

Cynthia Chamberlain

Children and the International Criminal Court

Analysis of the Rome Statute Through a Children's Rights Perspective



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Cambridge – Antwerp – Portland

Intersentia Ltd
Sheraton House | Castle Park
Cambridge | CB3 0AX | United Kingdom
Tel.: +44 1223 370 170 | Email: mail@intersentia.co.uk

Distribution for the UK:

NBN International
Airport Business Centre, 10 Thornbury Road
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CHILDREN AND THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

To my two wonderful sons, Sebastiaan and Samuel

FOREWORD

The history of the 20th century registers some of the bloodiest and cruel conflicts that cast a shadow over the history human beings.

Not forgetting national and international armed conflicts disputed in all continents, the mere memory of the two catastrophic World Wars, allowed the drafters of the Preamble of the Rome Statute to speak on behalf the millions of children, men and women “victims of unimaginable atrocities that deeply shock the conscience of humanity”.

These atrocities referred to in the aforesaid paragraph of the Statute’s Preamble, which were historically left unpunished, lead the international community to the adoption of a new legal system to put an end to their commission. It was this universal consciousness, as well as the imperative need to protect civilian victims, particularly children and women, from the devastating consequences of wars, which lead to the adoption of the Rome Statute in 1998.

With the creation of the International Criminal Court a new paradigm of international criminal justice came into force. It is a new paradigm of justice that includes a gender perspective, the rights of victims to actively participate in judicial proceedings, as well as a new perspective to the enforcement of human rights.

During its existence for more than a decade, the Prosecutors, Registrar and Judges of the International Criminal Court have barely been able to meet the expectations of the international community. They have also fallen short of meeting the expectations of victims in the cases investigated and prosecuted to date. Mistakes have been made, and difficulties and obstacles have been countless. But significant advances have been made which we cannot ignore.

Significant among these advances, has been the judicial acknowledgement of human rights of girls and children, victims of armed conflicts, to be protected from heinous crimes, such as the crime of enlisting, conscription and using children under the age of 15 years actively participate in hostilities. Children have been used and exploited in many different ways in all armed conflicts throughout history. However, it is only with the adoption of the Rome Statute that this war crime became crystallised in an international treaty as an international crime.

In this scenario and with this background is where this book by Dr Cynthia Chamberlain – which I am honoured to preface – acquires enormous transcendence.

It is with research such as that carried out by Dr Chamberlain in writing her remarkable thesis that the future jurisprudence of the International Criminal

Court will progress and advance the application and interpretation of the Rome Statute with a human rights perspective.

Children and the International Criminal Court is an extensive research into the violence that children, girls and boys, have suffered and are still suffering in all armed conflicts and attacks against civilians, although very often left invisible by enforcement mechanisms.

The author critically examines international instruments, including regional ones, and focuses her attention on the new system of the Rome Statute, from a human rights perspective and in light of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. She examines international criminal law and international human rights law equally, as two legal systems that should be interpreted in a harmonious and integrated manner.

To this end, Dr Chamberlain draws directly to our attention Article 21(3) of the Rome Statute, which sets the applicable law for all activities carried out by the International Criminal Court.

Dr Chamberlain presents a very detailed and creative analysis, with which this book undoubtedly enriches the literature and future academic sources for the analysis and application of the Rome Statute, particularly provisions such as Articles 68 and 75 of the Rome Statute and Rule 86 of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence, and its relationship with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

As she states – and I agree with her statement – her research is based on the premise that the rights of children included in the Convention on the Rights of the Child are indivisible, interrelated and equal. The authorities that she cites, which derive from a broad range of international standards adopted by the United Nations and its specialised agencies, such as UNICEF, are clear and compelling.

Throughout the different chapters of the book the author examines the relationship between children's rights (the international crimes of which they are victims, their status as victims for participation purposes, as well as their right to reparations). The conclusions with which Dr Chamberlain closes each chapter provoke future academic discussions, and also offer the opportunity for the ICC to enrich the legal basis of its decisions, adjusting faithfully to internationally recognised human rights and the spirit of Rome Statute.

Because this is such a comprehensive research and since the conclusions referred to above are so timely, undoubtedly the final chapter "Conclusions and Recommendations" offers a series of insightful and original contributions that Dr Chamberlain proposes to the International Criminal Court for its future work, particularly as regards the impact of international criminal justice in the lives of child witnesses and victims international crimes under its jurisdiction.

Each and all of the sixteen final recommendations require comments that exceed the aim of this foreword. Their scope and content must be taken seriously by those in the ICC who are required to create a culture of children's rights in international justice, and also very prominently, by the States and international community called to construct a coherent strategy to protect children from

violence in all its manifestations, within and outside the context of armed conflicts.

To conclude her work, Dr Chamberlain suggests the adoption of document that contains guidelines for ICC's work, both in the substantive and in the procedural areas. Based on existing principles of international law, and in perfect harmony with the principles and objectives of the Rome Statute, these proposed guidelines would be extremely useful for judges and court officials, but also for child victims and even for those who appear as accused persons before the Court. For example, the guidelines are extremely useful tool for the correct application of Rule 86 of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence, one of the most significant contributions in this new paradigm of international criminal justice, but which still has to find its true development in the jurisprudence of the Court and in domestic legislation of State Parties, in light of the principle of complementarity.

In the international and the internal order of States that aspire to make international human rights law and international criminal law the sources for societies that are fair and equal, contributions like Dr Chamberlain's are essential. Those of us who have devoted much of our life to human rights and international criminal justice, are greatly indebted to Dr Chamberlain for providing us with new elements to move forward.

Elizabeth Odio Benito
Former Judge
International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
and the International Criminal Court

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To conclude, I would like to thank those persons in my personal life that have also supported and encouraged me in this challenging process. Firstly my parents, who have sponsored my academic career to and who have always assured me that I could achieve this life-long dream. To my husband, for being a great partner and a fantastic dad to our sons. Thanks for your dedication to our family when my long working hours would not allow me to be there as a mom.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACtHPR	African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights
AFRC	Armed Forces for Revolutionary Council
ASP	Assembly of State Parties
CDF	Civil Defence Forces
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CICC	Coalition for an International Criminal Court
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECCC	Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia
ECECR	European Convention on the Exercise of Children's Rights
ECOSOC	United Nation's Economic and Social Council
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
GCU	Gender and Children Unit
IACtHR	Inter-American Court of Human Rights
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICTR	International Tribunal for Rwanda
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia
IDP	internally displaced persons
ILO	International Labour Organisation
JCCD	Jurisdiction, Complementarity and Cooperation Division
NGOs	non-governmental organisations
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OPCD	Office of Public Counsel for the Defence
OPCV	Office of Public Counsel for Victims
OTP	Office of the Prosecutor
PrepCom	Preparatory Commission
PIDS	Public Information and Documentation Section
RoC	Regulations of the Court
RoR	Regulations of the Registry
RPE	Rules of Procedure and Evidence
RTFV	Regulations of the Trust Fund for Victims
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SCSL	Special Court for Sierra Leone

TFV	Trust Fund for Victims
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission on Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
VPRS	Victims Participation and Reparations Section
VWU	Victims and Witnesses Unit

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INTRODUCTION

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is the world's first international permanent court with jurisdiction to judge individuals for crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and aggression.

The Rome Statute¹ is a pioneering international treaty as it also provides for the participation of victims throughout the proceedings, not only as witnesses of the defence or the prosecution, but also as participants in judicial proceedings. Article 68(3) of the Rome Statute is the central provision related to victims' participation.² It states "where the personal interests of the victims are affected, the Court *shall* permit their views and concerns to be presented and considered at stages of the proceedings determined to be appropriate by the Court" (emphasis added).

Another novelty from this international tribunal is that victims of crimes within its jurisdiction are entitled to receive reparations, either individually or collectively. Pursuant to Article 75(2) of the Rome Statute, the "Court may make an order directly against a convicted person [...] or in respect of victims, including restitution, compensation and rehabilitation".

Moreover, pursuant to Article 68(1) of the Statute, the "Court *shall* take appropriate measures to protect the safety, physical and psychological well-being, dignity and privacy of victims and witnesses" having regard to all relevant factors, including "age, gender [...] health, and the nature of the crime, in particular [...] where the crime involves sexual or gender violence or violence against children" (emphasis added).

These provisions are innovative and an advance in international criminal law, which goes, unlike the predecessors of the ICC, beyond the purely retributive nature of judicial proceedings, and includes a restorative mandate that encompasses the possibility for victims to express their views in international

¹ *Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court* (Rome Statute), original document is A/CONF.183/9 of 17 July 1998, UN Treaty Series, vol. 2187, no. 38544, p. 3. The treaty was corrected by *procès-verbaux* of 10 November 1998, 12 July 1999, 30 November 1999, 8 May 2000, 17 January 2001 and 16 January 2002. Amendments to Article 8 reproduce the text contained in depositary notification C.N.651.2010 Treaties-6, while the amendments regarding Articles 8 *bis*, 15 *bis* and 15 *ter* replicate the text contained in depositary notification C.N.651.2010 Treaties-8; both depositary communications are dated 29 November 2010. The Rome Statute is available at: <<http://www.icc-cpi.int/NR/rdonlyres/ADD16852-AEE9-4757-ABE7-9CDC7CF02886/283503/RomeStatutEng1.pdf>> accessed 2 April 2013.

² See also Articles 15(3) and 19(3) of the Rome Statute, which refer to other manners of victims' participation in the initial stages of ICC proceedings (authorisation to open an investigation and jurisdiction and admissibility proceedings).

criminal trials as well as the possibility to receive reparations for the harm suffered. However, the advances made with the adoption of the Rome Statute need to be applied to concrete situations currently investigated by the ICC's Prosecutor and in particular cases against accused persons.

In order to fulfil this pioneering mandate of the ICC, relevant expertise in these innovative features is required within the ICC.³ Accordingly, Articles 36(8)(b), 42(9) and 44(2) of the Rome Statute provide that the ICC should have judges, advisers and staff members with legal expertise on specific issues, including among others, violence against children.

As regards child victims and witnesses, the Rome Statute's legal framework clearly compels the ICC to consider their needs in international criminal proceedings. The Preamble of the Rome Statute explicitly refers to children as victims of the most serious crimes within the ICC's jurisdiction and calls to end impunity for these crimes. Article 68(3) of the Rome Statute provides that, in order to protect victims and witnesses, their age and also whether the crime involves violence against children, should be, among other factors, considered. Rule 86 of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence (RPE), which directly relates to Article 68 of the Statute, provides:

"A Chamber in making *any direction or order*, and other organs of the Court *in performing their functions* under the Statute or the Rules, *shall* take into account the needs of all victims and witnesses in accordance with article 68, in particular, *children*, elderly persons, persons with disabilities and victims of sexual or gender violence." (emphasis added)

These legal provisions reflect that, although a criminal court with clear penal mandate, the ICC also has the obligation to respect, as a minimum, the safety and well-being of victims and witnesses, particularly those who are most vulnerable, such as children. It also reflects the developments in human rights law to focus on children in judicial proceedings, both at the international and national level.⁴

³ See the *Statement by Ms Eva Boenders, Caucus on Children's Rights in the ICC*, 16 June 1998, ICC Preparatory Works <<http://www.legal-tools.org/en/doc/61113c/>> accessed 4 April 2013.

⁴ For example UNICEF affirmed in a preparatory document for the Rome Conference that the "legal safeguards recognised in international human rights law, particularly the CRC, should be effectively secured" in the ICC. UNICEF then stated that child witnesses and victims should benefit from "legal and other appropriate assistance" and that consideration should be given to the "special needs of the child", particularly making reference to the need to secure a "child-friendly" environment. See: *UNICEF and the Establishment of the International Criminal Court* (17 March 1998) ICC Preparatory Works <<http://www.legal-tools.org/en/doc/f0fa26/>> accessed 4 April 2013, p. 5. Likewise, in the Rome Conference the Special Representative of the United Nation's Secretary General on Children and Armed Conflict at the time also appealed that ICC provisions should be consistent with international standards, including, among others, the CRC. See: *Message from Olara A. Otunnu, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to the Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court* (17 June 1998), ICC Preparatory Works <<http://www.legal-tools.org/en/doc/ed4ff7/>> accessed 4 April 2013.