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## June Roundtable: International Criminal Court, Peace, and Justice, Introduction

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## June Roundtable: International Criminal Court, Peace, and Justice, Introduction

### Abstract

An annotation of:

"Peace Must Not Be the Victim of International Justice" New York Times. March 16, 2012.

### Keywords

Human rights, International Criminal Court (ICC), Peace, Justice, Post-conflict transition

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## International Criminal Court, Peace, and Justice

Article under review: "[Peace Must Not Be the Victim of International Justice](#)" *New York Times*. March 16, 2012.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) is a permanent international body, established to prosecute those responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. Since its creation, the court has been seen as a major institutional advancement in fulfilling the international promise of "never again" made by the international community after World War II. With nearly 120 State parties, the 1998 Rome Statute, which established the ICC, consolidates a significant normative shift in world politics.

The ICC has a global mandate but its activities have concentrated on African countries marked by ongoing violent conflict. Crimes committed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), northern Uganda, Darfur, and the Central African Republic are the subject of its first investigations and prosecutions. In March 2012, the court issued its first verdict against Thomas Lubanga, the leader of a militia in the DRC. Yet the ICC's operations in Africa have encountered significant challenges. In this Roundtable, Ian Paisley, MP from Northern Ireland and former United Nations and European Union peace envoy, provides the centerpiece and deals with the problems of pursuing justice in the midst of violence.

Paisley's believes that the ICC has failed as an instrument for peace and that it "[will continue to falter because its current methods go against the experience of many places in Africa and around the world where peace has been delivered through political negotiations and reconciliation efforts, not the imposition of international justice.](#)"<sup>[1]</sup> He goes even further, arguing that "[the pursuit of justice should not replace or undermine ongoing national reconciliation efforts. The foremost challenge facing the I.C.C. is to determine whether its intervention will help or hinder the cause of peace. The wheels of justice must be allowed to turn at their own pace, but that they must not impede the peace process.](#)"<sup>[2]</sup>

There has been an important academic and policy debate regarding "peace versus justice" in post conflict settings or in countries experiencing transitions from authoritarian to democratic regimes. This month's roundtable offers new angles for discussion, including the role of regional and national actors in prosecuting these types of crimes, the legitimacy of international interventions and the challenges of global governance, and even a critical analysis the role of the author of the centerpiece—Ian Paisley—in the peace process in Northern Ireland.

[1] Paisley, Ian. "Peace Must Not Be the Victim of Internaitonal Justice." *New York Times*, March 16, 2012. Accessed May 29, 2010. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/17/opinion/peace-must-not-be-the-victim-of-international-justice.html>.

[2] Ibid

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