



Fact Sheet - Background and Methodology

The Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC)

PIAC is an independent, Australian, non-profit law and policy organisation. For over 30 years, PIAC has worked to promote human rights and social justice through research and policy development; public interest litigation; and education and training. Information about PIAC's funding, governance and operations is available at www.piac.asn.au.

The International Crimes Evidence Project (ICEP)

ICEP is a project of PIAC. ICEP conducts independent and impartial investigations into allegations of grave violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law. ICEP is investigating the final phase of the Sri Lankan civil war (September 2008 to May 2009), when the most serious and widespread violations of IHL and international human rights law are alleged to have been committed. ICEP's current report, *Island of impunity?* assesses many such allegations.

ICEP Committee of Experts

ICEP receives advice and guidance from its Committee of Experts. The Committee, which is made up of some of the world's leading experts on war crimes investigations and international law, includes:

- John Ralston (Chair) – Executive Director, Institute for International Criminal Investigations.
- Professor Paola Gaeta – Professor of International Criminal Law.
- Professor William Schabas – Professor of International Law, International Criminal Law and Human Rights and member of the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
- Colonel (retired) Desmond Travers – former Commandant of the Irish Defence Force's Military College and member of the UN Fact-Finding Mission on the Gaza Conflict.
- Gordon Weiss – former UN Spokesperson for Sri Lanka and author of *The Cage*.

ICEP also has a broader team of advisers on international law, international criminal investigations, as well as forensics and military experts.

Methodology

ICEP has collected and analysed information from a range of sources including: witness accounts; photographs and videos; satellite imagery and analysis; confidential correspondence; UN and non-government organisation reports; and other open-source material.

ICEP has undertaken a rigorous legal analysis of the evidentiary material. That evidentiary material is made up of new witness testimony, as well as existing information that had not previously been subject to in-depth factual and legal scrutiny. On the basis of ICEP's factual and legal analysis of the evidentiary material, it is likely that international crimes were committed in the period under investigation. This highlights the need for a full, independent international inquiry on these issues.

Purpose

The UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) meets in March 2014 and will resolve how to achieve accountability on serious allegations arising from the Sri Lankan civil war. In this context and beyond, this ICEP report provides domestic and international decision-makers with a crucial source of independent, reliable and expertly-assessed information. This report aims to support informed and impartial decisions about the commission of, and accountability for, alleged violations of international law in Sri Lanka during the final phase of the civil war.

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