to impact the lives of the Syrian people on all sides. No one has been left unaffected by the devastating war and the fallout from the many violations committed since 2011. I would like to pay tribute to the Syrian civil society actors, the victim/survivor groups and the many families who carry the bulk of the burden for the work required to pursue justice and hold perpetrators accountable.

Their tireless dedication and advocacy, despite their own hardships over the years, has kept the issue of accountability firmly on the table of international discussions. While there is still much work to be done, many national jurisdictions are seizing opportunities to offer justice for Syrians under international law and providing tangible results.

The first few months of the year already marked important developments in accountability for core international crimes committed in Syria.

- In Germany, there was a landmark conviction from the Higher Regional Court in Koblenz in the Anwar R case. The former Syrian official was found guilty of crimes against humanity and sentenced to life imprisonment for his role in torture, murder and sexual violence while he was Head of the Investigation Department of Branch 251 of the Syrian General Intelligence Services.

This verdict adds an important legal development to the ruling in early 2021 by the same court, in the related case of Eyad A, where it was found that crimes against humanity were committed as part of a policy to put down the growing peaceful protest, and that killings, arbitrary detention and torture formed part of a widespread, systematic attack by the Syrian State. The IIIM was able to support both cases by sharing evidence from our Central Repository.

- In January 2022, as part of their investigations related to crimes attributed to individuals affiliated with the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Swedish and French authorities started a Joint Investigative Team (JIT) to support proceedings involving core international crimes committed by foreign terrorist fighters against the Yazidi population in Syria and Iraq. Both countries have publicly stated that they would seek the assistance of the IIIM to provide evidence and expertise.
- Following last year's decision by France's highest court, the Court of Cassation, (that charges of crimes against humanity could not be pursued if they were not illegal in the country where they were committed) there was much public and private advocacy by accountability actors, including the IIIM, pushing for change in legislation. In my meetings with French representatives, I encouraged them to remove obstacles preventing their jurisdictions from pursuing justice. These calls were noted in a report to the French National Assembly and on February 9, the French Government announced that it would be prepared to make changes to its laws depending on the outcome of the Court of Cassation's upcoming re-examination of its decision.

"Our ministries will therefore closely monitor forthcoming judicial decisions. Depending on those decisions, our ministries stand ready to swiftly set out the changes, including legislative changes, that should be made to enable France to continue resolutely fulfilling its steadfast commitment against impunity for international crimes."

[Link](#)

This statement by France's Ministry of Foreign Affairs is encouraging and is consistent with France's support for not only the IIIM, but also its own investigators and prosecutors, and their efforts to hold perpetrators accountable for crimes in the Syrian context.

Of course, none of this would be possible without recognising the critical role Syrian civil society plays in all these processes. Their advocacy, initiatives and cooperation with the IIIM and our prosecutorial and judicial counterparts, have helped make justice for Syrians a reality.

I hope that victims and survivors of such crimes continue to see tangible instances of accountability, irrespective of the affiliation of perpetrators.

My team and I will continue to support all available avenues for justice that are compatible with our mandate, and to prepare for those that may emerge in the future. While it is clear, as this bulletin will further illustrate, that progress towards justice is being made, the scale of unaddressed violations, and the relatively low number of perpetrators tried so far, remind us that there is still a long way to go before justice is achieved for Syria.

CATHERINE MARCHI-UHEL

National Accountability Developments

JUSTICE PATHWAYS

Universal jurisdiction and other forms of extra-territorial jurisdictions are the only tangible signs of justice currently available for victims/survivors of core international crimes committed in Syria. In recent meetings with States, the Head of the IIIM took the opportunity to encourage States to reinforce tools that allow their jurisdictions to fight impunity and ensure their commitment to international justice was backed by bolstered legislation.

The following, while not comprehensive, provides a small insight into the recent accountability efforts by national jurisdictions and recognises the critical role Syrian civil society actors play in that process.

FRANCE

In March 2021, a criminal complaint was filed before the investigative judges in France in relation to the August 2013 chemical weapons attacks on the city of Douma and on Eastern Ghouta. [The complaints were spearheaded by Syrian victims and civil society organisations \(CSOs\)](#), including Civil Rights Defenders, Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM), Syrian Archive, and the Open Society Justice Initiative.

THE NETHERLANDS & CANADA

[The Netherlands](#) and [Canada](#) issued a statement in March 2021 about their ongoing efforts to hold Syria responsible under the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The IIIM is also supporting the Canadian Structural Investigation regarding crimes against the Yezidi community.

SWEDEN

In April 2021, a criminal complaint was filed before the Swedish police's specialised war crimes unit in relation to chemical weapons attacks on Khan Shaykhun and Ghouta in 2017 and 2013, calling on the Swedish judicial authorities to open an investigation into these attacks. [The complaints were spearheaded by Syrian victims and civil society organisations](#), including Civil Rights Defenders, Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM), Syrian Archive, and the Open Society Justice Initiative.

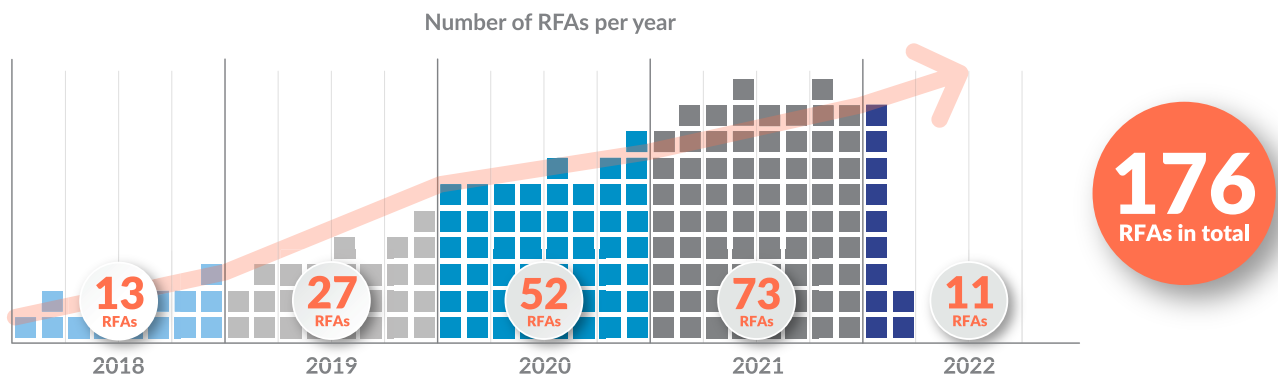
JOINT INVESTIGATION TEAMS (JIT)

In the context of their respective structural investigations on the basis of the Caesar file, [the French and German Prosecutors started a joint investigative team \(JIT\)](#) under the auspices of the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (EuroJust) in 2018.

In January 2022, on the basis of their respective investigations related to crimes attributed to individuals affiliated with ISIL, [the Swedish and French authorities started a JIT](#) to support proceedings involving core international crimes committed by foreign terrorist fighters against the Yezidi population in Syria and Iraq.

Given the materials in its Central Repository of evidence, and the expertise of its team to investigate and analyse core international crimes, the JIT has stated they would seek the assistance of the IIIM.

IIIM SUPPORT TO JURISDICTIONS



To date, the Mechanism has received 176 Requests for Assistance (RFAs) from 13 competent jurisdictions, relating to 146 distinct investigations of which the IIIM has supported 95.

Some of these investigations concern cases in which a suspect is in detention, and others have led to trial proceedings. As always, we not only respond to requests, but also proactively share other information and analytical products with several national war crimes units.

In response to specific requests, our operational capacity to conduct targeted witness interviews has increased. We have also supported criminal investigations in other tangible ways, including by identifying and locating witnesses for subsequent interviewing by national authorities, translating key materials, and geolocating crime scenes and other places of interest.

NATIONAL JURISDICTION CONVICTIONS AND SENTENCES*

GERMANY



Anwar R. (Life sentence in 2022)

Former head of investigative unit and detention centre of branch 251

- Crimes against humanity (killing, torture, unlawful detention, rape and sexual assault)
- In combination with 27 counts of murder, 25 counts of grievous bodily harm, 2 counts of aggravated rape and sexual assault, 14 counts of unlawful detention, 3 counts of hostage taking and 3 counts of sexual abuse of detainees as domestic offences

Eyad A. (4 yr. 6 mo. in 2021)

Member of investigative unit of branch 251

- Aiding and abetting a crime against humanity (torture and unlawful detention of at least 30 persons)

Nurten J. (4 yr. 3 mo. in 2021)

- War crime against property
- Aiding and abetting a crime against humanity (enslavement of a Yezidi woman)
- Failing the duty of care and upbringing of her children
- Weapon offences under German law
- Membership in a terrorist organization (ISIL)

Sarah O. (6 yr. 6 mo. in 2021)

- Crimes against humanity (enslavement of five Yezidi women and two girls, resulting in the death of a 14-year-old girl, and religious and gender-based persecution)
- Aiding and abetting crimes against humanity (rape)
- Unlawful detention resulting in death as a domestic offence
- Membership in a terrorist organization (ISIL)

Khedr A. K. (Life sentence in 2021) and Sami A. S. (9 yr. in 2021)

- War crime for their involvement in the execution of a captured Syrian lieutenant colonel
- Membership in a terrorist organization (Jabhat al Nusra)

Omaima A. (4 yr. in 2021 including the 3 yr. 6 mo. in 2020)

- Aiding and abetting a crime against humanity (enslavement of a 13-year-old Yezidi girl)
- Failing the duty of care and upbringing of her children
- Unlawful detention and weapons offences under German law
- Membership in a terrorist organization (ISIL)

Second trial in 2021

- Aiding and abetting a crime against humanity (enslavement of two Yezidi women)

Fadia S. (4 yr. in 2021)

- War crime against property
- Failing the duty of care and upbringing for her children
- Membership in a terrorist organization (ISIL)

Nils D. (10 yr. in 2021 including the 4 yr. 6 mo. in 2016)

Performed duties as a guard in an ISIL prison at Manbij

- Membership in a terrorist organization (ISIL)

Second trial in 2021

- Murder as a war crime and as a domestic offence
- Membership in a terrorist organization (ISIL)

Jennifer W. (10 yr. in 2021)

- Aiding and abetting a crime against humanity (enslavement of a Yezidi woman and her 5-year-old daughter, resulting in the daughter's death)
- Aiding and abetting a war crime (attempted murder by omission)
- Attempted murder by omission as a domestic offence
- Membership in a terrorist organization (ISIL)

Taha A.-J. (Life sentence and 50.000 EUR compensation in 2021)

- Genocide through serious bodily and mental harm to a Yezidi woman and her daughter
- A crime against humanity resulting in the death of a five year old girl (enslavement, torture, severe physical and mental harm and unlawful detention)
- A war crime against persons resulting in death (torture)
- Aiding and abetting a war crime against persons in two cases (forced eviction)
- Bodily harm resulting in death

Kim Teresa A. (4 yr. in 2021)

- War crimes against persons and other rights
- Weapon offences under German law
- Membership in a terrorist organisation (ISIL)

Kassim A. (1 yr. 6 mo. in 2020)

Member of the FSA in Dara'a

- War crime (outrage on human dignity)

Abdul Jawad A. K. (Life sentence in 2020)

- War crimes against persons (execution of at least 19 Syrian civilians taken prisoner in Raqa'a)
- Murder, unlawful detention resulting in death and weapon offences under German law
- Membership in a terrorist organization (Jabhat al Nusra)

Abdulrahman A. A. and Abdalfatah H. A. were acquitted on war crimes charges. Along with Abdoulfatah A., they were sentenced to between 3 yr. and 8 yr. 6 mo. in 2020 on other charges

- Unlawful detention and weapon offences under German law
- Membership in a terrorist organization (Jabhat al Nusra)

Fares A. B. (12 yr. in 2020)

Operated in an ISIL prison

- Attempted war crime (murder)
- War crimes (torture)
- Serious bodily harm as a domestic offence
- Membership in a terrorist organisation (ISIL)

Al B. (12 yr. in 2020)

- War crime (torture)
- Attempted war crime (murder)
- Serious bodily harm as a domestic offence
- Membership in a terrorist organization (ISIL)

Carla-Josephine S. (5 yr. 3 mo. in 2020)

- War crime (enlisting her 15-year-old son in ISIL)
- Weapon offences under German law
- Failing the duty of care and upbringing of her children
- Membership in a terrorist organization (ISIL)

Mohamad K. (4 yr. 6 mo. in 2019)

Member of the FSA

- War crimes (torture of two captured men 2012-2013)

Sabine S. (5 yr. in 2019)

- War crime against property
- Weapon offences under German law
- Membership in a terrorist organisation (ISIL)

Suliman Al S. (4 yr. 9 mo. in 2019 including the 3 yr. 6 mo. in 2017)

Affiliated with Jabhat al Nusra

- Aiding and abetting a war crime
- Kidnapping and unlawful detention of an employee of the United Nations in Syria in February 2013 as domestic offences

Retrial in 2019

- Complicity in a war crime
- Kidnapping and unlawful detention as domestic offences

Abdelkarim El B (10 yr. in 2018 including the 8 yr. 6 mo. in 2016)

- War crime (outrage on human dignity)
- Membership in a terrorist organization (ISIL)
- Weapon offences under German law

Second trial in 2018

- Aiding and abetting a war crime (torture)

Ibrahim Al F. (Life sentence in 2018)

Militia Ghurabaa Al Sham part of the FSA

- War crimes (killing and torture)
- Murder and kidnapping as domestic offences

Mustafa K. and Sultan K. (Sentence unknown in 2018)

Affiliated with Jabhat al Nusra

- Acquitted of war crimes and convicted on terrorism charges

Harry S. (3 yr. in 2016)

- Membership in a terrorist organization (ISIL)

Subsequent charges for murder as a war crime and as a domestic offence were rejected due to the previous conviction for membership in a terrorist organisation

Aria L. (2 yr. in 2016)

Affiliated with ISIL

- War crime (outrage on human dignity)



SWEDEN

Mouhannad D. (8 yr. in 2016)

Affiliated with the FSA

- War crimes (torture)
- Severe assault as a domestic offence

Haisam S. (Life sentence in 2017)

Affiliated with Jund Al Sham

- War crimes for his participation in the execution of seven captured soldiers in 2012 in Idlib

Mohamed A. (8 mo. in 2017)

Affiliated with the Syrian government forces

- War crimes (outrage on human dignity)



HUNGARY

Hassan F. (Life sentence in 2020)

Commander of a small ISIL unit in Homs

- Crimes against humanity (killing)
- Membership in a terrorist organization (ISIL)



NETHERLANDS

Ahmad Al K. (20 yr. in 2021)

- War crime for involvement in the execution of a captured soldier

Yousra L. (6 yr. in 2021)

- War crime (outrage on human dignity)
- Inciting terrorist crimes
- Distributing jihadi material
- Membership in a terrorist organization (ISIL)

Ahmad Al Y. (6 yr. in 2021)

Former commander of Ahrar Al Sham

- War crimes including outrages upon human dignity
- Membership in a terrorist organization (Ahrar Al Sham)

Oussama A. (7 yr. in 2021 reduced from 7 yr. 6 mo. in 2019)

A former FSA member who joined ISIL

- War crime (outrage upon human dignity)
- Membership in a terrorist organization

The crimes listed under each name correspond to the crimes for which the respective defendant(s) were convicted or acquitted. The sentence imposed, where known, is shown in parentheses.

*Based on open source information which has not been independently verified by IIIM.

Lausanne 2021 Summary

November 2021 saw a return to the in-person Lausanne Platform, the bi-annual meeting between the IIIM and representatives from Syrian civil society organisations (CSOs), hosted and convened by the Netherlands and Switzerland.

A cross section of the IIIM team across the different tracks of work attended, each giving updates from the past year. The presentations covered activities including developments in cooperation agreements, substantive project-related work, support to national jurisdictions and evidence management. Summaries of the presentations as well as additional relevant information are provided below.

The overarching theme for the meeting focused on accountability for crimes against and affecting children and youth, and in particular the IIIM's current work to develop a strategy on children and youth. Many of the CSOs invited by the organisers were selected for their specific work in relation to the theme, giving the IIIM team an opportunity to use the meeting to further consult. Those present were also able to hear directly from two CSOs whose core work is focused on children and youth.

STRATEGY ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

The Lausanne platform provided the perfect space to discuss in more detail the purpose and approach the IIIM is taking in developing its strategy on children and youth. With so many experienced CSOs in attendance, with years of experience working directly with children and youth, inside and outside of Syria, the IIIM team sought to benefit from their unique insights and perspectives to further inform the strategy's development.

Michelle Jarvis, the Deputy Head of the IIIM and Javier Perez-Salmeron, the children and youth thematic expert, each gave a presentation explaining the objectives of the strategy, and the plan to proactively engage with children and youth, as well as the important role CSOs will play in the strategy's implementation.

Context & Objectives of the Strategy

- The strategy on children and youth sits within the IIIM's broader commitment to facilitate inclusive justice for Syria, and is an expression of the IIIM's Victim/Survivor Centred Approach (VSCA).
- The IIIM's terms of reference specifically require it to pay attention to crimes against children, alongside other category-specific crimes.
- While the media consistently reports on children bearing the brunt of the conflict trauma, evoking a powerful sense of outrage, their experiences are often absent from justice efforts.
- The objective of the strategy is to address this disconnect between the sense of outrage at the mistreatment of children and youth, and the questionable track record in providing them with justice.
- The strategy also aims to ensure that the IIIM's collection and investigative work, case file preparation and other investigative and analytical projects, are informed by the views and perspectives of children and youth.
- The strategy strives to capture the complex identity of children and youth, considering their diverse and multiple characteristics rather than categorising them as one homogeneous group.
- The strategy is a tool for increasing the likelihood of delivering inclusive justice for victims/survivors.

Steps to Develop a Meaningful Children and Youth Strategy

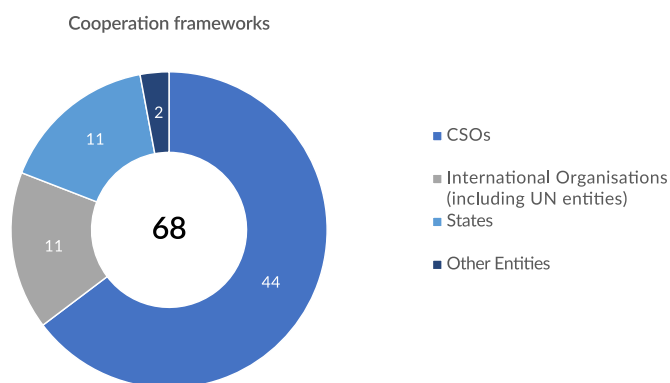
The IIIM plans to:

- Consult with CSOs, victim/survivor groups, family associations and networks as well as other entities who support and engage with children and youth.
- Increase engagement with children and youth in a meaningful and diligent way as part of our accountability work.
- Gather perspectives and views to help the IIIM understand how these groups are affected by crimes.
- Factor in age, gender, geographical considerations and socio-economic context to ensure a broad and intersectional spectrum of views.
- Provide safe spaces and genuine opportunities for children and youth to influence justice processes.
- Work with relevant groups and organisations to connect with children and youth, inside and outside Syria.
- Hold regular reviews and additional consultations as the strategy is developed and refined, sharing drafts to ensure it accurately captures the issues and the particular Syrian context.

COOPERATION

As the IIIM's capacity to travel and meet in-person resumes, building new collaborations and maintaining the relationships we have established so far, will be prioritised.

To date we have concluded **68** cooperation frameworks with a variety of entities.



The cooperation frameworks with CSOs and international organisations have mainly concerned the provision of information and materials to the IIIM for collection and preservation in our Central Repository. However, our collaboration with CSOs and international organisations expands beyond the 55 mentioned here, with many more information providers not having a formal cooperation agreement.

In contrast, cooperation frameworks with States often require complex negotiations involving a range

of different stakeholders from each State. Some of these agreements permit the IIIM to collect such materials from their war crimes units, some also regulate the sharing of evidence by the IIIM with war crimes units. Our teams meet with information providers or potential witnesses in those States.

The Head of the IIIM signed a cooperation convention with France and a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Sweden and the UK in 2021 and 2022 respectively.

IIIM'S SUBSTANTIVE PROJECTS

The Mechanism's substantive work is undertaken with a view to generating analytical products capable of assisting the work of justice actors investigating, prosecuting, and litigating cases relevant to the Syrian context.

During the Lausanne platform meeting in November, participants heard a presentation on the IIIM's strategic line of inquiry relating to detention related crimes. The presentation included an overview of some of the factual assessments made by the IIIM thus far. These assessments have been made in the context of the work which the IIIM undertakes to develop analytical reports concerning the structure and operation of detention-linked entities, the roles and responsibilities of relevant individuals linked to these entities, and patterns of crime within and across these entities.

In addition to its detention-related work, IIIM staff are also working on substantive projects relating to the IIIM's two other active strategic lines of inquiry:

- Unlawful attacks against civilians and civilian objects
- Crimes by individuals associated with the ISIL

The IIIM's work on unlawful attacks has involved an exhaustive analysis of materials in its repository that are relevant to the two case files which it opened last year which concern the alleged use of chemical and conventional weapons in 2015 and 2017.

The IIIM's ISIL related work has centred on the preparation of a legal brief which seeks to assist justice actors in establishing the existence of a systematic attack against a civilian population to support charges of crimes against humanity for ISIL-related conduct in Syria. This brief, a list of the evidentiary records used to prepare it, and the evidentiary records themselves, are currently in the process of being prepared for sharing with national jurisdictions that have already indicated significant interest in receiving these materials.

RESPONDING TO RFAS

The RFAs that the IIIM receives vary greatly in nature and scope, each requiring a different approach. A multidisciplinary team of analysts, legal officers and investigators meets to determine a 'response strategy', identifying how we can best assist the Requestor and the necessary steps that we need to take. These can include, but are not limited to, a standard search in our Central Repository and open source investigations, reaching out to or identifying new sources for collection of additional information, the preparation of an analytical report or the procurement of satellite imagery.

RFAs are prioritised depending on a number of factors, including whether it relates to a case where:

- A suspect is in custody
- A suspect is a flight risk
- A trial is starting shortly

The types of material and assistance the IIIM may provide includes:

- Information and evidence
- Analytical products
- Open source research
- Identification/location/introduction of witnesses or sources
- Targeted high value interviews on behalf of national jurisdictions
- Arabic and multi-lingual research
- Geolocation of crime scenes

SHARED ANALYTICAL PRODUCTS

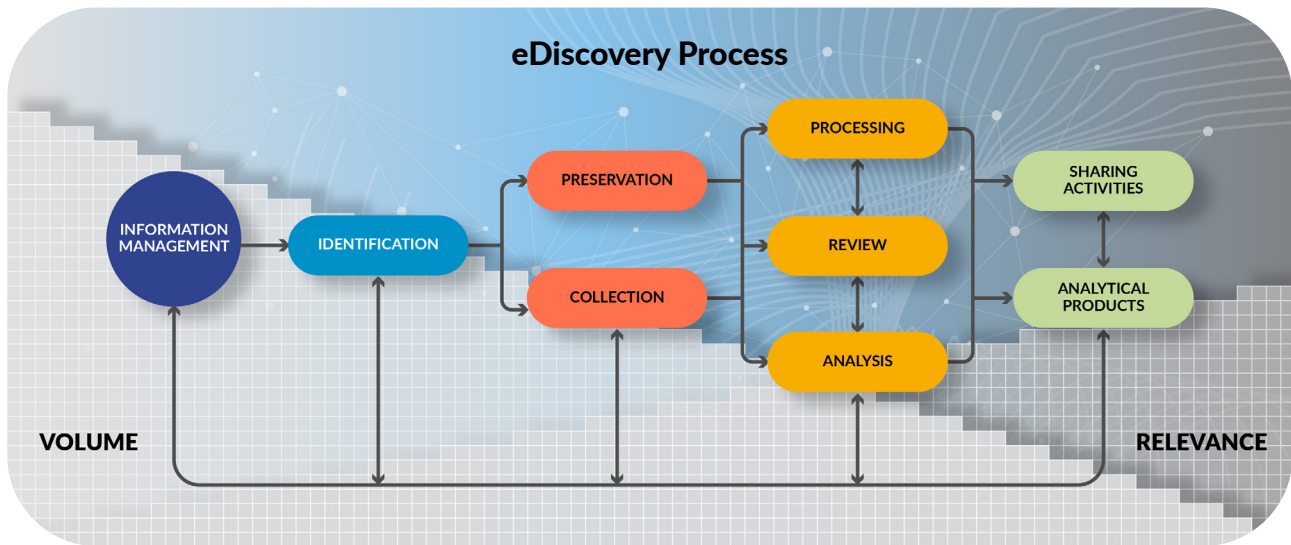
Analytical work continues to be shared, either on a proactive basis after confirmation of interest, or following a request by a specific investigation or prosecution.

Analytical work products shared thus far by the IIIM include the detention related reports referenced above, the IIIM's legal brief on the commencement of a non-international armed conflict (NIAC) in Syria, and geolocation reports.

There is an substantial demand for these products from national jurisdictions who welcome the support of the IIIM's resources; its legal and analytical expertise; and its linguistic expertise and technological know-how, all of which allow the IIIM to produce focused and in-depth products to support the work of justice actors. War crimes units that have received analytical products have provided positive feedback, with one characterising a product shared by the IIIM as a 'game changer'. This type of assistance will continue to be the focus of our work.

EVIDENCE MANAGEMENT

The team from the evidence unit of the Information Systems Management Section (ISMS) shared the eDiscovery process which covers the different stages that all evidence and data go through when collected/ received by the IIIM.



- It starts with setting in place policies and procedures to ensure that any material collected is correctly documented with the appropriate security and privacy measures in place. This is known as information governance and is the foundation of our evidence management process.
- Investigators from the collections team engage with information providers to identify the source of the material that will be collected and aggregated into our Central Repository. Material can then be gathered from civil society actors, international organisations, States, national criminal justice actors, individuals and open sources.
- Forensic collection is the next crucial step taken to preserve the evidence and prevent its spoliation (intentional destruction) or deletion.
- The evidence is then processed. This means we take technical steps using different tools, software and algorithms to incorporate the different data we receive and collect, into the single comprehensive Central Repository of information and evidence. Processing also includes assessing the quality of the data or transforming the underlying data to be ready for review.
- Once in the Central Repository, legal officers, analysts and investigators are able to review and analyse the material to prepare analytical products and identify material of relevance to RFAs.

The implications of the pandemic resulted in a slight decrease in the number of collections made between 2020 to 2021. In that period we shifted to more remote collections instead of in-person and, inevitably, a greater number of electronic file transfers and open source collections. However, there were some opportunities in this change of workflow. We were able to dedicate efforts to the significant data collections that had not yet been processed. This refocus means almost all the material in the Central Repository has been processed ready for review. Additionally, the IIIM also significantly increased its capacity and resources reducing the processing time, from months to weeks. This makes the data, after collection, available sooner for searches and reviews.

We have also increased our digital vault's capacity to store evidence. Its currently at 364 terabytes with a potential to expand to 1.7 petabytes. The digital vault is kept in an isolated environment with access limited only to the forensic investigators.

We continue to build new partnerships and develop new technology, that can respond to the varied types of material we receive and enables us to explore ways to fill the gaps we identify to strengthen them as evidence for the jurisdictions we support.

RECENT OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

During the Covid-19 pandemic, when in-person events were limited, the IIIM continued to engage with Syrian civil society via on-line platforms. More recently, it has taken a hybrid approach, holding in-person events as well as taking advantage of on-line platforms to engage with a broader range of interlocutors, including many for whom travel is not possible.

Gender Strategy consultations

As the IIIM continues to refine its Gender Strategy, it has hosted consultations with a variety of different organisations, including Syrian CSOs, international gender experts and practitioners, and key UN representatives. Syrian interlocutors were able to provide insights into the barriers to surfacing gender-based violence, including sexual violence in the Syrian context and the challenges faced by those working on these issues.

Children & Youth Strategy consultations

The first consultations for the Children and Youth Strategy were held in-person over two days in November 2021. The IIIM's team facilitated discussions with and between CSOs involved with documenting or supporting children and youth impacted by the conflict.

UN Security Council Arria Formula briefing

In November 2021, at an informal meeting of the UN security council, known as an Arria formula meeting, Catherine Marchi-Uhel, the Head of the IIIM and several Syrian civil society representatives briefed the UN Security Council. The meeting on [accountability in Syria](#) was chaired by Estonia and organised to address the need for increased efforts by the Security Council to establish full accountability for the most serious crimes committed in Syria.



Credit: Estonian Mission

Lausanne Platform

The most recent Lausanne Platform was held in Switzerland in November 2021, with representatives of over 20 NGOs attending. The main topic for discussion was in relation to the IIIM's development of a Strategy on accountability for crimes against and affecting children and youth.

Other events

The IIIM takes every opportunity to participate in events specifically tailored for Syrian and other directly affected communities, especially those organised by civil society. These types of events provide an opportunity to broaden understanding of the IIIM's work and objectives and allow it to answer questions put to it by different stakeholders.

Some of the events that the IIIM has participated in over the course of 2021 include:

- The Deputy Head of the IIIM was a panellist at an event on arbitrary detention of children in Syria, co-hosted by Legal Action Worldwide and the European Union. [Read more here](#)
- Briefing and Q&A for audience of male and female former detainees organised by a Syrian CSO.
- Discussion on the role of the IIIM on crimes impacting LGBTQI groups as part of an international conference for MENA CSOs.
- The Deputy Head of the IIIM met with a Gender Advocacy Group consisting of Syrian women's rights defenders and advocates to discuss how to combat violence against women and girls (WAWG).

In the coming year, the IIIM will be expanding the range of events for Syrian CSOs to attend. Please send us information about your organisation and its activities [here](#) if you would like to attend and be added to our mailing list.

REPORT TO THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The IIIM submitted its eighth report to the General Assembly and highlighted the advances made during the reporting in its structural investigation, the opening of two new case files and the greater support to the work of jurisdictions investigating and prosecuting crimes committed in the Syrian Arab Republic. The pursuit of inclusive justice remains a primary objective of the IIIM and the report provides updates on how its accountability-related work is underpinned by a rights-based victim/survivor centred approach that is given concrete expression through its thematic strategies on gender, children and youth, and broader justice objectives. The report covers the IIIM's activities between 1 February 2021 to 31 January 2022. [View](#)

CONTACT US

As always if you have any comments, questions or would like further information on any aspect of the IIIM's work please email us at: iiimsyria@un.org

GLOSSARY

Analytical Products: Products developed to be shared with competent jurisdictions. These products may include legal briefs, analytical reports, organisational structure charts/diagrams and incident timelines.

EuroJust: European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation based in the Hague. Encourages investigative and prosecutorial co-ordination to improve handling of serious cross-border crimes.

Joint Investigative Teams (JIT): Refers to a law and judicial team between the national agencies of two or more member States of the European Union to deal with cross-border crimes. The agencies involved coordinate their investigations and prosecutions in parallel.

Spoilation: In international law, this refers to the intentional or unintentional destruction, deletion or concealment of material relevant as evidence.

Structural Investigation: In contrast to the criminal investigation of a suspect for a specific crime, a structural investigation looks at the overall picture of the context of the crime as well as the individuals involved. It maps overarching crime patterns, the structures of power wielded by the parties to the conflict, relevant actors - particularly those within the structures of power but also other actors, including civilians, who may be operating outside of these structures but, nevertheless, have played a significant role in the commission of crimes - and the broader context within which all of the relevant events took place. This may include the constitutional and legislative frameworks, the geopolitical landscape and the political, economic, social, cultural and religious context.