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Last week, CCR senior staff attorney [Katherine Gallagher](#) returned from the Hague, having traveled there as part of a delegation of representatives of Afghan civil society and human rights defenders to request that the International Criminal Court (ICC) Office of the Prosecutor fully investigate ongoing war crimes and crimes against humanity in Afghanistan. CCR joined the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), OPEN ASIA/Armanshahr, and the Afghanistan Transitional Justice Coordination Group in this visit.

The ICC has had jurisdiction to investigate crimes that occurred on the territory of Afghanistan since May 2003, and began its preliminary investigation ten years ago. In her [November 2016 report](#), ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda declared that her office would soon make a decision on whether her office would initiate a full investigation, including into crimes committed as part of the U.S. torture program. It is crucial for the ICC to begin this as soon as possible; the victims of these past crimes deserve some concrete steps be taken towards justice — and those in position to commit further crimes in Afghanistan, including members of the Trump administration which has just taken a [dangerous step towards further military escalation with the launching of the MOAB](#), need to know that they will be held accountable for serious international law violations.

Katherine stated, "No high-level U.S. official from the military, the CIA, or private contractors has been prosecuted for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed within the U.S. torture program in Afghanistan or at other locations, including in Eastern Europe, where detainees were sent to be tortured. An investigation by the ICC into these crimes and others by U.S. actors, including civilian deaths, would send a much-needed message to the current U.S. administration and others around the world that no one is above the law."