

Frontiers of International Criminal Law and Justice

**Monday, 1 December 2025, 13:15-15:00,
The Hague, World Forum, 'Europe 1-2'**

*A side-event (with lunch) to the 24th Session of the ICC Assembly of States Parties,
convened by the Centre for International Law Research and Policy (CILRAP), sponsored by Korea, Norway and Sweden,
co-sponsored by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), Stockholm Centre for International Law and Justice,
Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies, Human Rights Law Centre (University of Nottingham), Institute for International Peace
and Security Law of the University of Cologne, Coalition for International Criminal Justice (CICJ), European Center for Constitutional
and Human Rights, and the Norwegian Helsinki Committee (NHC).*

Statement by Dr. Volker Nerlich Head of Chambers' Staff, ICC Chambers

It is a great pleasure to participate in this side event on the '[Frontiers of International Criminal Law and Justice](#)', and I am most grateful to Morten Bergsmo for having invited me. The topics of the first two panels were most inspiring, and it is also a great opportunity to reconnect with colleagues and friends, some of whom have been working for many years on CILRAP projects.

While the first two panels addressed questions of substantive international criminal law, this panel is dedicated to the tools that practitioners and academics need in their daily work: databases that make legal information about international criminal law accessible. The launch of version 3.0. of [Lexsitus](#), which now includes a Persian-language version of the database, is a great leap forward in this regard.

Lexsitus, just like its sister-databases, the Legal Tools collection and the ICC Case Law Database, is built on three essential principles.

First, the principle of *free access*. There are no fees, no subscriptions, no 'create an account'. The database can be used by anyone who has access to the Internet, without limitations or paywall. This is commendable because it ensures that legal information regarding international criminal law does not depend on the user's financial resources.

Second, the principle of *quality control*. In these times of artificial intelligence, users may be tempted to rely on the likes of ChatGPT to conduct legal research. I have done so myself, and the results are often impressive. But there will always remain a lurking doubt about the reliability of the results – and unless you are an expert in the field already, it will be difficult for you to know if the response from artificial intelligence is complete and trustworthy. For Lexsitus, it is a different story because its content is curated and often produced by experts in the field of international criminal justice. If one looks at the contributors to the project, it is difficult not to be impressed: the project has brought together leading academics and practitioners in the field.

Third, the principle of *multilingualism*. The approach of Lexsitus has always been not to limit itself to one language. Over the years, it has been made available, in addition to English, in French, Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish – all official languages of the UN and of the ICC. Today marks the launch of the Persian language version of the database. This is an important step, for if international criminal law is to be truly universal, it must be accessible to as many people as possible – and languages can still be a steep barrier in this regard.

I would like to end by highlighting that databases such as Lexsitus are important not only to spread knowledge about international criminal law. They are also essential to achieve the objectives of the Rome Statute: namely, that the most heinous crimes do not go unpunished. While the ICC is seen by many as the centre of international criminal justice, the Rome Statute is far from making it the exclusive forum for prosecution of international crimes. To the contrary, the Rome Statute envisages that prosecutions take place before domestic courts. Indeed, over the last two decades, the number of international crimes cases before domestic jurisdictions has grown significantly. While these cases might not get the same public attention as cases before the ICC, they are essential to bringing the promise of the Rome Statute to fruition.

Yet domestic prosecution authorities, defence and victims' counsel, and courts, often do not have access to books or other material on international criminal law. By providing free access to reliable legal information in multiple languages, Lexsitus is an essential tool in this regard.