

## Protection of Victims' Rights in International Criminal Proceedings

**Authors :** Irina Belozerova

**Abstract :** In the recent years, the number of crimes against peace and humanity has constantly been increasing. The development of the international community is inseparably connected to the compliance with the law which protects the rights and interests of citizens in all of their manifestations. The provisions of the law of criminal procedure are no exception. The rights of the victims of genocide, of the war crimes and the crimes against humanity, require particular attention. These crimes fall within the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court governed by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. These crimes have the following features. First, any such crime has a mass character and therefore requires specific regulation in the international criminal law and procedure and the national criminal law and procedure of different countries. Second, the victims of such crimes are usually children, women and old people; the entire national, ethnic, racial or religious groups are destroyed. These features influence the classification of victims by the age criterion. Article 68 of the Rome Statute provides for protection of the safety, physical and psychological well-being, dignity and privacy of victims and witnesses and thus determines the procedural status of these persons. However, not all the persons whose rights have been violated by the commission of these crimes acquire the status of victims. This is due to the fact that such crimes affect a huge number of persons and it is impossible to mention them all by name. It is also difficult to assess the entire damage suffered by the victims. While assessing the amount of damages it is essential to take into account physical and moral harm, as well as property damage. The procedural status of victims thus gains an exclusive character. In order to determine the full extent of the damage suffered by the victims it is necessary to collect sufficient evidence. However, it is extremely difficult to collect the evidence that would ensure the full and objective protection of the victims' rights. While making requests for the collection of evidence, the International Criminal Court faces the problem of protection of national security information. Religious beliefs and the family life of victims are of great importance. In some Islamic countries, it is impossible to question a woman without her husband's consent which affects the objectivity of her testimony. Finally, the number of victims is quantified by hundreds and thousands. The assessment of these elements demands time and highly qualified work. These factors justify the creation of a mechanism that would help to collect the evidence and establish the truth in the international criminal proceedings. This mechanism will help to impose a just and appropriate punishment for the persons accused of having committed a crime, since, committing the crime, criminals could not misunderstand the outcome of their criminal intent.

**Keywords :** crimes against humanity, evidence in international criminal proceedings, international criminal proceedings, protection of victims

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