

Genocide Network meeting held at Eurojust



□The Hague, 7 November 2019

Suspects of terrorist activities, such as returning foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), can receive higher sentences if charges of terrorism are combined with acts of war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide or other offences. To prosecute for all acts committed and achieve an accumulation of charges at national level, better cooperation and coordination between prosecutors with different competences is desirable. Currently, the prosecution of war criminals and terrorists in EU Member States can fall under the responsibility of various prosecutors. The accumulation of charges in this area was for the first time discussed by prosecutors during the 27th meeting of the [Network for investigation and prosecution of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes](#) (EU Genocide Network), held at Eurojust in The Hague on 6 and 7 November.

Eurojust's President, Mr Ladislav Hamran, said: *'The fight against terrorism is one of the main priorities for Eurojust. If a suspect is not only indicted for terrorist offences, but also tried for active involvement in war crimes or trafficking in human beings, the sentence can be higher, leading to more justice for victims and their loved ones. If we want justice done, we need optimal national coordination among prosecutors competent for different crime areas. Prosecutors need access to all sources of evidence, including evidence collected by UN bodies, military forces in the battlefield, non-governmental organisations and other partners.'*

Finnish State Prosecutor, Mr Tom Laitinen, Chair of today's meeting, said: *'Many countries are struggling to find a way to bring to justice the perpetrators of horrendous crimes committed across the globe. In this struggle, it is important to think "outside the box". We have to be inventive and find new ways to ensure that justice is done, not forgetting the rule of law. The discussions during today's meeting show that much is already being accomplished, and that there is a common ambition and will to hold the perpetrators of these crimes responsible for their actions. This is a good basis for all the work that lies ahead.'*

The meeting of the Genocide Network focused on existing jurisprudence in various EU countries and different judicial practices to see how cooperation and exchange of information could ensure criminal responsibility of perpetrators by an effective accumulation of charges. Terrorist groups can also commit war crimes and other crimes during an armed conflict. Suspects charged with terrorism are often also involved in other criminal offences, such as money laundering, trafficking in human beings, slavery or rape. Interaction between different sets of law is required to lead to a more effective charging of suspects. To avoid prosecuting just one angle,

different public prosecution offices need to coordinate to reach cumulative prosecution for war crimes, other crimes and terrorism offences.

With an increase in the number of FTFs who might return to EU countries, we need to use this approach and prosecute for all criminal acts committed to ensure their criminal responsibility, thus bringing justice to victims and reach a higher level of sentencing.

A high-level delegation from the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD), UN IIIM, ICC, as well as representatives from Member States, Europol, the academic world, civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and prosecutors participated in the meeting.

The Genocide Network provides a forum for practitioners to exchange information on ongoing cases and share expertise and best practice for the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators of core international crimes. The Genocide Network is also dedicated to raising awareness of the crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, thus demonstrating the EU's commitment to fighting impunity of suspected war criminals.