



CALL FOR PAPERS

Punishing International Crimes in Domestic Courts: Sentencing, Incarceration and Reintegration

Date: 12 June 2017

Venue: VU University Amsterdam, The Netherlands

The international community deems that international crimes, such as genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, cannot go unpunished. During the 1990s it significantly stepped up its 'fight against impunity' and established numerous international criminal courts and tribunals to prosecute and punish perpetrators of such atrocity crimes committed around the globe. These institutions, however, have increasingly been subjected to criticism: trials are extremely slow; fact finding is inaccurate; the number of convictions marginal; victims are disappointed; sentences too lenient, inconsistent, lacking justification or misplaced; and the post-sentencing phase – incarceration and reintegration of those convicted – is haphazard and arbitrary.

Over the past decades, also domestic courts have increasingly prosecuted and punished perpetrators of international crimes. Perpetrators tried and sentenced at domestic courts clearly outnumber those at the international level. For example, following the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda tried 74 individuals while Rwandan courts and gacaca tribunals prosecuted over 1 million individuals for their involvement in the genocide. Domestic mass atrocity crimes trials, however, have so far attracted only limited attention in international criminal justice discussions and scholarship. In particular, little attention is given to the sentencing and post-sentencing phase in these domestic contexts.

As many have argued, the future of criminal justice for mass atrocity crimes is domestic. For this reason, learning lessons from past domestic trials is increasingly relevant. The purpose of this one-day conference in Amsterdam is to bring together scholars and practitioners to discuss practices and challenges with regard to sentencing, incarceration and reintegration of perpetrators of international crimes in domestic contexts. This meeting aims to bring together experts from the legal institutions in The Hague and from various countries around the globe to promote a cross-border, cross-disciplinary dialogue about the practices and challenges of punishing perpetrators of mass atrocity crimes in domestic trials.

The conference aims to shed light on the following questions: How many individuals were actually prosecuted and sentenced by domestic courts? How severe are sentences for atrocity crimes perpetrators handed out by domestic courts? How do these sentences compare to sentences of ordinary, garden-variety crimes or to sentences handed out by international courts? How is punishment for atrocity crimes justified? Is there a special legal and jurisdictional regime established for such cases? How is punishment executed and what happens to those released after serving their sentences? How are they reintegrated?

Organizers invite submissions discussing punishment practices in *a specific country or region*. In order to get an overview of existing practices, each presenter will be asked to first provide an up-to-date overview on the number of trials, their outcomes and the modality and severity of punishment handed out to perpetrators of international crimes in the domestic jurisdiction(s) in question. Building upon this, papers based on theoretical, doctrinal or empirical research should focus on a specific aspect of punishment practices, such as:

- Sentence modalities and severity of sentences for international crimes
- Sentence justifications, sentencing goals, principles and factors
- Comparative analyses of sentencing (to ordinary crimes, to international tribunals (if applicable), to other countries)
- Conditions of incarceration
- Offender rehabilitation
- Perspectives on sentencing (criticism/reception)
- Reintegration of offenders after their release

Those interested in presenting a paper at the conference should submit an application **before 15 April 2017** via email to b.hola@vu.nl and include 1.) name and affiliation; 2.) short CV of max 1 page; and 3) title of the paper and 300 word abstract.

Local accommodation will be offered to selected presenters, as well as a contribution towards economy travel expenses of up to 50 Euros (NL), 300 Euros (Europe) and 800 Euros (World). Only a limited number of presenters outside Europe can be invited.

To enable paper-sharing and fruitful discussions during the conference, presenters will be asked to hand in an extended (1.000 words) abstract two weeks prior to the conference. After the event, presenters will be invited to submit a draft paper of 5.000-8.000 words for a publication in an edited volume.

The conference is organised by the Centre for International Criminal Justice (CICJ), VU University Amsterdam and is supported by a VENI research grant from NWO. Further details of the affiliated project 'Vertical (In)consistency of International Sentencing' are available [here](#).