

Disability: A Missing Piece of the International Criminal Law Puzzle



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US International Council on Disabilities (USICD) Releases Revised Policy Brief on Behalf of the International Peace and Security Network Crimes against Humanity Working Group

“Drafting a Disability Cognizant Convention on Crimes against Humanity: Recommendations for Accounting for Persons with Disabilities”

Washington, D.C. - July 19, 2025 - In celebration of the 35th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and nearly two decades since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the US International Council on Disabilities, the Secretariat for the International Disability, Peace and Security Network (IDPSN) and its Crimes against Humanity Working Group (CAHWG), proudly announces the release of its fully updated Policy Brief: “Drafting a Disability Cognizant Convention on Crimes against Humanity: Recommendations for Accounting for Persons with Disabilities.”

This updated 2025 edition builds upon previous work of the IDPSN, including advocacy by USICD and technical work undertaken by the Harvard Law School Project on Disability to

address a long-standing gap in international criminal law, namely, the systematic exclusion of disability perspectives in efforts to prevent, prosecute, and remedy crimes against humanity.

The brief outlines key recommendations for ensuring that any future international convention on crimes against humanity explicitly includes the rights, experiences, and protections of persons with disabilities. It highlights the need for inclusive legal frameworks, disability-sensitive accountability mechanisms, and survivor-centered approaches that do not leave this marginalized population behind.

“Disability must no longer be an afterthought in international criminal justice. This brief is a call to action for policymakers, legal experts, and advocates to integrate disability rights from the outset of treaty drafting processes,” said USICD President, Kirt Toombs.

The release of this brief marks a critical milestone in the global disability rights movement and calls on governments, international bodies, and civil society to recognize and correct the persistent invisibility of disability in international criminal law.

To access the full policy brief or for more information, visit <https://uscd.org/crimes-against-humanity-treaty/>

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