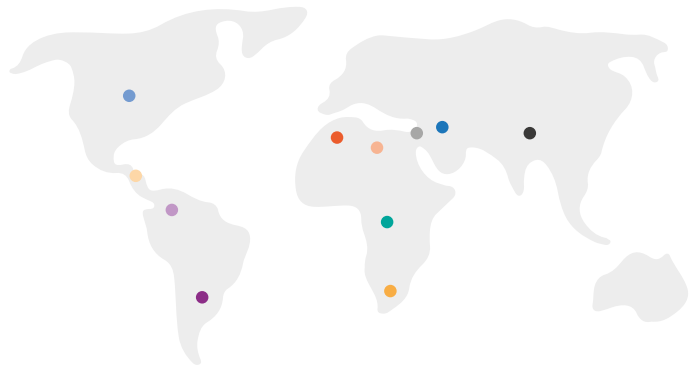


The International Network of Victims and Survivors of Serious Human Rights Abuses (INOVAS) is a network by and for victims and survivors of conflicts, dictatorships, and other abuses. Founded in 2020 and officially launched in 2021, INOVAS aims to create a platform for representing the often-sidelined or ignored voices of victims and survivors. Central to that aim is the belief that victims and survivors must lead the fight for justice and accountability at local, national, and international levels.

Global reach

INOVAS' reach is global, spanning several continents. Members experienced a range of abuse contexts, including conflicts, dictatorships, and abuses by non-state actors. As such, all members come with their own stories, experiences, and challenges as a result of the serious rights abuses they endured—at the same time though, part of INOVAS' strength is rooted in this diversity, meaning the network provides a safe, collaborative space for victims and survivors the world over.



Founding members

- **Ahmad Helmi** Syria | Ta'afi
- **Alicia Partnoy** US/Argentina | Proyecto VOS-Voices of Survivors
- **Anne-Marie Buhoro** Democratic Republic of Congo | IPVFAD
- **Antonio Leiva** US/Argentina | Proyecto VOS-Voices of Survivors
- **Deicy Patricia Carabali** Colombia | Asociación de víctimas Renacer siglo XXI
- **Fatna El Bouih** Morocco | Relais Prison-Société Association
- **Karim Abdessalem** Tunisia | Association for Justice and Rehabilitation
- **Marjorie Jobson** South Africa | Khulumani Support Group
- **Miguel Itzep** Guatemala | Q'anil Tinamit
- **Ram Kumar Bhandari** Nepal | NEFAD
- **Wadad Halawani** Lebanon | Committee of the Families of the Kidnapped and Missing in Lebanon

How INOVAS works

INOVAS challenges the idea of 'victim,' as word that often suggests passivity or weakness; rather, victims and survivors are empowered actors with the necessary first-hand experience, knowledge, and expertise to achieve true justice and accountability, and to end impunity for perpetrators of violence and human rights abuses. INOVAS seeks to change that perception of victims and survivors by working with key national, regional and international bodies, but also by working alongside

fellow individuals and organisations and supporting the work already being done on the ground. Conducting awareness-raising and advocacy to educate policy-makers and political actors related to transitional justice, victim participation and the fight against impunity is just one step in a broader strategy to better involve victims and survivors in the pursuit of justice and accountability around the world.

As such, the network focuses on five key activities:



Advocacy



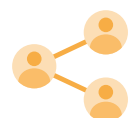
Unleashing the power of victims & survivors



Protection of activists



Documentation & Participatory research



Peer-to-Peer exchange & Solidarity

Victims and survivors of serious rights abuses often say that traditional transitional justice processes are unrepresentative. People want to be heard, to be able to speak on behalf of themselves and others like them, but justice processes all too often follow technocratic, top-down approaches without centring victims and survivors at their core.

Our rights

The rights of victims of gross human rights abuses have been well recognised under international law for decades. In recent years the international community has taken a number of steps to better recognise and protect those rights as well as processes to remedy rights abuses and hold perpetrators accountable. These steps include the

UN Principles to Combat Impunity, Basic Principles on the Right to Remedy and Reparations for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law and a number of international human rights treaties.

In sum, there are now four basic rights enshrined in international law for victims and survivors of gross human rights abuses:



Right to justice



Right to truth



Right to reparations



Guarantees of non-recurrence

More needs to be done

Despite the growing understanding that victims must be at the centre of accountability and transitional justice efforts to ensure their long-term success, survivors' experiences demonstrate that their participation remains limited. Victim participation has become something of a mantra in the mainstream conversation around transitional justice, but this has not always translated into concrete action—let alone results.

In some cases, security issues, political pressure, and discrimination may prevent participation; in others, victims and survivors are consulted within transitional justice structures in piecemeal or top-down ways that serve to actually disempower them of their rights. This can often leave victims and survivors feeling ignored, sidelined, or misrepresented, but also lead to less culturally and contextually sensitive results.



INOVAS members strongly hold that transitional justice efforts should be rooted in local contexts: moving away from technocratic, top-down transitional justice processes and instead directly involving survivors seeking horizontal power structures.

Indigenous activists call for change in the Philippines, 2012.
Photo Credit- iStock.com – h3k27

INOVAS is grateful for the support of Impunity Watch, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs.

