

## **COURTSIDE: Defence Counsel Join Forces**

**Author:** [Mirna Jancic](#)

A new association aims to represent and regulate tribunal lawyers.

Nine years after the founding of the tribunal, members of its defence counsel have formed an official association.

Around 80 defence lawyers are currently engaged at the tribunal, and their participation in the new association - expected to guarantee protection and introduce disciplinary measures for its members - will be mandatory.

A monthly membership fee of 100 euro will fund activities such as training defence counsel - a job so far undertaken by the tribunal registry.

Disciplinary procedures will be taken against lawyers suspected of abusing the court - by splitting fees with their clients, for example. The registry grants legal aid amounting to around 13 million US dollars a year to defendants who cannot afford to pay legal counsel.

The body's disciplinary committees are expected to handle such cases, with lawyers passing judgement on their peers, which it is hoped will make the process fairer.

The association president, John Ackerman, said that the lawyers could contribute to the better functioning of the tribunal, for example with amendments to the rules of procedure.

At the association's founding meeting on September 14, tribunal president judge Claude Jorda urged lawyers not to "waste this historic opportunity that has been offered to you to continue to show, jointly and in an organised manner, that true justice cannot exist without efficient defence".

The association is expected to grow to some 500 members. It is still debating whether it is appropriate to represent amici curiae, friends of the court.

Mirna Jancic is an IWPR assistant editor.

---

**Source URL:** <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/courtside-defence-counsel-join-forces>