

# From Justice for the Past to Peace and Inclusion for the Future

A Development Approach to Transitional Justice

Lessons Learned from UNDP Policy and Practice

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### Foreword

he current COVID-19 pandemic is recognized not only as a public health emergency, but also a socio-economic and human rights crisis. As of February 2021, over 2,400,000 people died from COVID-19, and the world is experiencing the largest economic shock in decades. The pandemic is also unveiling unaddressed injustices and exacerbating existing inequalities. Some state responses to the pandemic are also piling on human rights violations and new risks are posed through efforts to curb the spread of the virus, such as rapid digitalization and social isolation.

A historic movement against systemic racism is also sweeping the globe through the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. This was created in protest to incidents and racially motivated violence towards black people and has resonated with communities supporting the eradication of discrimination around the world. Similarly, over the past year, people joined social movements – many of them led by women and young people – and filled the streets with demands for equal rights, democracy and climate action – in countries including Algeria, Chile, Colombia, Haiti, Iraq, Lebanon and Sudan. Public demand for accountability is at an all-time high, as the daily decisions that states make have near immediate life or death consequences, particularly for people from marginalized communities.

This current context also closed many windows of opportunity for transitional justice processes as states focus their efforts on other urgent priorities and put in place measures to curb the spread of the virus, making transitional justice efforts more important than ever.

The commitment of governments to leave no one behind in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is being put to the test as the devastating effects of inequalities manifest in real time. It is painfully apparent that without justice for all there can be no peace, and that truth and reconciliation, must be at the forefront of states efforts for sustaining peace and development.

This provides a heightened context for the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) efforts to end the injustice of poverty, inequality and climate change. It is more important now than ever before that our efforts are rightsbased and multidisciplinary to support Member States create peaceful, just and inclusive societies. UNDP's COVID-19 response offer *Beyond Recovery: Towards 2030* is a strategy to support national partners not only address immediate health and socio-economic needs, but also to promote the rule of law, security, human rights, governance and conflict prevention measures needed to manage the pandemic and build resilience to future shocks. Support to transitional justice processes is essential for securing the rights of the most vulnerable, ensuring accountability and fostering social cohesion during this unprecedented time.

For over a decade, UNDP has supported transitional justice processes through a development lens – focusing on building national capacities and transforming systems to sustain and integrate progress achieved through transitional justice mechanisms. These issues are more relevant than ever and reaffirm the importance of UNDP support to transitional justice, to create more peaceful, just and inclusive societies. We need to focus not in getting back to the "normal" after the pandemic, but to implement a transformative recovery that builds a "better normal", one that does not separate health from efforts to address systemic racism, or collective reparations from access to justice for all.

UNDP remains committed to supporting transitional justice processes around the world and partnering with other UN agencies and international organizations to take forward these important areas of work. This paper analyzes UNDP's experiences supporting transitional justice processes around the world with a view to contribute to broader international reflection on challenges and successes in the field. The experiences, lessons and recommendations outlined throughout this paper will be used to inform UNDP's transitional justice programming in the future so that we can better contribute to sustainable outcomes for victims, communities and countries/territories. A key part of this will be our ability to draw on all the tools at our disposal to adapt transitional justice processes to new realities and address interconnected challenges. We hope that the findings of this paper are also useful for our partners supporting transitional justice processes as we are committed to acting as one United Nations.

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## Acronyms

BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CAR	Central African Republic
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease 19
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex and Queer
MINUSCA	Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
NHRIS	National Human Rights Institutions
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SSR	Security Sector Reform
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

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