



UNITED NATIONS

International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals

*The International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals ("Mechanism") was established on 22 December 2010 by the United Nations Security Council to continue the jurisdiction, rights, obligations and essential functions of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda ("ICTR") and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia ("ICTY") which closed in 2015 and 2017, respectively.*

## STATEMENT

PROSECUTOR

*(Exclusively for the use of the media. Not an official document)*

Arusha, The Hague, 12 June 2026

### **Address of Mr. Serge Brammertz Prosecutor, International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals to the United Nations Security Council 12 June 2026**

Madam President, Excellencies,

Thank you for the opportunity to brief you again.

The details on my Office's activities and results are set out in my written progress report. My remarks today will focus on the Council's review of the Mechanism.

Madam President, Excellencies,

For the last 18 years, I have had the honor to be entrusted by this Council to serve as Prosecutor.

I have also shared my opinion with you in a transparent way, which is even more important when this Council is considering strategic and institutional matters.

And so I would like to share my analysis of the situation, hoping it will assist your deliberations on the way forward.

Madam President, Excellencies,

Through the *ad hoc* Tribunals and Mechanism, the Security Council and the United Nations achieved an unprecedented record of accountability and justice.

154 perpetrators convicted. No fugitives at large.

Those held to account were at the very apex of political and military power, as well as direct perpetrators of the gravest crimes.

Through their cases, the Tribunals and the Mechanism also established the truth of what occurred in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda.



The ICTR determined that it is a fact of common knowledge beyond dispute that genocide was committed against the Tutsi in Rwanda in 1994.

Likewise, the ICTY's judicial record is clear that across the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, civilians were deliberately targeted in violation of the most fundamental rules of international law, while genocide was committed in Srebrenica.

Finally, the Completion Strategies, adopted by this Council, ensured that international justice was temporary and not the end of the accountability process. Primary responsibility for prosecuting the remaining crimes has passed to Member States, who have demonstrated their willingness and capacity to carry this work forward.

These results are a testament to the United Nations' commitment to justice and accountability.

Madam President, Excellencies,

The Council has made clear its expectations that the Mechanism bring its activities to an orderly closure. And the Mechanism must ensure it is a small, temporary and efficient structure.

In this context, the Mechanism's Strategic Plan is a roadmap for fundamental change. It is a proposal for the Council to start from.

I fully understand that timelines are an issue of particular interest. For my Office, the necessary transfer could, with the Secretariat's support, be accelerated.

The core point is that the Strategic Plan reflects a commitment, by all Principals and Organs.

We are ready to move forward, in a new way, with a fresh approach.

Our focus now will be on only what is truly essential.

We can transfer or terminate many mandates. We can dramatically reduce our footprint and requirements.

From my perspective, there are three essential components to address.

First, those persons convicted and serving their sentences.

Second, assisting Member States to achieve more justice for more victims.

Third, education about what occurred and remembrance of those who suffered.

Madam President, Excellencies,

The Tribunals and the Mechanism were mandated to prosecute individuals and hold them personally responsible for their crimes.

Their guilt is theirs alone. Their punishment is for what they did, the crimes they committed. Not collective responsibility, but individual criminal responsibility.



They were sentenced to terms of imprisonment and detained on the authority of the United Nations and this Security Council, enforced by Member States in their national systems.

Imprisonment is the most severe sanction that can be imposed under international law. It expresses our shared condemnation of these crimes.

As Prosecutor, I believe that the Mechanism should continue to bear ultimate responsibility for convicts serving their sentences. Their imprisonment is by our authority and decisions.

According to the Statute, convicted persons are entitled to consideration for commutation and early release. Our system of justice provides them with the opportunity to demonstrate remorse for their crimes.

The Council decided in resolution 1966 that the Mechanism was best placed to deal with these matters. That was the right decision then, and it remains so today.

So I would strongly recommend that the Mechanism continue performing the early release function as its core judicial and prosecutorial activity.

At the same time, it is possible to transfer day-to-day supervision to enforcement States. And also decide that costly review hearings are no longer required to provide effective remedies.

These changes will significantly reduce the Mechanism's activities and resources.

Madam President, Excellencies,

As I have regularly briefed you, I believe that one of the most important achievements of the Completion Strategies has been that Member States fully assumed responsibility to continue the accountability process.

International justice was always a temporary measure in the particular circumstances of the time. Member States have the sovereign authority and responsibility to investigate and prosecute those responsible for crimes.

Today, that national ownership of the justice process has been restored, and Member States have achieved and continue to achieve impressive results.

In Rwanda and the countries of the former Yugoslavia, domestic courts and post-conflict justice mechanisms have prosecuted thousands of perpetrators for their crimes. They have delivered justice to victims where it is best served, in local communities most accessible to the public.

In addition, trials have been held in many other States around the world where perpetrators have fled, often hiding their true identities and falsely claiming to be refugees. A clear message is being sent that those responsible for international crimes will be held accountable, wherever they may be found.

Of course, more work remains to be done at the domestic level.

Rwandan authorities are still seeking more than 1,000 génocidaires. In the countries of the former Yugoslavia, more than 2,000 suspects still need to be investigated.



Key challenges include complex cases against senior- and mid-level official; crimes of sexual violence; strengthening international cooperation; and tracking fugitives.

As OIOS reported in its most recent assessment, Member States consistently underscored the practical indispensability of my Office in supporting their work. Achieving justice in their courts depends on the evidence and expertise my Office provides.

Member States recognize that the Mechanism must wind down its activities. At the same time, they strongly wish the assistance provided by my Office to continue.

The obvious solution is to transfer this function to the United Nations Secretariat.

As a technical assistance function, this work falls squarely within the core competencies of the Secretariat. The United Nations serves Member States, particularly by providing international expertise to strengthen national capacities.

My Office prepared a clear and detailed proposal, with budgetary and administrative implications. And so I would strongly recommend that the Council transfer this mandate to the Secretary-General, together with our evidence and some of my staff members.

This would be another significant milestone in the Completion Strategies. It would advance the completion of the Mechanism's activities and at the same time strengthen Member States.

Madam President, Excellencies

The work of the Tribunals and the Mechanism is not just about the past, but also the present and future.

The victims and survivors have always been at the forefront of our efforts. We have endeavored to provide them with some measure of justice for their pain and suffering.

Equally, though, this work has increasing relevance to the next generations. For many, the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia and the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda are a matter of history, not lived experience.

It is critical that the stories of the victims and survivors live on. It is by remembering them that we honor them.

The Mechanism's archives have an essential role to play. The records of our trials contain the testimonies of so many courageous victims and survivors. They confronted those who wronged them and told the truth of what happened.

This truth is needed now more than ever. Unfortunately, the denial of the crimes and glorification of war criminals persists. Reconciliation depends on full respect for the suffering of all victims from all groups.

Memorialization is also vital to prevention.

The horrific atrocities in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia were not random outbreaks of violence.



They were the result of organized plans by senior leaders who abused their authority and sought to achieve their political goals through the widespread commission of crimes.

Hate speech and propaganda prepared the groundwork by dehumanizing other groups as foreigners and threats.

Education about what occurred helps identify warning signs for the future. And it contributes to preventing future atrocities.

So I strongly recommend that the archives of the Tribunals and the Mechanism are transferred to the Secretariat so it can make them available to the public for the long-term.

This will ensure that the legacy of the Tribunals and Mechanism lives on for generations to come.

Madam President, Excellencies,

In my view, there is a path forward this Council can endorse.

Addressing the three elements I have outlined will decisively advance completion of the Mechanism's activities in a responsible and appropriate way.

Transferring the assistance function and archives to the Secretariat will ensure Member States and the global public continue to benefit from the work of the Tribunals and Mechanism.

What will remain with the Mechanism can be the minimum possible. That will create a sustainable foundation for the final essential work.

The Council has provided its steadfast support to the Tribunals and Mechanism since their establishment.

Thanks to that support, so many victims in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia have received the justice they deserve.

This is a tribute to all Council members' dedication to accountability and international law.

My Office stands ready to assist the Council in its deliberations and provide any information that Council members may find helpful.

Thank you for your attention.

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