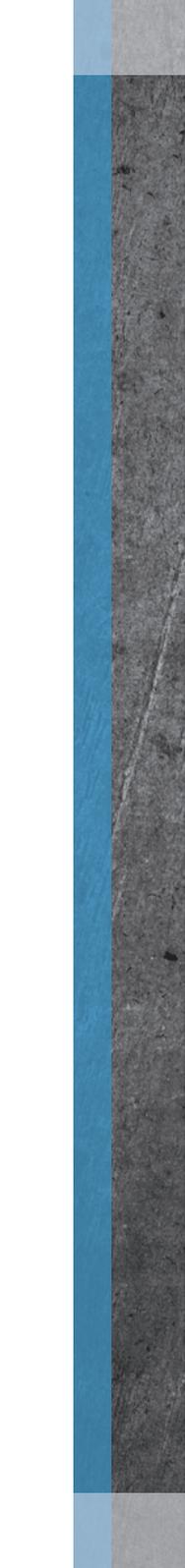


*The
echoes
of
witnesses
and
testimonies*

A Pilot Study into the long-term impact
of testimony on witnesses who were called
to testify before the Tribunal



The Victims and Witnesses Section (VWS) of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (Tribunal), in cooperation with the University of North Texas (UNT), has launched a Pilot Study of the long-term impact of testimony on witnesses who were called to testify before the Tribunal about the crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia. This leaflet aims to provide general information to participants on the reasoning behind the Pilot Study and on what it entails.

Why is this study being done?

A large number of witnesses have experienced and/or witnessed traumatic events during the conflict in the former Yugoslavia about which they were called to testify. Being a witness before an international criminal tribunal can be a challenging experience. This VWS Pilot Study aims to gain more insight into witnesses' experiences and the long term impact the testimony process may have on them. This will contribute to a better understanding of witnesses' needs and the improvement of support services required to meet these needs. The VWS Pilot study is the preliminary part of a larger Follow-Up Project in which VWS intends to contact all witnesses who have testified before the Tribunal and determine the possible impact of testimony on their long-term well-being.

Why am I being asked to take part and do I have to participate?

From all individuals who were called to testify before the Tribunal, a random sample selection of approximately 300 witnesses has been made. In making this selection, the VWS and UNT considered witnesses' age, gender, case in which they were called to testify, if they testified or not, number of testimonies and country of residence. If you have been called to participate in this study it is because you were identified to fall within the sample selection.

It is your choice to decide whether you wish to take part or not. If you decide to take part, you will be given a consent form that contains essential information about the study and the participant's rights. You are free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason.

How will the study be carried out?

In 2013-2014 the VWS intends to conduct in-person interviews of approximately 300 witnesses residing in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Kosovo. The interview will include a questionnaire of primarily multiple-choice questions and a few open ended questions. The participants will be able to provide their answers on paper or electronically. The VWS staff member will assist if necessary. When answering open ended questions, the VWS staff members will audio record the conversation.

Once the interviews have been conducted and entered into an electronic data base, UNT researchers will analyze the collected data. It is anticipated that a conclusive report with the research findings will be prepared and published by the VWS and UNT.

What topics will be discussed during the interview?

To better understand the impact of testifying, a questionnaire which covers different areas of general welfare including security, socio-economic conditions, physical health, and psychological wellbeing has been developed. The questions ask about the effect testifying has had on you as a person. It is your choice whether or not to answer any of these questions.

Is my participation confidential?

Yes. The identity of participants will not be revealed to UNT or the public. Only VWS staff members will know your name and address. Only the VWS staff members will be conducting the interview with you. You will be assigned an interview code; your name will not be written in the interview file nor will it appear in the audio recording. Audio records, of answers to open ended questions, awaiting transcription by the VWS staff will be kept in the VWS safe accessible only to the VWS staff members. After transcription, the audio records will be destroyed. In all study results, publications and presentations, you will remain anonymous, and all personal information will remain confidential.

Will it cost me anything to participate?

No. The VWS staff will travel to your place of residence or any other place you deem appropriate in order to interview you.

What are the possible benefits?

Your participation is voluntary and no allowance/remuneration will be provided. You will be given the opportunity to talk about positive and negative aspects of your experience as a witness before the Tribunal. By sharing your story you will contribute to a better understanding of the effects testimony has on witnesses which will be of great importance for the development of support services for future witnesses and other courts.

What are the possible risks?

By answering questions about your testimony, you will recall war related events, the period before and after testifying and the testimony itself. Both the recalling of traumatic war events and the recalling of the testimony might trigger emotional and physical responses. The interview can be stopped at any moment especially if you do not wish to continue. If you feel that the interview has caused any distress or harm, and you do not have somebody in your surrounding to provide you with adequate support, the VWS will endeavour to refer you to local institutions and organizations for further assistance if required.

Who will be conducting this Pilot study?

This Pilot study will be conducted by the VWS in close cooperation with the UNT.

The Victims and Witnesses Section (VWS), as an integral part of the Registry of the Tribunal, contributes to its effective functioning by facilitating the appearance of witnesses, whether called by the Chambers, Prosecution or Defence. Founded in 1994, it endeavours to ensure that all witnesses can testify safely and securely, and that the experience of testifying does not result in further harm, suffering or traumatization to the witness.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the research process, the VWS has partnered with academic scholars from the **University of North Texas (UNT)**, Departments of Political Science and Psychology. The Political Science department houses the Castleberry Peace Institute and the Peace Studies program, both of which conduct cutting edge peace science research to advance our understanding of why conflicts occur, how to bring conflicts to a less destructive end, and how to build a more durable peace in the aftermath of armed conflict. The Department of Psychology is one of the few departments in the United States with three American Psychological Association accredited programs including Clinical Psychology, Counselling Psychology, and Clinical Health Psychology. Its program focuses on training university research faculty and scientist-practitioners.

Who is funding this study?

As the VWS and UNT are not in a position to fully fund this study other than using their own staff resources, the implementation of this Pilot Study mainly depends on external funding. Voluntary contributions can only be accepted from those individuals, states and bodies that comply with the United Nations policy on donations.

If you need further information about this research study, please feel free to contact **Victims and Witnesses Section** on following telephone numbers:

The Hague Office +31 70 512 88 77
Sarajevo Field Office +387 33 568 560; +387 33 568 562 or
Email address vwspilotstudy@un.org
Alternatively, visit the website on www.icty.org

We hope you will be willing to share your thoughts and comments on your experience as a witness before the Tribunal.
Your opinion and feedback is of great value to us.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this leaflet!



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