



# Clooney Foundation for Justice

NEWSLETTER

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Dear friends and supporters of CFJ,

A lot has happened since we were last in touch. The news of war in Ukraine deeply shocked and saddened us all, as did the crackdown on protests and free speech in Russia. Our fight for justice seems more important than ever.

At CFJ, we have [coordinated across all of our foundation initiatives](#) to launch an investigation into war crimes, crimes against humanity, and aggression crimes being committed in Ukraine. Our team, who traveled to Ukraine last month and will be back there later in May, will be using their legal expertise to gather evidence and interview survivors while our open-source experts are analyzing evidential materials. This will be used to launch criminal cases in national courts around the world—under the principle of ‘universal jurisdiction’—and to aid the work of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. [CFJ is also supporting the legal Task Force](#) on Accountability for Crimes committed in Ukraine, which was established at the behest of the Ukrainian government and is being led by our Co-Founder Amal Clooney. [Amal recently spoke](#) at the UN Security Council and urged countries to focus on international justice for war crimes being committed in Ukraine.

As we wage justice in Ukraine and Russia, we’re also proud to be organizing our inaugural ‘Albie Awards’ for a unique group of people across the world whose relentless fight for justice has put their lives at risk. The Albie Awards, named in honor of Justice Albie Sachs, who is revered for his heroic commitment to ending apartheid and whom we are honoring with a lifetime achievement award, will take place at the New York Public Library on September 29. We’re deeply humbled that our awardees will be joining us for this special evening as we celebrate the role each one of them is playing in their fight for press freedom, democracy, women’s rights, and accountability for atrocity crimes. Darren Walker, President of the Ford Foundation, recently hosted an intimate lunch where we revealed our Albie Award Honorees - [captured in a short video here](#).

We’re also so grateful to announce our newest board members: Dr. Eric Esrailian, Physician, Producer, and Entrepreneur; Bryan Lourd, Partner, Managing Director, and Co-Chairman Creative Artists Agency; Zanny Minton Beddoes, Editor in Chief of *The Economist*; Dr. Denis Mukwege, doctor and Nobel laureate and Founder and Medical Director of the Panzi Hospital and Foundation; Brad Smith, President and Vice Chair of Microsoft; and Darren Walker, President of the Ford Foundation. They will be joining our current board members Philippa Webb, Professor of Public International Law at King’s College London and a barrister at Twenty Essex chambers, and Emma Lindsay, partner at Withers.

We’re so fortunate to have new partners like Co-Impact join us as an important ally for our [Waging Justice for Women initiative](#). With funding from [Co-Impact’s Gender Fund](#), we are working to promote women’s leadership in law and engage in collective advocacy to promote the rights of women and girls. And with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, we are working to collect data exposing laws, policies, and practices that engender and sustain discrimination against women and to identify advocacy opportunities to change them.

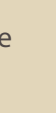
— Amal and George Clooney

## WAGING JUSTICE



“Our foundation is committed to helping to bring to justice the perpetrators of atrocities in Ukraine. Ukrainians demand and have every right to expect their day in court—and to have access to funds to rebuild their lives.”

- George and Amal Clooney



[Putin’s Exploitation of Africa Could Help Him Evade Sanctions](#)  
An op-ed from The Sentry Team & George Clooney in TIME

## Ukraine: Waging Justice for Victims of War Crimes, Democracy Defenders and Women

The Docket, CFJ’s initiative focused on justice for victims of international crimes, will spearhead our investigation and litigation focused on Ukraine. From the first days of the war, the team started collecting evidence with the aim of initiating and supporting criminal cases in various jurisdictions around the world under the principle of universal jurisdiction. The Docket has focused on cases of indiscriminate attacks with the use of cluster munitions and thermobaric weapons, which have already caused the deaths of hundreds of civilians; attacks on hospitals that are explicitly prohibited by international law; attacks on civilian vehicles trying to flee the fighting; and mounting reports of sexual violence against women and girls. The Docket is in contact with law enforcement agencies in European and other countries as well as the office of the Ukrainian Prosecutor-General. Collaborating alongside local partners, The Docket will work with survivors and witnesses to assist them in seeking justice for crimes committed against them.

CFJ’s strategic partner [The Sentry](#) will also continue to investigate the Kremlin-backed mercenary firm [Wagner Group](#). The Sentry has already exposed its involvement in an array of mass atrocities in the Central African Republic linked to the looting of gold, diamonds, and other resources vital to Russia’s attempts to evade the impact of international sanctions. The Sentry plans to expand its investigations on Russian actors financing war operations through a series of shadowy criminal networks.

CFJ’s trial-monitoring and advocacy initiative [TrialWatch](#) will focus on Russia’s crackdown on the growing number of Russians criticizing the Ukrainian invasion at home, in particular the cases of anti-war protesters arrested for taking part in demonstrations. TrialWatch saw similar tactics being employed in [Belarus](#) in 2020, where it monitored a group of trials of protesters, lawyers, and journalists being swept up in the authorities’ dragnet. TrialWatch has since filed legal submissions supporting the appeal of these journalists.

“Ukrainians deserve to see perpetrators held to account and to recover compensation for the horrific abuses they are suffering.”

- Amal Clooney



## OUR INAUGURAL ALBIE AWARDS

We at CFJ seek to shine a spotlight on courageous people fighting for justice despite great personal risk. Our goal is to let those who abuse human rights know that the world is watching. To do this, we have created [The Albie Awards](#), named in honor of Justice Albie Sachs, who is revered for his heroic commitment to ending apartheid.

[Click here to watch Amal and George reveal our honorees!](#)

### Meet our 2022 Honorees:

#### Justice Albie Sachs

##### LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT IN PURSUIT OF JUSTICE

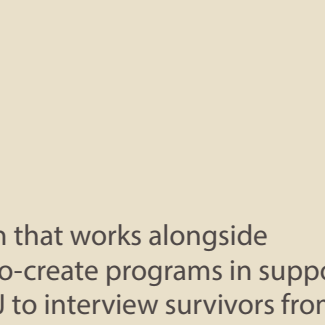
Albert ‘Albie’ Sachs is a South African activist, lawyer, writer, and a former judge appointed by Nelson Mandela to serve on the first Constitutional Court of South Africa. After twice being detained in South Africa for his anti-apartheid activities, in 1966 he went into exile and was later the victim of a car bombing executed by the South African security services. He lost his right arm and vision in one eye. In 1990 Justice Sachs returned to South Africa to help write the Constitution of South Africa and later to serve for fifteen years on the country’s Constitutional Court.



#### Maria Ressa

##### JUSTICE FOR JOURNALISTS

Award-winning Filipino journalist, Nobel Prize winner, and CEO of Rappler, [Maria Ressa](#), faces a lifetime behind bars for her work in the Philippines after she became known for exposing government corruption and human rights violations through her reporting.



#### IACT

##### JUSTICE FOR SURVIVORS

[IACT](#) is a groundbreaking international organization that works alongside survivors of genocide and other mass atrocities to co-create programs in support of refugee communities. The group worked with CFJ to interview survivors from Darfur, Sudan, who have been trapped in refugee camps in Chad for over a decade.



#### Viasna

##### JUSTICE FOR DEMOCRACY DEFENDERS

Human rights group [Viasna](#) has been a voice of resistance in Belarus for nearly 30 years as it has led a brave campaign for freedom and democracy against President Lukashenko’s regime. In the run up to and following the fraudulent 2020 presidential elections, the group has paid a high price for their work: seven Viasna members have been detained on trumped-up charges and both of the organization’s leaders are in jail.



#### Josephine Kulea

##### JUSTICE FOR WOMEN

[Dr. Josephine Kulea](#) is a Kenyan women’s rights campaigner and founder of the Samburu Girls Foundation (SGF). SGF is a small non-profit organization that helps to rescue girls from child marriage, female genital mutilation (FGM), and other harmful practices. Josephine works with police and local authorities to coordinate rescue missions for young girls at risk.



## SNAPSHOT:

### TrialWatch

While Putin was waging war in Ukraine, TrialWatch released a [report on Aleksey Navalny’s slander trial](#), giving it a grade of “F”, our lowest ranking. TrialWatch expert and former Vice-President of the European Court of Human Rights Judge Françoise Tulkens was our legal expert in the case. She analyzed the materials from our monitoring and concluded that the trial failed to meet basic standards of due process and that “the Russian authorities are building a never-ending cascade of cases” against this opposition figure.

TrialWatch also announced that it would [monitor the appeal](#) of Washington Post contributor Vladimir Kara-Murza, a prominent critic of the Russian government, who was charged with disobeying police orders. These proceedings come against the backdrop of arrests of thousands of protesters, shuttering of the remaining independent media in Russia, and adoption of new laws to criminalize criticism of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. TrialWatch [also released a report about Russian journalist Alexander Pichugin’s trial](#), giving it a grade of “D”. Pichugin was the first journalist convicted under what was at the time, Russia’s newest ‘fake news’ law. The report said Pichugin’s prosecution and conviction violated his right to freedom of expression. CFJ now plans to support his application to the European Court of Human Rights.

We continued to carry out our defense of the media with a filing made in support of journalist, [Aigul Utepova in Kazakhstan](#). We, along with Debevoise & Plimpton LLP, took this case to the UN Human Rights Committee and challenged not only her unfair conviction under Kazakhstan’s anti-extremism laws, but also stressed the need to reform the laws themselves. Before her trial, she was subjected to an involuntary psychiatric examination despite no history of mental illness, and subsequently involuntarily committed to a psychiatric clinic. As part of her sentence, she was banned for two years from public commentary on social or political issues. These tactics show how Kazakhstan uses its laws to effectively silence independent reporting.

We released the final TrialWatch report on [‘Hotel Rwanda’ figure Paul Rusesabagina’s trial](#), which gave it a grade of “D”. The report, by TrialWatch legal expert Geoffrey Robertson QC, said his trial “was seriously flawed” and “violated international and regional standards for fair trial procedures”. The New York Times [also reported on our findings](#).

### The Docket

**Democratic Republic of the Congo:** CFJ was admitted as a [civil party](#) by the French investigative judge in proceedings against former Congolese warlord, Roger Lumbala. Lumbala is under investigation for his role in atrocities, including summary executions, slavery, and torture, committed during the Second Congo War (1998 – 2003). In the twenty years since these crimes were committed, there has never been a credible accountability mechanism against the perpetrators—that’s why this investigation is so important if victims are to seek justice. As a civil party, CFJ will be granted several procedural rights.

### Waging Justice for Women

Just three months since we launched our [newest initiative WJW](#), we’re delighted to announce that we recently filed a submission in a case before the African Court of Human and Peoples’ Rights challenging the policy of expelling pregnant and married girls from high school in Tanzania. Approximately 1 in 4 girls in Tanzania is either pregnant or married by the age of 18 which means that a huge portion of the female population is robbed of an education and all the opportunities that flow from that. This is only the second case where the African Court is considering women’s rights and has the potential to change many lives.

### The Sentry

At the Sentry we are seeing multiple rounds of action being taken against the oligarchs, businesses, and other enablers close to the Kremlin. The United Kingdom just [announced sanctions](#) against the Wagner Group, a private mercenary army that has committed atrocities in the Central African Republic, the Sahel, and Ukraine. The Sentry’s reporting on Wagner, in [collaboration with CNN](#), last year contributed to sanctions imposed by the European Union. Our investigators will continue to follow the trail of dirty money to put a stop to the Wagner Group’s bloody business.

### Venezuela

Last month the office of the prosecutor of the ICC had to pause its investigation into alleged crimes against humanity in Venezuela. They did this because President Maduro’s administration asked them to defer their investigation to Venezuela’s law and enforcement courts. Almost immediately, the Office of the Prosecutor announced that it would request authorization from the ICC to resume its investigation. While they prepare to file and await a decision, the Docket will [continue to gather evidence from Venezuelan survivors and witnesses that will eventually support this case at the ICC as well as other accountability efforts](#).

## SPOTLIGHT

[Click here to watch CFJ’s Co-Founder Amal Clooney address the UN on Accountability for War Crimes in Ukraine.](#)



## WHAT’S NEXT

- We will host a press conference about our investigation into the looting of antiquities in the Middle East and North Africa on June 8th in DC. It will be both an in-person and virtual event.
- If you would like to be added to CFJ’s press list, please email [media@cfj.org](#). If you would like to receive general updates, please email [info@cfj.org](#).



## HOW YOU CAN HELP

Our community is crucial! If you’re on social media, please share our work [@ClooneyFDN](#), [@TrialWatch](#) [@TheDocket](#).

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