



**THE GENDER
JUSTICE**
PRACTITIONER HUB

HIGHLIGHTS

Gender Justice in International Criminal Law Conference

29-30 SEPTEMBER 2025 | THE HAGUE



A TURNING POINT FOR GENDER JUSTICE

On 29 and 30 September 2025, more than 1400 practitioners, survivors, scholars, and advocates registered to take part in the second annual Gender in ICL Conference in The Hague and online. Together, we confronted escalating attacks on gender justice and international criminal law and strategised collectively on how to protect, sustain, and deepen hard-won gains.

Co-hosted by [the Gender Justice Practitioner Hub](#), [Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice](#), [Legal Action Worldwide](#), and [the International Institute of Social Studies \(ISS\)](#), the Gender and International Criminal Law Conference convened participants from more than 60 countries across all regions.

Against a backdrop of shrinking civic space, sanctions directed at key partners, and a well-resourced global anti-gender movement, speakers emphasised that gender justice cannot be reduced to better case selection alone. It requires confronting the structural drivers of violence, the entrenched gendered hierarchies within our institutions, and the political pressures seeking to reverse feminist advances.

Across panels and strategy sessions, participants examined the intersections of gender persecution, reproductive violence, decolonial and intersectional practice, and regional feminist organising. We shared concrete strategies to shift from rhetorical solidarity to operational collaboration.

“We need to start looking at the whole ecosystem that affects our prospects of justice.

We have an opportunity, we have an opening, and we should seize it.”

– Michelle Jarvis

Deputy Head, IJIM-Syria, Gender Justice Practitioner Hub Advisory Board



TWO DAYS. **300+ PARTICIPANTS.**

A shared commitment to confront division with solidarity, and to turn diversity into a collective strength for gender justice.



CONFERENCE THEMES

- Solidarity in Facing Attacks on Gender Justice
- Networks: Strengthening Practitioner Connections in ICL
- Making the Case: Gender Analysis in Accountability
- Gender-sensitive Institution Building
- Reproductive Violence as a Strategy of Genocide
- Gender Justice for Palestine
- Strategising to Support Emerging Justice Opportunities in Syria
- Gender Justice Across the MENA Region
- Gender at the International Court of Justice
- Next Generation Strategies in ICL
- Repairing Gender-based Violence

“The idea of conferences, convening, and everything else, bringing people from everywhere together, means we're undermining the complete power of the states.

It means that we are bonding under that radar screen.

We're moving from a vertical stranglehold on our rights into one which is much more ours. And so we need to build on those so that we can actually create that architecture and have that change.”

– Madeleine Rees
Former Secretary General, WILPF.



CONFERENCE IMPACT



Decolonial and Intersectional Imperatives

Participants challenged the colonial, racialised, and patriarchal foundations of international justice institutions. Intersectionality was framed as an operational requirement: gender, race, class, disability, sexuality, migration status, and religion shape both exposure to harm and access to justice.

Conversations highlighted how international mechanisms can reproduce exclusion through language, participation rules, or risk-averse funding practices, and called for redistributing power toward affected communities and partners in the Global South.

Regional Realities and Operational Solidarity

Voices from Palestine, Tigray, Darfur, Syria, Myanmar, Guatemala, Ukraine, and Afghanistan stressed that gendered harms including sexual and reproductive violence, detention-related abuses, enforced disappearance, and socio-economic deprivation are central to atrocity patterns.

Participants voiced that solidarity must be operational, expressed through coordinated advocacy, shared risk-management, and collective engagement with the ICC, ICJ, and other mechanisms. Palestine and Syria were repeatedly described as stress tests for whether the field can meaningfully integrate structural gender analysis in active conflict settings.

CONFERENCE IMPACT



MENA In Focus

This year's conference placed particular attention on the Middle East and North Africa, creating space for practitioners, advocates, and researchers from across the region to lead discussions on accountability challenges and opportunities.

The MENA-focused sessions, including Gender Justice in Palestine, Emerging Justice Opportunities in Syria, and a strategy session on gender justice in the MENA region, centered regional expertise on issues including Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq, with simultaneous Arabic translation in-person and online throughout the conference. Gender justice work must be grounded in the perspectives of those directly affected to ensure that regional actors shape the strategies intended to serve their communities.

Reproductive Violence as Core Atrocity Crime

Panellists discussed forced pregnancy, sterilisation, coerced abortion policies, denial of abortion care, and attacks on maternal health as central features of modern atrocity crimes. Despite growing jurisprudence, these harms remain insufficiently investigated.

Speakers stressed the potential of reproductive violence to constitute genocide or crimes against humanity, the need for survivor-centered documentation models, and the utility of The Hague Principles on Sexual Violence as guidance for investigators and national authorities.

WHAT'S NEXT?

We thank all speakers, participants, and partners who contributed to the conference. Your insights and candid reflections made the discussions substantive and practical, and they will inform the next phase of work across our networks.

We appreciate the time and expertise shared over the two days that reaffirmed that gender justice is not built in institutions alone, but in communities that listen to one another, challenge inequity, and create space for diverse leadership.

COMING UP

- 1** A full conference report summarising key insights, recommendations, and action points emerging from the discussions.
- 2** A dedicated conference webpage with a recap of sessions, resources submitted by panellists and participants, recordings of all sessions and photo highlights that captured the energy and collaboration that defined both days.

