International criminal tribunals and human rights law: Adherence and contextualization

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CHAPTER 6  THE RIGHT TO BE TRIED WITHOUT UNDUE DELAY

1.  Introduction

The ICTR has reiterated the maxim that ‘justice delayed is justice denied’.\(^1\) Similarly, the ICC has considered that ‘delays are inimical to the proper administration of justice’.\(^2\) Nevertheless, the length of international criminal proceedings has been one of the most criticized aspects of the practice of the ICTs.\(^3\) An average trial has lasted six years and two months before the ICTY, and nine years and two months before the ICTR.\(^4\) The ICC has recently completed its first trial up to the Appeal, but the pace of its proceedings thus far does not seem promising. Many studies have addressed the pace of international criminal justice.\(^5\) That is not the primary aim of this Chapter. Instead, focus is on the interpretation and application of the right of the accused to be tried without undue delay by the ICTs. As will be seen, despite the staggering

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\(^1\) ICTR, Decision on the Defence Motion for Severance and Separate Trial Filed by the Accused, Prosecutor v. Kamuhanda (ICTR-99-54-T), 7 November 2000, 5.


\(^3\) Similarly William Schabas, ‘Synergy or Fragmentation? International Criminal Law and the European Convention on Human Rights’ (2011) 9 J Int’l Crim Just 609, 627, who observes that the ‘extraordinary lengths’ of international criminal proceedings has been ‘one of the most unsatisfactory aspects of procedure’ at the ICTs. See also David Tolbert and Fergal Gaynor, ‘International Tribunals and the Right to a Speedy Trial: Problems and Possible Remedies’ in Magda Karagiannakis (ed), Critical Assessments of International Criminal Courts (Federation Press 2009), who mention the ‘poor, and in some instances shocking, record in respect of the requirement that trials be expeditious.’ See also Yvonne McDermott, ‘The Right to a Fair Trial in International Criminal Law’ (PhD Thesis, National University of Ireland Galway 2013), 115.

\(^4\) For the purposes of this Chapter, the average lengths of proceedings before the ICTs have been calculated. The data that has been processed was collected from the websites and decisions of the ICTs. The table containing this data is reproduced in Annex 1 to this dissertation and the full database containing a complete overview is on file with the author. The numbers presented here relate to the total length of the proceedings, from the moment of the arrest of the suspect until the final judgment in her/his case.

lengths of many of their cases, the ICTs have only once found a violation of this right, which can largely be explained by the specific way in which they have interpreted and applied it.

The first part of this Chapter addresses the framework applicable to the right to be tried without undue delay in IHRL. It addresses the scope of this right, as well as the parameters that are generally used to assess whether this right has been violated. The second and third parts of this Chapter discuss the practice of the ad hoc Tribunals and the ICC, respectively. The formers’ practice is far more substantial than that of the latter, as a result of which the conclusions arrived at in this Chapter primarily pertain to the ad hoc Tribunals. However, as will be seen, the early practice of the ICC discloses an approach similar to that of the ad hoc Tribunals, which strengthens the value of this Chapter’s findings for the future practice of the Court.

2. IHRL Framework

IHRL provides the right to be tried without undue delay. This section discusses the basis and scope of this right, which derives from two distinct rights—fair trial and the right to liberty—and addresses the parameters developed to assess whether delays have been undue.

The right to a fair trial includes the right to be tried without undue delay. The terminology, however, differs per convention. While the ICCPR speaks of the right to be tried without undue delay, the ECHR, ACHR and ACHPR refer to the right to be tried within a reasonable time. Other terms, such as the right to an expeditious or a speedy trial can also be found in case law and academic literature. Arguably, the meaning of these phrases is more or less identical, since a determination of whether the length of proceedings has been reasonable hinges on the question whether there has been undue delay. There is no evidence that the different terminology has led to diverging interpretations, quite the contrary, as will be seen below, the ECtHR, IACtHR, and the HRC’s interpretation of their respective provisions is highly similar. As a result, these phrases can be used interchangeably. This study will consistently use the right to be tried without undue delay as the preferred term, since this term is used in the Statutes of the ICTs, unless external sources are quoted.

The right to be tried without undue delay creates an obligation for states to organize their judicial system in such a way so as to enable expeditious pre-trial, trial and appeal proceedings, and the right of each individual to have her/his particular case finished within a

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6 Art 14(3)(c) ICCPR.
7 Art 6(1) ECHR; Art 8(1) ACHR; Art 7(1)(d) ACHPR.
reasonable time. The guarantee governs the entire period of judicial proceedings: from the moment that a person is charged until the proceedings against her/him come to a final end. The purpose of this guarantee is two-fold. First, there is a public interest in avoiding delays in the judicial system. This is thought to enhance public faith in the system, and thereby its legitimacy. Similarly, economic considerations militate in favor of expeditious judicial proceedings. Second, and more importantly for this study’s purposes, the accused has a judically enforceable right to be tried without delay. The impact of criminal proceedings on a person’s life is considerable, particularly when s/he is provisionally detained. As stated by the ECtHR, this right ‘is designed to avoid a person charged remaining too long in a state of uncertainty’.9 Similarly, the IACtHR has considered that ‘the purpose of the principle of “reasonable time” … is to prevent accused persons from remaining in that situation for a protracted period and to ensure that the charge is promptly disposed of.’10 Finally, according to the HRC, the guarantee is ‘designed to avoid keeping persons too long in a state of uncertainty about their fate’ and to ensure that provisional detention is not too long, but also serves the more abstract interests of justice.11

The right to liberty also includes the right to be tried without undue delay for provisionally detained persons.12 As will be seen, the standards used to determine whether a delay has been undue are slightly stricter in this context than under the general heading of a fair trial, because of the invasive nature of liberty deprivations.13 The period covered by this particular right commences with arrest, and lasts until the day on which a decision is made on the charges, ie when a court of first instance renders a judgment of conviction or acquittal.14

Nonetheless, the parameters to determine a violation of provisionally detained persons’ right to be tried without undue delay are similar to those employed for determinations of undue delay as a part of the right to a fair trial. There is one apparent difference. The ECtHR has developed the obligation to conduct proceedings against provisionally detained persons, who still benefit from the presumption of innocence, with ‘special diligence’. At the same time, the ECtHR has applied this obligation in the context of the general right to a fair trial, in cases that involved persons who were provisionally detained. As a result, this obliga-
tion of special diligence seems to exist in the context of both the right to be tried without undue delay as a part of the right to a fair trial, and of provisionally detained persons’ right to be tried within a reasonable time, as a part of the right to liberty. Furthermore, in the practice of the ICTs, provisional detention has been the rule, not the exception. \(^{15}\) Although the ICTY has become more permissive in allowing provisional release over the years, the ICC has ordered release on only one occasion—in a case not involving core crimes—and the ICTR has never granted provisional release. \(^{16}\) Therefore, this study will not employ a strict separation between the two rights. Instead, it discusses the parameters to determine a violation of the right to be tried without undue delay mainly based on jurisprudence concerning the right to a fair trial, and adds a section discussing the requirement of special diligence and possible distinctive aspects of provisionally detained persons’ right to be tried without undue delay.

2.1. Scope of the right to be tried without undue delay

The right to be tried without undue delay governs the entirety of pre-trial, trial and appeal proceedings. The period commences when the suspect becomes aware that s/he is subject of a criminal investigation, or when s/he is charged with a criminal offence. \(^{17}\) The moment of being charged has an autonomous meaning in the case law of the ECtHR, and the Court has held that this can be when a person is arrested, officially notified that s/he will be prosecuted, or when the preliminary investigations are opened. \(^{18}\) Another definition given by the ECtHR to the term is ‘the official notification given to an individual by the competent authority of an allegation that he has committed a criminal offence’. \(^{19}\) This definition corresponds to another test—often used by the ECtHR with reference to the activation of fair trial rights—of whether a person has been ‘substantially affected’. \(^{20}\) The period to be assessed extends to the point where

\(^{15}\) See supra Chapter 5.
\(^{16}\) See supra Chapter 5; significantly, however, the ICC also works with summons to appear in a number of its cases, as opposed to arrest warrants, in which case defendants await their trial in freedom; see Art 58(7) ICC Statute.
\(^{19}\) ECtHR, Judgment, Bak v. Poland (App No 7870/04), 16 April 2007, 73.
the case comes to a final end and thus includes possible appeal stages.21 All stages of the proceedings must take place without undue delay.22 The period continues to run if the case is sent back to lower courts for a retrial.23

2.2. Relevant parameters to determine a violation

There are no absolute time limits that define reasonableness of the duration of judicial proceedings. What constitutes a reasonable period is determined by a number of factors, and must be assessed in light of the circumstances of the case. The parameters to determine whether delays have been undue are the conduct of the defendant, the conduct of the authorities, the complexity of the case, and what was at stake for the applicant in the dispute.24

23 See eg ECtHR, Judgment, I.A. v. France (App No 28213/95), 23 September 1998, 115; Trechsel, Human Rights in Criminal Proceedings (n 8), 141; Nowak (n 17), 337.
2.2.1. **Conduct of the defendant**

Insofar as the defendant is her/himself responsible for causing delays in the proceedings, these delays cannot be attributed to the state.\(^{25}\) Such delays cannot therefore not lead to a violation of the right to be tried without undue delay. For example, the submission of frivolous motions or other dilatory tactics such as a boycott of the proceedings or a hunger strike have been found to be attributable to the defendant, thereby clearing the authorities at least partially of the responsibility for any resulting delays.\(^{26}\) The same goes for delays caused by a defendant who absconded for a certain period.\(^{27}\) However, the defendant has the right to use all procedural remedies at her/his disposal and is by no means under an obligation to actively cooperate with the authorities conducting judicial proceedings against her/him.\(^{28}\) The genuine use of procedural remedies may thus not be construed as a sort of implicit waiver of the right to be tried within a reasonable time.\(^{29}\) Still, the ECtHR has held that while the defendant cannot be reproached for making full use of procedural remedies, ‘such conduct constitutes an objective fact, not capable of being attributed to the respondent State, which is to be taken into account when determining whether or not the proceedings exceeded a “reasonable time”’.\(^{30}\) At the same time, the ECtHR has affirmed that the fact that a portion of the delays in the judicial proceedings is attributable to the defendant does not absolve the state from its responsibility. In that sense, it has found violations of the right to be tried without undue de-


\(^{26}\) ECtHR, Judgment, *Salapa v. Poland* (App No 35489/97), 19 December 2002, 88-89: where the ECtHR considered that the numerous motions and appeals filed by the applicant cast doubt on his intention to have the proceedings conducted expeditiously; ECtHR, Judgment, *I.A. v. France* (App No 28213/95), 23 September 1998, 121, where the ECtHR considered deliberate delaying tactics by the applicant; ECtHR, Judgment, *Ringeisen v. Austria* (App No 2614/65), 16 July 1971, 110, where the ECtHR considered the numerous motions submitted by the defendant to replace judges; see also ECtHR, Judgment, *Jablonski v. Poland* (App No 33492/96), 21 December 2000, 104, where the ECtHR considered that while the applicant contributed significantly to the length of the proceedings, by going on a hunger strike and inflicting injuries on himself, there was still a violation since this could not explain the total length of the proceedings.


\(^{29}\) However, see also Stephanos Stavros, *The Guarantees for Accused Persons under Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights: an Analysis of the Application of the Convention and a Comparison with other Instruments* (Martinus Nijhoff 1993), 98.

lay despite the defence having also contributed to such delays.\footnote{ECtHR, Judgment, \textit{Ledonne v. Italy} (App No 35742/97), 12 May 1999, 25; similarly ECtHR, Judgment, \textit{Calleja v. Malta} (App No 75274/01), 7 April 2005, 132; ECtHR, Judgment, \textit{Portington v. Greece} (App No 28523/95), 23 September 1998, 29.} The ECtHR followed this line of reasoning even in a case where the defendant had contributed the delays by evading the authorities for a certain period.\footnote{ECtHR, Judgment, \textit{Girolami v. Italy} (App No 13324/87), 24 January 1991, 15, where it considered that a trial of more than eight years was still ‘inordinately long’.}

\subsection*{2.2.2. Conduct of the authorities}

The conduct of the authorities is the key factor determining whether or not the right to be tried within a reasonable time has been violated.\footnote{Similarly Trechsel, \textit{Human Rights in Criminal Proceedings} (n 8), 136.} Under this criterion, human rights courts and supervisory bodies assess the conduct of all state authorities, including the government, prosecutorial authorities, and the judiciary. States have been found to have violated this right because of certain acts that can be said to have directly contributed to a delay in proceedings. However, it appears that states have more often been found to be in violation for a failure to explain or justify the lengths of proceedings that were considered unreasonable.

For example, the ECtHR has held states responsible for failing to ensure the appearance of witnesses whose absence caused delays in the judicial proceedings.\footnote{ECtHR, Judgment, \textit{Sizov v. Russia} (App No 58104/08), 25 July 2012, 62; ECtHR, Judgment, \textit{Trzaska v. Poland} (App No 25792/94), 11 July 2000, 90.} It has also criticized states for ordering investigative measures that it considered unnecessary.\footnote{ECtHR, Judgment, \textit{Szeloch v. Poland} (App No 33079/96), 22 February 2001, 110.} At the same time, the ECtHR has held that delays that were due to foreign authorities, in a case that included international aspects, were not attributable to the government.\footnote{ECtHR, Judgment, \textit{Neumeister v. Austria} (App No 1936/63), 27 June 1968, 21.}

The central premise of the approach to delays is that the burden of justifying \textit{prima facie} unreasonably long proceedings rests with the state. If it is found that the proceedings have been unreasonably lengthy, it will be for the government to explain and justify this and when it fails to do so, there will be a violation. Substantial periods of inactivity or excessive delays for which states fail to offer an acceptable justification will thus result in a violation.\footnote{ECtHR, Judgment, \textit{Grishin v. Russia} (App No 14807/08), 24 July 2012: ‘the State remains responsible for the efficiency of its system and the manner in which it provides for mechanisms to comply with the reasonable time requirement – whether by automatic time-limits and directions or some other method – is for it to decide. If a State allows proceedings to continue beyond the “reasonable time” prescribed by Article 6 of the Convention without doing anything to advance them, it will be responsible for the resultant delay’; ECtHR, Judgment, \textit{Ledonne v. Italy} (App No 35742/97), 12 May 1999, 26-27; ECtHR, Judgment, \textit{Portington v. Greece} (App No 28523/95), 23 September 1998, 33; ECtHR, Judgment, \textit{Philis v. Greece (No. 2)} (App No 19773/92), 27 June 1997, 40; ECtHR, Judgment, \textit{Abdoella v. Netherlands} (App No 12728/87), 25 November 1992, 24; ECtHR, Judgment, \textit{Süssmann v. Germany} (App No 20024/92), 16 September 1996, 69-70; HRC, \textit{Sextus v. Trinidad and Tobago} (n 23), 17 October 1992, 30; ECtHR, Judgment, \textit{Philis v. Greece (No. 1)} (App No 19772/92), 27 June 1997, 40; ECtHR, Judgment, \textit{Philis v. Greece (No. 2)} (App No 19773/92), 27 June 1997, 40; ECtHR, Judgment, \textit{Philis v. Greece (No. 3)} (App No 19774/92), 27 June 1997, 40.}
In addition, the ECtHR has considered that inexplicable breaks in the proceedings may lead to a violation of the Convention. In a similar vein, the ECtHR has criticized authorities for failing to act with the requisite diligence in bringing a person to trial expeditiously. Notable efforts by the authorities to speed up proceedings are also taken into consideration as a factor militating against a finding of a violation.

When it comes to assessing what justifications are acceptable, the ECtHR has clarified that an overworked court-system cannot excuse delays. The Court has consistently held that states have an obligation to ‘organize their judicial systems in such a way that their courts can meet each of its requirements, including the obligation to hear cases within a reasonable time’. Similarly, a backlog of cases has not been accepted as a justification for unreasonably lengthy proceedings. The HRC and the ACnHPR have clarified that a difficult economic situation cannot excuse an ineffective judicial system.

Finally, joinder of cases may lead cases against individual co-accused persons to last longer than they would have, had they been tried individually. Joinder cannot justify ‘substantial delay’ in the proceedings against one of the co-accused. However, the ‘good administration of justice’ may require joinder, which is primarily a matter for national authorities to determine. Only when severance would have been compatible with the good administration of justice and would have expedited the proceedings will the ECtHR consider failing to sever

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38 ECtHR, Judgment, Muradkhanyan v. Armenia (App No 12895/06), 5 June 2012, 85; ECtHR, Judgment, Toth v. Austria (App No 11894/85), 12 December 1991, 76-77.


40 ECtHR, Judgment, Bak v. Poland (App No 7870/04), 16 April 2007, 79.


the proceedings a factor indicating a possible violation of the right to be tried without undue delay.45

2.2.3. Complexity of the case

Complex cases may legitimately take longer to investigate and to try.46 To determine the complexity of a case, the ECtHR has considered, among other things, the scope of the charges,47 the number of defendants,48 the number of victims and witnesses,49 the distance between the location of the trial and the location of evidence or witnesses,50 the number of expert reports that needed to be drawn up,51 the volume of the evidence and the size of the case file,52 and the added complexity of investigating crimes that have been covered up.53 Complexity may thus pertain to both factual and legal issues. Still, the complexity of a case does not absolve the state from its obligation to act with due expedition. When the proceedings are lengthy, complexity alone cannot be the only factor to justify their entire length, and there might still be a violation.54

45 For examples of cases where the ECtHR did not find a violation despite allegations that severance would have sped up the proceedings, see eg ECtHR, Judgment, Coême et al v. Belgium (App No 32492/96; 32547/96; 32548/96; 33209/96; and 33210/96), 20 June 2000, 139; ECtHR, Judgment, Bonnaert v. Belgium (App No 12919/87), 12 October 1992, 38-39; ECtHR, Judgment, Neumeister v. Austria (App No 1936/63), 27 June 1968, 21; for examples of cases where the ECtHR considered that there was no reason why the cases could not have been severed, see eg ECtHR, Judgment, Kemmache v. France (App No 12325/86, 14992/89), 27 November 1991, 70; ECtHR, Judgment, Henrich v. France (App No 13616/88), 22 September 1994, 61.
51 ibid.
Three early ECnHR cases related to charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity, where defendants had spent lengthy periods of over six years in provisional detention without being granted release. The Commission did not consider the length of their detention to amount to undue delay because of the importance of thorough investigations into these types of crimes. The ECnHR acknowledged the difficulties of investigating and trying such cases, particularly because of the fact that the acts charged had happened twenty or more years prior to the trial, the number of accused, the complex contextual elements that had to be established by the Prosecution, the number of witnesses, and the fact that many of these witnesses as well as a portion of the evidence were located abroad. In all three cases, the Commission relied heavily on the importance of conducting war crimes trials and emphasized that the right to be tried within a reasonable time must not stand in the way of the judges who must do their work properly and carefully. The commission thus allowed a certain leeway for cases of genuine complexity. This added leeway in the context of cases that are considered inherently complex and of particular importance, may be of relevance to the work of the ICTs, the cases before which are generally complex, and involve allegations of very serious crimes.

2.2.4. ‘What is at stake’ for the defendant

The ECtHR has developed a fourth criterion, where it considers what is at stake for the applicant. This factor seems a less prominent consideration in criminal cases, which could be explained by the fact that in criminal cases, there is arguably always much at stake; even more so where the defendant might be deprived of her/his liberty, or risks a high sentence. Criminal cases therefore require the authorities to act especially diligently. In addition, the ECtHR has found that the authorities have an obligation to act with ‘particular diligence’ when the suspect is provisionally detained.


57 However, see: McDermott, ‘The Right to a Fair Trial in International Criminal Law’ (n 3), 119, who is very critical of reliance on such reasoning to justify derogations from fair trial standards by the ICTs.

58 Harris, O’Boyle and Warbrick (n 44), 281; Trechsel, Human Rights in Criminal Proceedings (n 8), 144.

59 This particular obligation applies in the context of the right to be tried within a reasonable time as a part of the right to a fair trial. It arguably operates in conjunction with provisionally detained persons’ right to be tried within a reasonable time, as a part of the right to liberty. See eg ECtHR, Judgment, Sizov v. Russia (App No 58104/08), 25 July 2012, 64; ECtHR, Judgment, Grishin v. Russia (App No 14807/08), 24 July 2012, 182; ECtHR, Judgment, Jablonski v. Poland (App No 33492/96), 21 December 2000, 102; ECtHR, Judgment, Abdoella v. Netherlands (App No 12728/87), 25 November 1992, 24; ECtHR, Judgment, Jablonski v. Poland (App No
2.2.5. Special diligence: Provisional detention and undue delay

Provisionally detained persons have the right to be tried within a reasonable time, or to release pending trial.60 This right extends up to the first instance judgment; its scope is thus more limited than that of the right to be tried without undue delay as a part of the right to a fair trial. The defining characteristic of this right is that it applies to persons deprived of their liberty who have not yet been convicted in a judicial procedure, and thus still benefit from the presumption of innocence. Therefore, the authorities have an obligation to display special diligence in the conduct of court proceedings.61 Similarly, provisionally detained persons are entitled to their case being given priority.62

The assessment of undue delay in proceedings against provisionally detained persons is essentially similar to that of trial proceedings generally. Reasonableness cannot be determined in the abstract, but must be assessed in light of the specific circumstances of each case.63 The parameters developed to determine undue delay are also similar: the conduct of the accused person, the conduct of the authorities, and the complexity of the case.64 The state bears the burden to prove that the authorities acted with ‘special diligence’. If the period of provisional detention has been lengthy, it is for the authorities to justify and explain this, and if they fail to do so, there will be a violation.65 Furthermore, the ECtHR has clarified that in

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60 Art 9(3) ICCPR; Art 5(3) ECHR; Art 7(5) ACHR.


64 Harris, O’Boyle and Warbrick (n 44), 181.

65 See eg ECtHR, Judgment, Suslov v. Russia (App No 2366/07), 29 May 2012, 96; similarly ECtHR, Judgment, Barfuss v. Czech Republic (App No 35848/97), 31 July 2000, 71-73; ECtHR, Judgment, Punzelt v. Czech Rep-
their assessment of the period of provisional detention, ‘the complexity and special characteristics of the investigation are factors to be considered’. Having already discussed these factors in previous sections, little can be added here. Nonetheless, this obligation of ‘special diligence’ exemplifies the more stringent standards that apply to the length of the proceedings conducted against persons who are deprived of their liberty, particularly because suspects and accused persons before the ICTs are generally kept in provisional detention pending trial.

In addition, the ECtHR has considered a number of factors under the right to liberty that are of particular interest to the present study. Like in the context of the right to be tried within a reasonable time under the heading of fair trial, the ECtHR has explained that in its evaluation of complexity of the case under the right to be tried without undue delay, as applicable to provisionally detained persons, it will take into account the number of defendants, victims and witnesses, the volume of the evidence, the complexity of the determination of the exact role of the accused in cases of organized crimes. Cases involving large-scale criminality, such as terrorism or organized crime, are inherently complex which can be of influence on the length of trials and investigations. For example, in a case that involved charges of terrorism, the ECtHR held that a period of five years and five months of provisional detention did not constitute a violation of the Convention, due to the case’s extreme complexity, the number of co-accused, the number of 169 witnesses, and the international nature of the case. This was justified by emphasizing that the obligation to act with special diligence should not impede authorities to examine the case with the appropriate care.

### 2.3. Interim conclusion

The right to be tried without undue delay as a part of the right to a fair trial applies from the moment when a person is ‘substantially affected’ by criminal investigations and until the fi-

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66 ECtHR, Judgment, Muradkhanyan v. Armenia (App No 12895/06), 5 June 2012, 82.

67 See supra Chapter 5.


69 ECtHR, Judgment, Chraidi v. Germany (App No 65655/01), 26 October 2006, 43.

nal judgment. There are no absolute time limits that determine the reasonableness of the length of proceedings. Instead, the specific circumstances of each case must be assessed in light of a number of factors. These factors are the conduct of the defendant, the conduct of the authorities, the complexity of the case, and, to a lesser extent, what is at stake for the defendant. The conduct of the authorities is the most relevant parameter, which can be explained by the fact that the obligation to ensure a trial without undue delay rests with the state, including its prosecutorial, judicial, and executive authorities, which are responsible for setting up the justice system. This serves to explain why the state bears the burden to justify lengthy periods of trial proceedings. When it comes to complexity, IHRL recognizes that cases of genuine complexity may legitimately take longer. At the same time, this should not be taken as absolving the state from its responsibility to prevent undue delay. Even in complex cases, the authorities must act diligently and must ensure that trials are concluded within a reasonable time. Similarly, the authorities have a responsibility to act with ‘special diligence’ in cases where the defendant is detained provisionally. Finally, the ECtHR has acknowledged the importance of conducting war crimes trials, and has recognized that such cases are inherently complex. It has therefore been held that the duty to prevent undue delay must not stand in the way of the judges to do their work properly and carefully. However, these cases were decided in the early 1960s, which raises the question of their present-day relevance. This will be further addressed when evaluating the ICTs’ approach to the right to be tried without undue delay.

3. Trial without Undue Delay before the ad hoc Tribunals

The Statutes of the ad hoc Tribunals provide that every accused person has the right to be tried without undue delay.\(^\text{71}\) The Statutes also impose an obligation on the Chamber to ensure that trials are fair and expeditious.\(^\text{72}\) The former is formulated as a right of the accused, and follows the wording of the ICCPR.\(^\text{73}\) The latter, on the other hand, is an obligation of the Tribunals.\(^\text{74}\) This duty to ensure expeditious trials is broader than the right of the accused to be tried without undue delay. The Chambers must ensure expeditiousness not only for the accused, but also for the Prosecution, who acts on behalf of the international community and

\(^\text{71}\) Art 21(4)(c) ICTY Statute; Art 20(4)(c) ICTR Statute.
\(^\text{72}\) Art 20(2) ICTY Statute; Art 19(2) ICTR Statute.
\(^\text{73}\) Erik Møse and Cécile Aptel, ‘Trial Without Undue Delay before the International Criminal Tribunals’ in Lal Chand Vohrah and others (eds), *Man’s Inhumanity to Man, Essays in International Law in Honour of Antonio Cassese* (Kluwer Law International 2003), 540.
has therefore been held to also have an ‘interest’ in an expeditious trial.\textsuperscript{75} Similarly, it has been held that not only accused persons have a right to an expeditious trial, as a result of which they cannot waive this right.\textsuperscript{76} Although the other beneficiaries of the right were not specified, the Chamber probably had similar interests of the Prosecution, victims, or the international community in mind. The ICTY Appeals Chamber has indeed held that the victims also have the ‘right’ to an expeditious trial.\textsuperscript{77} This obligation to ensure expeditious trials thus does not imply a higher standard than provided for by the right to be tried without undue delay. Instead, it is seen as emphasizing the general importance of speediness in the Tribunals’ work.\textsuperscript{78} This broader focus on expeditiousness as a duty owed to the victims or the international community at large may have had an impact on the Tribunals’ approach to the right to be tried without undue delay.

There are two main ways in which the Tribunals have addressed the right to be tried without undue delay. First, the Judges have used this right as a device to control the proceedings.\textsuperscript{79} It has been employed to limit the use by both parties of certain procedural actions in order to prevent delay. Amendments of the indictment and requests for joinder and severance have been examined in light of the right to be tried without undue delay, and more specific procedural actions, such as (re)calling witnesses and admitting evidence, have also been assessed in light of this right. Second, the Tribunals have, to a limited extent, addressed allegations of violations of the right to be tried without undue delay. This case law is most relevant for present purposes, since it discusses the core of this right. However, attention will also be devoted to the former since that will properly reflect the use of the right to be tried without undue delay in the case law of the Tribunals. On top of that, the case law regarding alleged violations of the right to be tried without undue delay is relatively limited.\textsuperscript{80}


\textsuperscript{76} See eg ICTY, Decision on Adoption of New Measures to Bring the Trial to an End within a Reasonable Time, \textit{Prosecutor v. Pulić \textit{et al}} (IT-04-74-T), 13 November 2006, 14.


\textsuperscript{79} See Farrell (n 74), 106, who calls this ‘procedural streamlining’.

\textsuperscript{80} The ICTY’s case law in particular, is quite limited in number. Its first decision on this issue was rendered in 2007: ICTY, Decision on Motion for Sanctions for Failure to Bring the Accused to Trial without Undue Delay, \textit{Prosecutor v. Perišić} (IT-04-81-PT), 23 November 2007, 12.
3.1. Scope of the right to be tried without undue delay

Before the Tribunals, the time period relevant for the right to be tried without undue delay commences with the arrest of the suspect. The Tribunals’ practice further confirms this, since assessments of undue delay have always taken the arrest of the defendant as their starting point. However, at least in one case, the ICTR held that the relevant time period commences when the Tribunal charges a person. Similarly, the ICTY once followed the standard developed by the ECtHR in that the time period commences when the accused is ‘substantially affected’ by the proceedings, for example by being investigated, or when s/he is arrested.

It seems legitimate to consider the moment of arrest as triggering the protection of the right to be tried without undue delay before the Tribunals. This may seem at odds with the standards developed in IHRL, because a person would normally be investigated prior to being charged, and would perhaps be charged prior to being arrested. However, the system of the Tribunals is such that once an indictment is confirmed, this decision is usually joined by a warrant for the arrest of the person in question. The moment of charging and arresting a suspect should therefore coincide. Generally, if there is a significant time period between the issuing of an indictment and the actual arrest of an accused person, this passage of time cannot be attributed to the Tribunal. States might be reluctant to transfer certain accused persons, or accused persons themselves choose to evade arrest. If this results in significant time periods between the ‘charging’ of an accused person and her/his arrest and transfer, such delay cannot be attributed to the Tribunals. It therefore seems legitimate that, as a rule, the Tribunals have taken the date of the arrest of a suspect as the commencement of the time period relevant for her/his right to be tried without undue delay.

However, accused persons may have spent considerable time in domestic detention prior to being indicted by the Tribunals. The question then arises whether to take their arrest

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84 Arts 19 and 20 ICTY Statute; Arts 18 and 19 ICTR Statute; Gideon Boas and others, International Criminal Procedure (CUP 2011), 179.
85 Similarly Lahiouel (n 5), 200. Of course, it is not unimaginable that persons have been substantially affected by investigations into their conduct prior to being indicted by the ad hoc Tribunals. However, no examples of this have been found in the practice of the Tribunals.
as the starting point, or the date of their transfer to the Tribunal. The ICTR has clarified that the relevant period only commences once a person is detained at the request of the Tribunals themselves, be it the Prosecutor or a Chamber.\(^{86}\) Any prior domestic detention is not relevant for the Tribunals’ responsibility to ensure a person’s right to be tried without undue delay.

Furthermore, the Tribunals have confirmed that the right to be tried without undue delay also applies to (interlocutory) appellate procedures.\(^{87}\) The total period governed by this right before the Tribunals thus runs from arrest until the final – appeal – judgment is rendered. This has led the judges of the ICTY to create the previously inexistent institution of a pre-appeal judge, who is responsible for ensuring the expeditiousness of the (pre-)appeal process.\(^{88}\) The judges of the Tribunal thus created a procedure, or procedural power that was not provided for in the Tribunal’s legal framework, yet was considered necessary in order to ensure respect for the rights of the accused.

3.2. Relevant parameters to determine a violation

The Tribunals have repeatedly held that the assessment of whether proceedings have been unduly delayed must be done on a case-by-case basis, with reference to the specific circumstances of each case.\(^{89}\) There is no absolute time-limit at which point the length of proceed-

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\(^{88}\) ICTY, Order Appointing a Pre-Appeal Judge, Prosecutor v. Delalić et al (IT-96-21-A), 12 October 1999, 3; ICTY, Order Appointing a Pre-Appeal Judge and Scheduling Order, Prosecutor v. Blaskić (IT-95-14-A), 8 June 2000, 2; see also Farrell (n 74), 106.


Still, decisions of both Tribunals prior and subsequent to this decision have also relied on other sets of parameters. For example, in Rwamakuba, the ICTR relied on the gravity of the charges, the complexity of the case, the complexity of the proceedings, including the complexity of the investigations, the joinder of accused, the conduct of the accused, the number of motions filed by the parties, and the conduct of the organs of the Tribunal, including the Prosecution and the Registry.\(^96\) In Karemera et al, the Chamber assessed the complexity of the case, the complexity of the investigations, the joinder of Accused, and the number of motions filed by the parties.\(^97\) In Ntahobali, the Chamber had regard to the complexity of factual or legal issues, the conduct of applicants and competent authorities, and what is at stake for the applicant.\(^98\) In Šešelj, the ICTY said to have considered the complexity of the case, the large number of witnesses heard and exhibits tendered, the behavior of all the parties involved, and the seriousness of the charges against the accused, in determining that the accused’s right to be tried without undue delay had not been violated.\(^99\)

On the one hand, there is clear overlap between these various approaches, although the wording may differ. Some of the factors repeatedly referred to as relevant are the same, albeit under different labels. Furthermore, a number of factors can be joined under a similar heading. For example, the number of motions filed by a party clearly falls within the scope of the more general factor of the conduct of the parties. At the same time, however, there is a
certain lack of consistency with regard to a number of factors.\textsuperscript{100} Notably, prejudice to the accused is not always examined, nor is the gravity of the crimes charged, which was not included by the Appeals Chamber in its authoritative listing of relevant criteria and yet remained a relevant factor in a number of decisions. Similarly, the ICTY, faced with a number of motions alleging undue delay in Šešelj, has not followed the Mugiraneza et al criteria like it did in Perišić, but instead considered the complexity of the case, the conduct of all parties involved, and the seriousness of the charges against the accused.\textsuperscript{101} However, the ICTY Appeals Chamber did subsequently endorse these five criteria in Šešelj.\textsuperscript{102} This inconsistency raises problems in and of itself. It creates inequality between defendants, and complicates the conduct of an effective defence. It will be difficult for defence counsel to convince a Chamber of proceedings having suffered from undue delay if they cannot predict the criteria that it may use to assess delays.

The criteria used by the Tribunals to assess delay are clearly inspired by IHRL. Interestingly, however, the Appeals Chamber did not refer to any sources of human rights law when it first elaborated these criteria. In addition, although the criteria seem inspired by IHRL, they are not identical. The subsequent sections address each parameter, followed by a section on other relevant aspects of the Tribunals’ approach to undue delay.

3.2.1. Length of the delay

A large number of decisions have considered the length of the delay as a relevant factor in determining whether the right to be tried within a reasonable time had been violated. Naturally, however, even in decisions where the length of the period was not explicitly termed a separate ‘factor’, it was still considered. In order to enable a determination of whether an accused person was tried within a reasonable time, the actual length of proceedings must first be established.

The Tribunals have not given much attention to the concrete implications of this factor on the overall determination of reasonableness. As a general rule, longer proceedings militate towards unreasonableness. However, as stated above, there are no absolute time limits for trial proceedings, and the reasonableness of the length of the proceedings must be as-

\textsuperscript{100} See also Farrell (n 74), 113, who identified this lack of consistency early on in the case law of the Tribunal. Although the authoritative determination by the Appeals Chamber in Mugiraneza et al, cited above, took away a part of this inconsistency, it has not disappeared completely.

\textsuperscript{101} ICTY, Decision on Oral Request of the Accused for Abuse of Process, Prosecutor v. Šešelj (IT-03-73-T), 10 February 2010, 30.

\textsuperscript{102} ICTY, Decision on Appeal against Decision on Continuation of Proceedings, Prosecutor v. Šešelj (IT-03-67–AR15bis), 6 June 2014, 63.
sessed by reference to a number of factors. The actual length of the proceedings or the delay does not appear to be that crucial for a determination of reasonableness. Periods of up to fifteen years have been justified by means of arguments comparable to those justifying proceedings that took three years or less. Furthermore, in Šešelj, the Trial Chamber has issued a total of four consecutive decisions denying defence motions alleging undue delay without adding substantial reasoning over a period of almost four years. In the first few decisions, the Chamber essentially reiterated its previous findings without justifying the additional time that had passed since. Although the fourth decision did acknowledge the additional time passed, the delays were still justified by means of the same arguments as in previous decisions.

3.2.2. Complexity of the case

The complexity of the case is an important consideration in the case law of the ad hoc Tribunals on undue delay. The Tribunals have considered a number of factors to determine to the complexity of a case. In general terms, the difficulty of on-site investigations has been referred to often as a component of complexity. More specifically, the international nature of the investigations has been cited as adding to a case’s complexity: the broad scope, both geographic and temporal, of the crimes charged, as well as the fact that witnesses and evidence are situated around the world have been said to render the investigation in international

103 ICTY, Decision on Oral Request of the Accused for Abuse of Process, Prosecutor v. Šešelj (IT-03-73-T), 10 February 2010, 29-30, where the Chamber relied on several arguments related mainly to the complexity of the case to dismiss the allegations that the accused’s right to be tried without undue delay had been violated; ICTY, Decision on Motion by Accused to Discontinue Proceedings, Prosecutor v. Šešelj (IT-03-73-T), 29 September 2011, 29, where the Chamber referred back to its previous arguments; ICTY, Decision on Accused’s Claim for Damages on Account of Alleged Violations of his Elementary Rights during Provisional Detention, Prosecutor v. Šešelj (IT-03-73-T), 12 March 2012, 29, where the Chamber again referred back to its previous findings without adding any reasoning. The Chamber’s subsequent decision did add some, albeit limited, reasoning to justify additional delays: ICTY, Decision on Continuation of Proceedings, Prosecutor v. Šešelj (IT-03-67-T), 13 December 2013, 18-22, where the Chamber reiterated its previous findings, and 23, where the Chamber held that the additional time taken since the previous decisions was ‘reasonable’, in light of the complexity of the case; see also ICTY, Decision on Appeal against Decision on Continuation of Proceedings, Prosecutor v. Šešelj (IT-03-67-AR15bis), 6 June 2014, in this decision, however, the Appeals Chamber did not consider delays up to that point, but possible future undue delay resulting from the disqualification of Judge Harhoff from the bench of the Trial Chamber.


105 ICTY, Order Denying a Motion for Provisional Release, Prosecutor v. Blaskić (IT-95-14-T), 20 December 1996, 7; ICTR, Decision on Defence Motion for Trial to Proceed before Trial Chamber II, Composed of Judges Sekule, Maqutu and Ramaroson and for Termination of the Proceedings, Prosecutor v. Kanyabashi (ICTR-96-15-T), 20 February 2004, 3; ICTR, Decision on Defence Motion for Stay of Proceedings, Prosecutor v. Rwamakuba (ICTR-98-44C-PT), 3 June 2005, 34.
crimes particularly difficult.106 Another aspect of the international nature of investigations is the unavoidable reliance on state cooperation, which can also cause delays.107 Furthermore, the fact that the adjudication of the crimes takes place a considerable time after their occurrence may have an impact on the complexity of the cases.108

The size of cases has also been a prevalent factor adding to complexity. The number of witnesses and the volume of the evidence, whether actually specified or not, have been cited most often.109 The number of accused has been considered to add to complexity,110 as well as the number of crimes that the defendants were charged with.111 The number of mo-

107 Whiting (n 5), 336.
108 Møse and Aptel (n 73), 550-553; see also Whiting (n 5), 335-336.
tions filed by the parties and the number of decisions rendered by the Chamber have also been weighed as adding to the complexity of cases.\textsuperscript{112} Several decisions have also referred to the—large—number of trial days as a part of the complexity of a case.\textsuperscript{113} Another typical feature of international crimes cases relates to the necessity of translation of documentary evidence, testimony and trial proceedings generally into the two working languages of the Court, and/or into the language of their respective areas of jurisdiction. This translation can be very time-consuming and has been considered to add to the complexity of a case.\textsuperscript{114}

A related concern is the legal complexity of the crimes charged. This includes the complexity of having to prove indirect modes of perpetration, as well as other aspects that make international crimes more complex than regular crimes.\textsuperscript{115} Although the Tribunals have not clarified what such legal complexity entails, it is true that the Tribunals faced complex and novel legal questions. Their sources of law include their own Statutes, their RPEs, but also a variety of sources stemming from international law and domestic law, both in their

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substantive and procedural law. Moreover, they have had to apply modes of individual criminal responsibility that either had not fully developed in international law, or were completely novel.

Generally, the complexity of cases before the Tribunal has thus been a recurring factor relied on to justify the length of their proceedings. The Tribunals appear to consider it the most important factor in determining undue delay. The relative importance of complexity is further illustrated by the fact that the ICTR has held that proceedings that took up to sixteen years did not violate the accused’s right to be tried without undue delay, based on the size and complexity of the case alone.

This particular importance attached to the complexity of the cases by the ICTs seems to have a strong connection to the Tribunals’ failure to truly assess the responsibility of the judicial and prosecutorial authorities. As seen in the above, the ICTs have routinely relied on the complexity of the cases before them as the most important, if not the sole justification for the length of the proceedings. To a certain extent, this seems reasonable. IHRL acknowledges the impact of the complexity of a case on its length, and the cases before the ICTs are generally more complex than ordinary domestic criminal cases. In addition, the factors relied on by the ICTs to justify the complexity of the cases before them seem to correspond to those that have been accepted by human rights supervisory bodies, such as the ECtHR.

However, most decisions blanketly assert the complexity of the case as an absolute and unqualified justification of delays, no matter their length. There are few discussions of how the complexity of a case actually contributed to its length, and varying lengths of cases have been justified in similar ways. A pertinent example is the case against Gatete, which had witnessed a pre-trial delay of over seven years, while the trial itself had proceeded rather quickly. Still, the Trial Chamber held that there had been no undue delay. The Appeals Chamber corrected the Chamber and found an on its part, considering that the case was far less complex than other cases before the ICTR, and that the complexity was not sufficient to justify a seven year pre-trial delay, particularly because the trial proceedings themselves lasted only 30 days, and the volume of the evidence was limited. However, this has not dissuaded the Tribunal from blanketly relying on complexity in other cases. For example, the

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116 Mose and Aptel (n 73), 550.
117 See also Heinsch (n 5), 482.
120 ICTR, Appeals Judgement, Prosecutor v. Gatete (ICTR-00-61-A), 9 October 2012, 29.
case against Karemera and Ngirumpatse took sixteen years to complete, which the Appeals Chamber found not to have been undue based on the size and complexity of the case alone.\textsuperscript{121}

Another neglected issue is the fact that the complexity of a case does not absolve the judicial and prosecutorial authorities from their responsibility to protect the accused’s right to be tried without undue delay.\textsuperscript{122} The ICTs have failed to recognize this in their case law on this right. Most decisions assert the complexity of the case and mention a number of factors that have added to this complexity, such as the number of accused, the number of charges and the volume of the evidence. This is a very one-dimensional approach to the complexity of a case, as it fails to assess how this complexity has in fact impacted on the length of the proceedings. It also ignores the fact that both the Prosecutor and the Chamber itself have a significant responsibility in determining the complexity of a case.\textsuperscript{123} The discussion of the conduct of the authorities below further builds on this aspect of the case law of the Tribunals.

3.2.3. Conduct of the parties

The conduct of the parties is the third factor that the Tribunals address in their assessments of undue delay. According to the ICTR Appeals Chamber, the conduct of the parties, including that of the prosecutor, is a central factor that a Chamber must consider in determining undue delay.\textsuperscript{124} The ICT has considered that both parties have a duty to expedite proceedings.\textsuperscript{125}

The conduct of the defence is one prong of the analysis. Where the defence contributed to possible delays, this militates against a finding of undue delay. However, the Tribunals have rarely relied on this factor. The ICTY once held that where the conduct of the defence, for example in filing numerous motions, adds to the delay, this is a factor that militates against a finding of undue delay.\textsuperscript{126} In Šešelj, the ICTY weighed the time-consuming contempt proceedings that resulted in a conviction for the accused as a factor significantly con-


\textsuperscript{124} ICTR, Decision on Prosper Mugiraneza’s Interlocutory Appeal from Trial Chamber II Decision of 2 October 2003 Denying the Motion to Dismiss the Indictment, Demand Speedy Trial and for Appropriate Relief, \textit{Prosecutor v. Mugiraneza} (ICTR-99-50-AR73), 27 February 2004, 3.


\textsuperscript{126} ICTY, Order Denying a Motion for Provisional Release, \textit{Prosecutor v. Blaskić} (IT-95-14-T), 20 December 1996, 7.
tributing to the delays in this case. Similarly, the ICTR has discussed the conduct of a defendant as having contributed to delays, while it did emphasize that the majority of his contribution to the delays were legitimate procedural actions. The ICTY has held that the exercise of defence rights cannot in itself be invoked by the Chamber as leading to a delay of the proceedings; in other words, it cannot imply some sort of waiver of the right to a speedy trial. At the same time, extensive pre-trial litigation, resulting from the numerous motions filed by the defence, was considered to have added to the complexity of the case, thus legitimizing a portion of the delays. Similarly, the defence has been held to have a responsibility to complain about delays in a timely manner, to prevent forfeiting its right to complain about it. For example, an ICTR Chamber has held that the defendant had contributed to his own lengthy detention by failing to request provisional release, and by failing to appeal several decisions amending the indictment.

Chambers have an obligation to ensure the fairness and expeditiousness of the proceedings, which apparently extends beyond respecting the right of the accused to a trial without undue delay. This could explain the fact that Chambers of both tribunals have limited the exercise of defence rights, where they considered this to negatively impact on the expeditiousness of the proceedings. For example, Karemera’s request for postponement of his

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129 ICTY, Decision on Motion by Accused to Discontinue Proceedings, Prosecutor v. Šešelj (IT-03-73-T), 29 September 2011, 26; similarly ICTY, Decision on Appeal against Decision on Continuation of Proceedings, Prosecutor v. Šešelj (IT-03-67-AR15bis), 6 June 2014, 65.
131 ICTR, Decision on Protais Zigiranyirazo’s Motion for Damages, Zigiranyirazo v. Prosecutor (ICTR-2001-01-073), 18 June 2012, 38, 40; similarly ICTR, Judgement and Sentence, Prosecutor v. Karemera and Ngirumpatse (ICTR-98-44-T), 2 February 2012, 32: ‘Karemera, however, did not raise the issue of delay during any of his initial hearings or in motions that challenged various other aspects of the proceedings. It also does not appear that the matter was mentioned at any later period until his closing brief; some 13 years after these delays occurred. The Chamber considers that Karemera’s failure to promptly bring this challenge indicates that any prejudice he suffered is minimal at most.’ Similarly ICTR, Appeals Judgement, Prosecutor v. Ndindiliyimana et al (ICTR-00-56-A), 11 February 2014, 44, where the Appeals Chamber held that the accused could no longer complain about the delays in his case related to its joinder with those against other accused persons, because he had failed to do so earlier.
trial was denied because of his own right to be tried without undue delay. The ICTY also often assess defence requests for procedural actions, such as amending its witness list, or for more time to present their case, in light of the Chamber’s obligation to prevent undue delay, or the accused’s own right to be tried without undue delay. The ICTY has held that ‘the Trial Chamber has a duty to be proactive in ensuring that the accused is tried without undue delay, regardless of whether the accused her/himself asserts that right.’ Such limiting of defence rights in order to expedite proceedings has been subject to criticism both from within and outside the Tribunals.

Generally, slightly more attention has been paid to the importance of the conduct of the Prosecutor in contributing to possible delays. The burden of proof regarding possible delays caused by the Prosecution, however, is consistently imposed on the defence. It has been held that the Prosecutor has a duty to act with ‘due diligence’ in order to ensure the ac-


ICTR, Decision on Édouard Karemera’s Motion for Postponement of the Commencement of his Case as well as on the Prosecutor’s Crossmotion for Enforcement of Rule 73ter and Remedial and Punitive Measures and the Prosecutor’s Request for Temporary Transfer of Witness AXA pursuant to Rule 90bis, Prosecutor v. Karemera et al (ICTR-98-44-T), 27 February 2008, 14.

ICTY, Decision on Appeal from Decision on Duration of Defence Case, Prosecutor v. Karadžić (IT-95-5/18-AR73.10), 29 January 2013, 16; ICTY, Decision on Accused’s Motion to Vary List of Witnesses, Prosecutor v. Karadžić (IT-95-5118-T), 21 February 2013, 8; ICTY, Decision on Accused’s Motion to Substitute Witness, Prosecutor v. Karadžić (IT-95-5118-T), 25 February 2013, 5; ICTY, Decision on Accused’s Motion to Vary List of Witnesses: Srebrenica Component, Prosecutor v. Karadžić (IT-95-5/18-T), 13 September 2013, 8; ICTY, Decision on Accused’s Motion to Vary List of Witnesses: (Sarajevo Component), Prosecutor v. Karadžić (IT-95-5/18-T), 10 October 2013, 7; ICTY, Decision on Accused’s Motion to Vary List of Witnesses: Srebrenica & Municipalities Components, Prosecutor v. Karadžić (IT-95-5/18-T), 4 November 2013, 9; ICTY, Decision on Accused’s Motions for Severance of Count 1 and Suspension of Defence Case, Prosecutor v. Karadžić (IT-95-5118-T), 2 August 2013, 16; ICTY, Decision on Tolimir’s Motion for Extension of Time for Filing Amendments to the Brief in Reply, Prosecutor v. Tolimir (IT-05-88/2-A), 29 February 2014, 2.

ICTY, Appeals Judgment, Prosecutor v. Sainović et al (IT-05-87-A), 23 January 2014, 100, where the Appeals Chamber reiterated that the Prosecution acts in the interests of the international community, for which reasons the accused cannot waive aspects of his right to a fair trial.

See, eg: ICTR, Decision in the Matter of Proceedings under Rule 15bis (D), Dissenting Opinion of Judge David Hunt, Prosecutor v. Nyiramasuhuko et al (ICTR-98-41-A15bis), 24 September 2003, 30; McDermott, ‘General Duty to Ensure the Right to a Fair and Expeditious Trial’ (n 75), 805; see also Yvonne McDermott, ‘Rights in Reserve: A Critical Analysis of Fair Trial Rights under International Criminal Law’ in William Schabas, Yvonne McDermott and Niamh Hayes, The Ashgate Research Companion to International Criminal Law: Critical Perspectives (Ashgate 2013); this question, however, exceeds the scope of the present inquiry which focuses on the right to be tried without undue delay itself.

ICTR, Decision on Prosper Mugiraneza’s Interlocutory Appeal from Trial Chamber II Decision of 2 October 2003 Denying the Motion to Dismiss the Indictment, Demand Speedy Trial and for Appropriate Relief, Prosecutor v. Mugiraneza (ICTR-99-50-AR73), 27 February 2004, 3; ICTR, Decision on Prosper Mugiraneza’s Application for a Hearing or other Relief on his Motion for Dismissal for Violation of his Right to a Trial without Undue Delay, Prosecutor v. Bizimungu et al (ICTR-99-50-T), 3 November 2004, 32.

ICTR, Appeals Judgement, Prosecutor v. Mugenzi and Mugiraneza (ICTR-99-50-A), 4 February 2013, 33, where the Appeals Chamber dismissed the defence’s arguments regarding the prosecution’s behavior having caused delay as ‘speculative’ and/or ‘unsubstantiated’. 
cused’s right to be tried without undue delay.\textsuperscript{139} In \textit{Barayagwiza}, the Appeals Chamber severely criticized the Prosecutor for her failure to act diligently in order to prevent delays in the transfer of the accused to the Tribunal, and in order to ensure a timely first appearance of the accused.\textsuperscript{140} Although this decision did not relate to the general right to be tried without undue delay, the Appeals Chamber did emphasize that the Prosecutor has a duty to ensure that ‘the case proceeds to trial in a way that respects the rights of the accused’.\textsuperscript{141} Similarly, in \textit{Rwamakuba}, the lack of diligence on the part of the Prosecutor was one of the constitutive reasons for denying his request for further adjournment, in order to prevent undue delay.\textsuperscript{142}

This duty has also been reiterated often in decisions related to amending indictments. Prosecution requests to amend the indictment have often been denied because of possible delays it would cause\textsuperscript{143} The standard is that the Prosecutor must show diligence in requesting the relevant amendments, including doing so in a timely fashion.\textsuperscript{144} Amendments unduly delay the proceedings when the request results from any ‘improper tactical advantage sought by the prosecutor’.\textsuperscript{145} Some decisions have imposed the burden of proof with regard to due

\textsuperscript{139} ICTY, Decision on Motion for Sanctions for Failure to Bring the Accused to Trial without Undue Delay, \textit{Prosecutor v. Perišić} (IT-04-81-PT), 23 November 2007, 24.
\textsuperscript{141} ibid.
\textsuperscript{142} ICTR, Decision on Prosecution Motion for Reconsideration or, in the alternative, Certification to Appeal Chamber’s Decision Denying Request for Adjournment, \textit{Prosecutor v. Rwamakuba} (ICTR-98-44C-T), 25 September 2005, 23.
However, these decisions also show that little importance was attached to the finding of a failure to show the requisite diligence. For example, the ICTY once deplored the lack of diligence with which the Prosecution was disclosing materials, yet still considered that the delays also resulted from the defence strategy of filing numerous motions, which led it to conclude there was no unreasonable period of detention. Furthermore, in decisions where the defence alleged an actual violation of the right to be tried without undue delay, it appears that the burden to prove a lack of due diligence on the part of the Prosecution was imposed on the defence. At the same time, it has been emphasized that the Prosecutor also has a right to make use of the procedures provided for in the legal frameworks of the Tribunals, and that where the use of such procedures causes delay, this does not necessarily imply that the delay was undue. All in all, there appears to be a limited number of decisions that offer in-depth discussion of the conduct of, particularly, the Prosecutor and her/his obligation of due diligence in the context of the right to be tried without undue delay, which is further discussed in the subsequent section.

3.2.4. Conduct of the authorities

The ad hoc Tribunals have not been consistent as to the behavior of which authorities they consider under this heading. The conduct of the Prosecutor, who is considered an ‘authority’ in IHRL, has mostly been assessed under the heading of the conduct of the parties, albeit not consistently. The conduct of judicial authorities has been assessed under this heading, although, as will be seen, this parameter has been given limited attention.

Chambers have adopted a variety of measures to expedite proceedings and thus prevent undue delay. For example, the Perišić Chamber held status conferences every 120 days,

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147 ICTY, Order Denying a Motion for Provisional Release, Prosecutor v. Blaskić (IT-95-14-T), 20 December 1996, 7.


in order to ensure that the trial moves forward as expeditiously as possible. In *Prlić et al*, the Chamber adopted special guidelines for the conduct of trial proceedings, in order to ensure the expeditiousness of the case. Furthermore, Chambers often rely on their obligation to ensure expeditious trial proceedings to justify denying defence requests for certain procedural actions. More often, however, have Chambers limited the prosecutor’s use of certain procedures because of the accused’s right to be tried without undue delay, for example, through limiting the amount of Prosecution evidence, and the time allotted for its presentation. Generally, Prosecution requests that may lead to more lengthy proceedings are assessed in light of the accused’s right to be tried without undue delay. However, the sometimes-limited importance attached to this factor is illustrated by a decision in which it was admitted that prosecutorial conduct had caused delays, but that the accused had already been compensated for that conduct by being granted two extra trial days.

Generally, the right to be tried without undue delay has been a central consideration in decisions related to joinder and severance. Both Tribunals have refused Prosecution request for joinder because it would delay the proceedings. One Chamber explained that the joinder of particular accused would lead to one of the accused having large amounts of evidence presented that would be irrelevant to her/his own case. Another Chamber held that the

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157 ICTY, Decision on the Defence Motion in Opposition to Joinder and Motion for Severance and Separate Trial Filed by the Accused Juvenal Kajelijeli, *Prosecutor v. Bizimana et al* (ICTR-98-44-T), 6 July 2000, 35; similarly, an ICTR Chamber once ordered the severance of a case, despite objections of all the defendants and the prosecution, because the illness of one of the accused would cause delays that would prejudice the other defendants. This Trial Decision was, however, overturned on appeal and subsequently vacated by the Trial Chamber. See: ICTR, Decision on Continuation of Trial, *Prosecutor v. Karemera et al* (ICTR-98-44-T), 3 March 2009; ICTR, Decision on Appeal Concerning the Severance of Matthieu Ngiumpatsimadu, *Prosecutor v.
joinder of a new accused to a running trial would lead to delays and violate the co-accused’s right to be tried within a reasonable time. Similarly, Chambers have ordered severance of cases in order to ensure particular accused persons’ right to be tried without undue delay.

The ICTR has relied on case law of the ECtHR to support the contention that even if joinder leads to delays in the procedures, this is not necessarily incompatible with the good administration of justice. At the same time, Chambers have emphasized that joinder of cases ensures quicker trials overall: trying one case with several co-accused is considered quicker than conducting several separate trials. An example of an argument raised in favor of joint trials was that severance might cause unnecessary pressure on survivors and other witnesses who may be repeatedly called upon to testify. Furthermore, it has been considered important to try defendants jointly in order to properly reflect the joint nature of their crimes. Chambers have also held that the right of an accused to trial without undue delay must be assessed in light of other accused persons’ rights, both of co-accused in the same case, as well as of accused persons in other cases that might be impacted by the severance of specific cases. Specifically, the ICTR has held that individual trials for all accused before

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ICTY, Decision on Motion for Joinder, Prosecutor v. Tolimir (IT-05-88/2-PT), 20 July 2007, 47.


the Tribunal would lead to a large number of accused persons being in custody considerably longer, particularly given the fact that the ICTR had 40 accused in the docket at the time.\textsuperscript{163} As such, the overall speed of the Tribunal would be significantly diminished, which the Chamber considered not to be in the interests of justice and the public interest. This relates to the limited facilities of the Tribunals: the number of courtrooms, judges and staff is finite. In a similar vein, a Chamber has also held that severance would lead to additional expenditures, which it weighed against severance in that case.\textsuperscript{164} The ICTR has held that although the jointer of an accused’s case to that against other caused substantial delays, jointer was provided by the Tribunal’s legal framework, and had never been challenged by the accused, thus supporting the conclusion that the accused’s right to be tried without undue delay had not been violated.\textsuperscript{165}

At the same time, Chambers have often emphasized that accused persons in joined cases are entitled to the same procedural rights as if they were tried individually.\textsuperscript{166} This is also provided by the Tribunals’ RPEs.\textsuperscript{167} This does not appear to be in line with other decisions by the Tribunals, cited above, where it was held that an accused right to be tried without undue delay must be weighed against that of her/his co-accused, as well as that of other accused in different cases that might be impacted.

The Prosecution and the Chamber, in respectively requesting and deciding on questions of joinder and severance, could perhaps be held responsible, at least partly, for the number of accused persons, a factor which is commonly cited as adding to the complexity of a case. The case law of the Tribunals insufficiently acknowledges this partial responsibility of the authorities for the complexity of a case. For example, the ICTR Appeals Chamber has held that ‘[a]lthough the size and complexity of the case resulted from the Prosecution’s decision to jointly charge four senior government officials, Mugiraneza fails to demonstrate that


\textsuperscript{164} ICTR, Decision on Continuation of the Proceedings, \textit{Prosecutor v. Karemera et al} (ICTR-98-44-T), 6 March 2007, 82.

\textsuperscript{165} ICTR, Appeals Judgement, \textit{Prosecutor v. Ndindilyimana et al} (ICTR-00-56-A), 11 February 2014, 44.


\textsuperscript{167} Rule 82(A) ICTY RPE; Rule 82(A) ICTR RPE.
This decision improperly prolonged his trial. This illustrates the high burden of proof that the accused bears in this regard. Although the Appeals Chamber conceded that the decision to join the cases impacted on its size and complexity, and subsequently justified the length of the proceedings, exceeding thirteen years, relying precisely on the size and complexity of the case, it still considered that the accused had failed to discharge his burden of proof to show that the decision to join the cases improperly prolonged his trial. Instead, the number of accused persons has consistently been treated as a given by Chambers confronted with allegations of undue delay, which neglects the responsibility of the Prosecution and the chamber itself in joining cases or refusing to sever them. This is particularly striking given the length of several multi-accused trials before both the ICTR and the ICTY thus far.

The number of crimes and incidents charged also depends on choices made by the Prosecution and, to a lesser extent, the Chamber. Prosecutorial practice with regard to the indictments has been criticized as causing significant delays. First, indictments are often amended, a very time-consuming process since the amendment itself is litigated and, when granted, often necessitates extra time for defence preparation. Second, the Prosecution determines the number of counts in the indictment, which is, in turn, confirmed by a Chamber. The Prosecutor’s practice of cumulative indictments that charge large amounts of crimes, which in turn requires large amounts of evidence, has often been criticized as adding to delays. Judge Robinson has held that the main reason for the long duration of trials is ‘the large number of Prosecution witnesses, numbering over a hundred in several cases.’ It might therefore be proper for Chambers, faced with allegations of undue delay, to assess the amount of crimes charged and of evidence adduced more critically. It has been suggested that the Prosecution should abandon its practice of ‘charging every possible crime site’, which was argued to be motivated by a desire to satisfy the victims. A former ICTY Judge has similarly noted that the complexity of cases is ‘to some extent … attributable to the initial Prosecution policy of indicting individuals for a great number of offences, encompassing

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169 ibid, 33, 32.
170 For example, Bizimungu et al, before the ICTR, took almost eight years from the commencement of trial until the first instance judgement; and Popović et al, before the ICTY, took a little under four years from the commencement of trial until the first instance judgment.
171 Sluiter (n 123), 251; Lahiotel (n 5), 203.
172 Patrick Robinson, ‘Fair but Expeditious Trials’ in Hirad Abtahi and Gideon Boas (eds), The Dynamics of International Criminal Justice (Brill 2006), 169.
long periods and numerous crime sites.¹⁷⁴ This tendency has also been linked to the alleged aim of the Tribunals to create a historical record.¹⁷⁵ For example, an experienced international criminal defence lawyer has called for increased judicial intervention to limit the number of counts and/or limit the number of crime sites or incidents charged in order to allow for quicker trials.¹⁷⁶ Similarly, a former Legal Officer at the ICTY concluded that 80 percent of the Prosecution case in Milošević focused on the underlying offences, instead of on the personal responsibility of the accused.¹⁷⁷ For this and other reasons, he recommended an approach that focuses on the ‘core criminal conduct of the accused’ in which the Prosecution selects representational crimes, instead of charging as many crimes as possible.¹⁷⁸

These considerations do not seek to argue that the practice of the Tribunals with respect to joinder and the size of the indictments has actually violated defendants’ rights to be tried without undue delay. However, Chambers, when confronted with allegations of delay, should not treat the number of accused, the number of charges and the volume of the evidence as a simple given, beyond their, or the Prosecution’s control. The impact of such decisions by the Prosecution and the judges on the right to be tried without undue delay should be properly considered when allegations of delay arise. This has not been the approach of the Tribunals thus far. Although delay is often a factor that is considered in decisions related to joinder, amending indictments and, to a far lesser extent, the admission of evidence, such consideration is often brief and rather superficial. What is more, these facts are rarely examined by Chambers faced with allegations of actual violations of the right to be tried without undue delay.

Generally, the Tribunals have not considered the conduct of the authorities as a prominent factor in the determination of alleged violations of the right to be tried without undue delay. Where it was discussed, the defence’s arguments have been rejected. For example, one decision simply noted that the Chamber was mindful of its duty since expeditiousness had been a constant concern in the proceedings.¹⁷⁹ The case law that does exist with regard to this factor shows that the defence bears the burden of proof regarding the conduct of the authori-

¹⁷⁴ Schomburg (n 24), 15.
¹⁷⁵ Galbraith (n 5), 90.
¹⁷⁷ Boas (n 173), 137.
¹⁷⁸ ibid, 128.
ties, which departs from IHRL. In repeated undue delay decisions in Bizimungu et al, the allegations of the defence were rejected because the Chamber regarded them insufficiently detailed. However, in the latest decisions in this case, one of the Judges dissented on this matter. According to Judge Short, the fact that no judgment had been rendered 24 months after the case had been closed, violated the defendants’ rights to be tried without undue delay. Judge Short argued that ‘the UN Security Council and the General Assembly have failed to organize the judicial systems of the ad hoc Tribunals in such a manner as to enable them to comply with the right to be tried without undue delay’, an obligation he based on case law of the ECtHR. Specifically, he alleged that the fact that judges and legal staff became involved in new cases once the closing arguments were heard, but while the judgment had not yet been written, had contributed significantly to the delay in this case. In the Judgment that followed, the Chamber conceded that the increased workload of the judges had contributed to the delay. At that point, three years had passed between the closing of the case and the rendering of the Trial Judgment. However, the majority still held that the accused’s right to be tried without undue delay had not been violated, essentially based on the complexity of the case alone. Judge Short, however, reiterated his previous dissent, and found that the accused’s right to be tried without undue delay had been violated, but the majority did not engage with his argumentation.

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183 Similarly McDermott, ‘The Right to a Fair Trial in International Criminal Law’ (n 3), 132.

184 ICTR, Judgement and Sentence, *Prosecutor v. Bizimungu et al* (ICTR-99-50-T), 30 September 2011, 74; see also Tolbert and Gaynor (n 3), 58-59, who are similarly critical of the lengthy periods of judgment-drafting in a number of cases before the ad hoc Tribunals.


The Appeals Chamber subsequently sided with the Chamber’s majority, and considered that the accused had failed to show ‘the relative significance of the judges’ workload distribution, overlapping duties, and outside activities, or the relative significance of any related staffing issues, for the conduct of this case.’ The Appeals Chamber emphasized that the Trial Chamber had conceded the total period of twelve years between the arrest and the judgment had been ‘lengthy’, and that the heavy workload of the judges may have had an impact on the length of the Trial, but considered ‘that it is not unusual for judges of the Tribunal to participate in multiple proceedings, impacting the pace of those respective proceedings.’ These two findings appear to contradict each other. The Appeals Chamber seems, on the hand, to concede that the judges’ workload impacted on the length of the proceedings, but at the same time, to deny that the accused have shown how this workload impacted on the length of proceedings.

Judge Robinson dissented from the Appeals Chamber’s majority and held that the delay resulted ‘from the manner in which the Tribunal has organized and managed its resources’, which could not legitimately be invoked as a justification for delays. He found that the Trial Chamber failed to properly consider the arguments of the defence in this regard, noting also that in other multi-accused cases before the ICTR and ICTY, judgment drafting had been much quicker. He therefore found that the defendants’ right to be tried without undue delay had been violated, leading him to state that he would award the – acquitted – defendants – who had been detained for almost fourteen years, compensation in the amount of $ 5,000. One ICTY Judge has relied on this dissent to substantiate his argument that Šešelj should also be awarded monetary compensation or sentence reduction, because the delays in his case were due to ‘faulty administrative operations’. In that case, the majority and, subsequently, the Appeals Chamber considered the issue of delay premature, because the actual consequences of the addition of a new judge to the bench were not yet clear.

188 ibid.
190 ibid, 4.
191 ibid, 12.
ertainty, the Trial Chamber held that the then one-and-a-half years of deliberations were reasonable in light of the complexity of the case.194

Instead of blanketly relying on the complexity of cases to justify lengthy proceedings, the Tribunals should more critically examine the role and responsibility of the judicial and prosecutorial authorities for the delays. As stated, although the complexity of international criminal trials may add significantly to their length, Chambers still have an obligation to do everything within their power to protect the right of the accused to a trial without undue delay. The role of the Chambers themselves herein has been left largely unexamined by the Tribunals. For example, a former ICTR trial attorney has criticized the Tribunal’s policy of working with sessions as causing unnecessary delays.195

Furthermore, despite strongly worded dissents in which members of the bench have criticized their own institutions for failing to provide trials without undue delay, the majority of these Chambers have summarily discarded their colleagues’ arguments by relying on the complexity of the case. However, complexity should not absolve the Chamber of its responsibility to ensure a trial without undue delay. In IHRL, a time period of three years between closing a trial and rendering a judgment would have probably constituted a prima facie delay, for the justification of which the authorities would have borne the burden of proof. However, the majority of the Chamber did not address the substance of the defence’s arguments, which were endorsed by Judge Short, and instead relied on the complexity of the case. In addition, the Appeals Chamber’s response to this protracted period of three years of judgment drafting was limited to observing that ‘it is not unusual’ for judges to be involved in multiple cases. However, the length of judgment drafting in this case was, in fact, highly unusual. Before the ICTY, the average period between closing arguments and the rendering of the judgment is about six months. Before the ICTR, this period is a little under one year.196 Not only is the ICTR thus considerably slower than the ICTY, the period taken for the Bizimungu et al judgment is about triple the ICTR’s average. What is more, judgment drafting in another multi-accused case, Nyiramasuhuko et al, took a little over two years, which is considerably quicker, though still well below average.

Furthermore, the ICTR has, albeit sparingly, relied on insufficient physical and logistical resources as one of the causes of delays in their trials. This explanation for delays be-

194 ICTY, Decision on Continuation of Proceedings, Prosecutor v. Šešelj (IT-03-67-T), 13 December 2013, 23.
195 Iain Morley, ‘The Fairness of the Proceedings: Thoughts on How Proceedings at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda Might be Improved’ (2008) 14 New Eng J Int’l & Comp L 293, 295-296; see also Tolbert and Gaynor (n 3), 39-60, where they offer several constructive suggestions aimed at expediting international criminal proceedings.
196 See Annex 1 for a table containing an overview of the data collected.
fore, particularly the ICTR, can be found in the literature on this topic as well. Especially during the early years of their mandate, the Tribunals had a limited amount of personnel, resources and even courtrooms, as a result of which delays occurred. 197 Although measures, such as the creation of an extra Trial Chamber and extra courtrooms as well as the installment of a large number of ad litem Judges have increased the Tribunals’ capacity, the limited human and physical resources of the Tribunals have impacted on the length of their trials. In IHRL, this is not an acceptable justification for delays. States have an obligation to ‘organize their judicial systems in such a way that their courts can meet each of its requirements, including the obligation to hear cases within a reasonable time’. 198 Judges Short and Robinson relied on this obligation in their dissents in Bizimungu et al, arguing that the defendants’ rights to be tried without undue delay had been violated. The system of assigning judges and their staff new cases prior to finalizing the judgment in their old cases was necessitated by the limited resources of the Tribunal, and the delays caused by this would therefore be attributable to the Tribunal. However, as stated above, the majority of the Chamber disregarded these arguments, and the responsibility of the Tribunal itself has never been thoroughly examined by either of the Tribunals.

The Tribunals’ interpretation and application of the parameter of the conduct of the authorities thus differs significantly from the parallel consideration of this parameter in IHRL. The parameter has rarely been thoroughly considered, despite allegations regarding the responsibility of both the prosecutorial and the judicial authorities for undue delays. When ICTs do address this factor, the burden of proof is consistently imposed on the defence and, by and large, their arguments have been discarded for lack of specificity. Instead, Chambers overrely on the complexity of the case, without truly substantiating how such complexity has caused specific delays. The Tribunals have invoked IHRL to support their reliance on the complexity of the case as a justification for delay. However, their treatment of this case law has been highly selective.

3.2.5. Prejudice

The fifth factor in determining whether or not an accused’s right to be tried without undue delay has been violated is that of ‘prejudice’. The defence bears the burden of proof regarding

198 See supra section 2.1.
this factor.\textsuperscript{199} However, although many decisions have referred to this factor, there has been no real explanation of what it entails, or how it can generally be established. The purpose of the addition of this factor seems to be to ensure that only delays that have in fact prejudiced an accused in her/his legitimate interests are considered undue.

The Tribunals’ approach to this factor has thus been highly casuistic. For example, in \textit{Bagosora et al}, the Chamber concluded that there was no prejudice because the accused had received life sentences.\textsuperscript{200} This suggests that persons who are convicted and receive lengthy sentences are not prejudiced by delays in their cases, because they are going to remain incarcerated for a long period regardless. Another decision denied prejudice because the date of the judgment was thought to be near.\textsuperscript{201} Allegations that delays had caused the memory of witnesses to fade and that this had prejudiced the defendant were also rejected.\textsuperscript{202} In another case, the Chamber found that the defendant had suffered no prejudice since he had been able to present her/his case.\textsuperscript{203} The Chamber further conceded that the delay could not be explained by the complexity of the case which was limited in comparison to other cases before the Tribunal, and that there had been unjustifiable delays caused by the Prosecution; yet it concluded that the delay was not ‘undue’ because the defence had failed to show prejudice.\textsuperscript{204} The Appeals Chamber overturned this finding, and considered that a pre-trial delay of over seven years, given the limited complexity of the case, was prejudicial in and of itself.\textsuperscript{205} In determining the remedy for this violation of the accused’s right to be tried without undue delay, the Appeals Chamber did emphasize that it considered the defence’s failure to show

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\textsuperscript{201} ICTR, Decision on Prospeer Mugiraneza’s Fourth Motion to Dismiss Indictment for Violation of Right to Trial without Undue Delay, \textit{Prosecutor v. Bizimungu et al} (ICTR-99-50-T), 23 June 2010, 18.

\textsuperscript{202} ICTR, Decision on Prosper Mugiraneza’s Third Motion to Dismiss Indictment for Violation of his Right to a Trial without Undue Delay, \textit{Prosecutor v. Bizimungu et al} (ICTR-99-50-T), 10 February 2009, 23.


\textsuperscript{205} ICTR, Appeals Judgement, \textit{Prosecutor v. Gatete} (ICTR-00-61-A), 9 October 2012, 44.
\end{footnotesize}
how the delays prejudiced the preparation of his case or the conduct of his defence, and de-
cided to shorten the sentence from life, to forty years.206 This is the only decision that has
been identified in which an ad hoc Tribunal actually considered the right to be tried without
undue delay to have been violated, and one of two decisions where an accused person was
found to have been ‘prejudiced’. The other decision that admitted prejudice acknowledged
that lengthy detention was prejudicial to the accused by its nature, but the defence still bore
the burden to prove that the delay was ‘undue’, and the Chamber denied the allegations for
procedural reasons.207

The requirement of ‘prejudice’ as a parameter establishing whether a delay has been
undue finds no support in IHRL and is arguably inconsistent with the object and purpose of
the very right to be tried without undue delay.208 The idea behind this right is that undue de-
lays are, by their nature, prejudicial to defendants. The Tribunals, however, have denied pre j-
udice in cases because the defendants had received life sentences, and because the defence
had failed to show what prejudice it had suffered as a result of the delay. This turns the right
to be tried without undue delay on its head. This right protects against the uncertainty of be-
ing tried without knowing the provisional outcome. Such a lengthy state of uncertainty is the
very prejudice that this right seeks to protect against. Requiring defendants to show that they
have suffered prejudice from undue delay in order to establish that such a delay has been un-
due is tautological and finds no support in international human rights law.209 What is more,
finding that the defendants have not been prejudiced by excessive delays because they have
received life sentences fundamentally ignores the presumption of innocence as a governing
consideration of an international criminal trial because it suggests that convicted persons,
and particularly persons who have received severe sentences, are less, or not at all, protected by
this right. In other words, this approach retroactively denies protection of this right to persons
who have been convicted.

206 ibid, 284.
207 ICTR, Decision on Protais Zigiranyirazo’s Motion for Damages, Zigiranyirazo v. Prosecutor (ICTR-2001-
01-073), 18 June 2012, 36, see also 42, where the Chamber denies the motion because of the accused’s failure to
assert his right to be tried without undue delay earlier.
208 See eg Masha Fedorova and Göran Sluiter, ‘Human Rights as Minimum Standards in International Criminal
Proceedings’ (2009) 3 Hum Rts & Intl Legal Discourse 9, 53, who call it a ‘puzzling adjustment’.
209 Two later decision of the ICTR seems to have a more appropriate understanding of this factor, holding that
lengthy detention is by its nature prejudicial to the accused: ICTR, Decision on Protais Zigiranyirazo’s Motion for
Damages, Zigiranyirazo v. Prosecutor (ICTR-2001-01-073), 18 June 2012, para 36; ICTR, Appeals Judg-
ment, Prosecutor v. Gatete (ICTR-00-61-A), 9 October 2012, 44. However, both cases emphasize that the de-
lays in these cases were prejudicial because of the limited complexity of the case.
3.2.6. Other relevant aspects of the Tribunals’ approach

As stated above, the Tribunals have not consistently relied on the five factors discussed in the foregoing. Several other factors have played a role in determinations of violations of the right to be tried without undue delay. The seriousness of the charges against accused persons has been weighed in a number of decisions.\(^{210}\) For example, the gravity of the charges and the importance of those charges representing ‘the totality of the alleged conduct of the accused’ were cited in *Bagosora et al* as mitigating possible delays that might result from the amendment of the indictment at that point.\(^{211}\) Several decisions also based their finding that the delays in question were not undue on the gravity and the complexity of the crimes charged.\(^{212}\) In addition, the gravity and the seriousness of the crimes charged have been cited as an element of the complexity of a case.\(^{213}\) Finally, a number of other decisions have held that the importance of expeditiousness must be weighed against the importance of finding the truth about the serious crimes with which the Tribunal deals.\(^{214}\)

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Certain decisions have held that the right to be tried without undue delay must be ‘reconciled with the fundamental purpose of the Tribunal’. It was held that this right must be ‘interpreted and applied within the context of the sole purpose of the Tribunal, to prosecute persons responsible for genocide and other violations of IHL’. The fact that the Tribunal’s mission concerns the most serious violations of international law was thought to militate against finding delays undue. However, the ICTR Appeals Chamber held that this factor could not legitimately be weighed against the accused’s right to be tried without undue delay. This factor does not seem to have been relied upon since this decision.

Furthermore, several decisions have referred to more practical aspects of the specific context in which the Tribunals operate. An ICTR Chamber has held that since the Tribunal has limited human and physical resources and depends on the UN for funding, it cannot be compared to domestic legal systems, and held up to the same standards of speediness. The ICTR also considered that the cases before it could not be compared to domestic cases, because of its specific mandate and the inherent complexity of the cases before it. According to the Tribunal, this makes it reasonable to expect that the judicial process before the Tribunal will not always be as expeditious as before domestic courts.

These additional factors find no support in IHRL. Considering the gravity of the crimes charged is particularly problematic. Persons accused of serious crimes are not less entitled to a trial without undue delay. Although it is impossible to ascertain whether this is truly what the Tribunals intended to argue when relying on gravity, it is also difficult to see what else might have been meant. Some decisions have examined gravity as a factor adding to the complexity of a case, which seems legitimate, but others have simply asserted gravity as an independent factor relevant for the assessment of delays. This finds no support in IHRL.

At the same time, however, a limited number of cases of the ECnHR, discussed in the above, have considered that the importance of proper investigations and trials in cases involving war crimes and crimes against humanity, grant the authorities more leeway in the context

215 ICTR, Decision on Justin Mugenzi’s Motion for Stay of Proceedings or in the Alternative Provisional Release (Rule 65) and in Addition Severance (Rule 82(B)), Prosecutor v. Mugenzi et al (ICTR-99-50-I), 8 November 2002, para 30; ICTR, Decision on Prosper Mugiraneza’s Motion to Dismiss the Indictment for Violation of Article 20(4)(c) of the Statute, Demand for Speedy Trial and for Appropriate Relief, Prosecutor v. Mugiraneza (ICTR-99-50-I), 2 October 2003, 11.


of delays. The ECnHR acknowledged the inherent difficulties associated with investigating and trying cases concerning crimes of an international nature, committed on a massive scale, many years prior to the proceedings. In addition, it considered the importance of conducting war crimes trials and emphasized that the right to be tried within a reasonable time must not stand in the way of the judges to do their work properly and carefully.219 These decisions of the Commission might be cited in support for more leeway for the Tribunals in the context of the right to be tried without undue delay. However, it has been convincingly argued that these decisions should be treated as an anomaly, rather than as standing and applicable jurisprudence. The decisions were issued a very long time ago, and recent judgments pertaining to atrocity crimes prosecutions contain no references to them.220 More fundamentally, the importance of prosecuting suspects of heinous crimes and ‘ending impunity’ should not absolve the judicial authorities from their duty to protect the ‘internationally recognized human rights’ of accused persons, including their right to be tried without undue delay.

One final aspect of the Tribunals’ approach to the right to be tried without undue delay, which has already been alluded to, is that they consistently impose the burden of proof with regard to violations of the right to be tried without undue delay on the defence.221 Similarly, they have also imposed the burden with regard to the specific parameters, notably the conduct of the parties, the conduct of the authorities, and the requirement of prejudice, on the defence. Although some decisions have held that the Prosecutor should bear the burden of proof with regard to due diligence on her/his own part, other decisions have also required the defence to prove failure to act with diligence by the Prosecution. In IHRL, on the other hand, it has been consistently held that the Prosecution bears the burden of proof with regard to due diligence on her/his own part, other decisions have also required the defence to prove failure to act with diligence by the Prosecution. In IHRL, on the other hand, it has been consistently held that the Prosecution bears the burden to prove diligence on their part in bringing the case to trial and trying it within a reasonable time. The same goes for the court authorities. The ECtHR generally requires the defence to assert, on a prima facie level, that the proceedings have been lengthy, or that there have been periods of inactivity, where-

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219 See supra section 2.2.5.
220 McDermott, ‘The Right to a Fair Trial in International Criminal Proceedings’ (n 3), 119: ‘[g]iven that the Commission applied Article 6 as normal to a later war crimes suspect in Menten, and more recent European Court of Human Rights jurisprudence has considered the fair trial rights of those accused of war crimes, it is submitted that we can treat X v. FRG as a curiosity rather than established precedent. This means that the complexity of the case should be seen as a consideration to be taken into account when assessing whether a delay was undue rather than a factor excluding the defendant from the full scope of protection afforded by international human rights standards.’
upon it is for the authorities to prove they acted diligently. The very basis of the ICTs’ approach to the right to be tried without undue delay thus differs significantly from IHRL. However, the Tribunals have never acknowledged or justified this apparent departure.

3.3. Comparison and the Tribunals’ use of IHRL

The right to be tried without undue delay before the Tribunals is clearly based on IHRL, as their Statutes reproduce Article 14(3)(c) of the ICCPR verbatim. As has been explained, the ECHR, ACHR, and ACHPR enshrine the right to be tried within a reasonable time, and the content of these guarantees is identical.\(^\text{222}\) The ICTY has confirmed that its Statute reflects IHRL with regard to the right to be tried without undue delay.\(^\text{223}\) The ICTR has also emphasized the fact that the right to be tried without undue delay was laid down in the Statute as well as other international human rights instruments.\(^\text{224}\) The latter statement led the Ntagerura et al Trial Chamber to determine the factors relevant to establishing undue delay based on ‘human rights case law’ and ‘human rights standards’.\(^\text{225}\) In this case, the ICTR referred to parameters that correspond with those employed in IHRL: the complexity of the case, the conduct of the authorities, and the conduct of the accused. However, there was no discussion of these parameters and the Chamber mentioned the complexity of the case alone to justify the length of the proceedings up to that point.\(^\text{226}\)

Furthermore, subsequent case law of the Tribunals has relied on the criteria discussed above, which do not comport with those in IHRL. The Tribunals have referred to the conduct of the parties and the conduct of the authorities, whereby the Prosecution is considered a party, not an authority. But in IHRL the criteria are the conduct of the accused and the conduct of the authorities (including the Prosecution). Arguably, assessing the Prosecution’s conduct as that of an ‘authority’ better reflects her/his responsibility as an organ of the Tribunals in terms of ensuring respect for the rights of accused persons. In addition, while the conduct of the authorities is the most important parameter in IHRL to determine a violation, the Tribunals have focused mostly on the complexity of the case as an almost blanket justification for lengthy proceedings. Finally, the Tribunals have invented the additional requirement of prej-

\(^{222}\) See supra section 2.

\(^{223}\) ICTY, Decision on the Prosecutor’s Motion to Hold Pre-Trial Motions in Abeyance, Prosecutor v. Kordić and Čerkez (IT-95-14/2-PT, 28 January 1998, 8.


\(^{226}\) ibid, 56.
udice, which, as has been argued above, goes against the very nature of the right to be tried without undue delay.

The Tribunals have never justified their invention of this additional requirement, have not acknowledged the departure of their legal test from IHRL, and have not explained their focus on the complexity of the case or different interpretation of the conduct of the authorities. This is striking given that they have cited case law from the ECtHR and human rights supervisory bodies to justify other aspects of their approach. In particular, the Tribunals have often emphasized that in IHRL decisions regarding undue delay depend heavily on the circumstances of the case. One oft-quoted decision in *Kanyabashi* relied on the HRC, IACnHR, and the ECtHR essentially to underline the flexibility of IHRL when it comes to assessing when delays are undue. The Chamber held that ‘[t]he reasonableness of the period cannot be translated into a fixed number of days, months or years, since it is dependent on other elements which the judge must consider.’227 In the same vein, the Chamber held that ‘the Strasbourg organs have deemed trials that even lasted longer than 10 years to be compatible with Article 6(1) of the ECHR, holding, on the other hand, others lasting less than one year to be in violation of the provision.’228 This paragraph has been reiterated in numerous subsequent decisions.229 Other decisions that did not rely on this specific quote have similarly emphasized that whether delays are undue depends on the circumstances of the case, relying for example, on the HRC230 and the ECtHR.231 Similarly, several decisions have emphasized the

228 ICTR, Decision on the Defence Extremely Urgent Motion on Habeas Corpus and for Stoppage of the Proceedings, *Prosecutor v. Kanyabashi* (ICTR-96-15-I), 23 May 2000, 68; see also ICTY, Order Denying a Motion for Provisional Release, *Prosecutor v. Blaškić* (IT-95-14-T), 20 December 1996, 6-7, where the ICTY relied on a number of ECtHR cases to emphasize that the Court has found five years of, in that case, pre-trial detention, not to exceed a reasonable time.
importance of a case-by-case assessment of undue delay, without referring to IHRL explicitly. Such use of IHRL is highly selective, as it fails to acknowledge other aspects of the right to be tried without undue delay with which the ICTs’ approach is not in line.

There are also several examples of references to case law of the ECtHR, where the parameter of ‘complexity’ alone was singled out by the ICTR as justifying lengthy periods of detention. Similarly, the ICTY based its decision regarding the length of the provisional detention in Perišić almost entirely on the ECtHR’s reasoning in one specific case, which was ‘very complex’, and where the ECtHR had accepted a period of more than five years of pre-trial detention as not exceeding a reasonable time because of the complexity of the case and the fact that detention had been subject to continuous review.

The Tribunals have cited a variety of legal bases to support their reliance on human rights law and jurisprudence. In the Perišić decision, the ICTY explained that it considered the case law of the ECtHR as ‘persuasive and not controlling authority’. It did not further venture into questions regarding the basis of this authority. Several other decisions that relied on sources of IHRL did justify why they did so. For example, several ICTR decisions have held that ‘generally accepted norms of human rights’ are binding on the Tribunal. The ICTY has also held that ‘internationally recognized standards apply to the Tribunal’.

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231 ICTY, Order Denying a Motion for Provisional Release, Prosecutor v. Blaskić (IT-95-14-T), 20 December 1996, 6; ICTR, Decision on the Defence Motion for Separate Trial, Prosecutor v. Ndayambaje (ICTR-96-8-T), 25 April 2001, 18; idem: ICTR, Decision on the Motion for Separate Trials, Prosecutor v. Nyiramasuhuko and Ntahobali (ICTR-97-21-T), 8 June 2001, 23; ICTR, Decision on Protais Zigiranyirazo’s Motion for Damages, Zigiranyirazo v. Prosecutor (ICTR-2001-01-073), 18 June 2012, 34; [the ECtHR] has established that the issue of whether a period of detention is reasonable cannot be assessed in the abstract.


233 ICTY, Decision on the Defence Motion for Separate Trial, Prosecutor v. Ndayambaje (ICTR-96-8-T), 25 April 2001, 18: ‘[i]t however stems from the case law of the European Court of Human Rights that “the reasonableness of the length of the proceedings needs to be assessed in each instance according to the particular circumstances” and with regard to, “among other things, the complexity of the case”;’ idem: ICTR, Decision on the Motion for Separate Trials, Prosecutor v. Nyiramasuhuko and Ntahobali (ICTR-97-21-T), 8 June 2001, 23.

234 ICTY, Decision on Motion for Sanctions for Failure to Bring the Accused to Trial without Undue Delay, Prosecutor v. Perišić (IT-04-81-PT), 23 November 2007, 24-25.

235 ibid, 21.


ever, these decisions failed to clarify the content and the nature of these standards, as well as the legal basis for their binding nature.

In several decisions in *Bizimungu et al.*, the ICTR accepted the persuasive authority of the jurisprudence of the ECtHR and the HRC but considered that the Tribunal should only have recourse to such authorities to the extent that its statutory instruments and jurisprudence are deficient. Such jurisprudence was thus identified as a possible gap-filler. This is further illustrated by the Chamber’s statement that it would rather have ‘recourse to jurisprudence that is binding on it’, which was case law of the Tribunal itself. The same Chamber has emphasized that the Statute of the ICTR was its primary source of law. Another Chamber has held that ECtHR jurisprudence cannot be considered as binding customary international law because it covers a limited geographical area. It did find the jurisprudence of the ECtHR to be ‘persuasive’ because that Court ‘has adjudicated issues relating to delay in criminal cases in a variety of legal systems’. In that decision, the ICTR held that the ECtHR has ‘adopted the same criteria as the ICTR Appeals Chamber for review’, neglecting the aforementioned substantial differences between the respective approaches of the Tribunals and the ECtHR. Subsequently, the Chamber did refer specifically to the responsibility of the authorities and their obligation to display ‘special diligence’, and it held that it was ‘incumbent on the authorities to explain any periods of inactivity or inertia’. Still, it found that the right to be tried without undue delay had not been violated because the accused should have invoked it earlier in the proceedings.

Overall, the Tribunals’ use of IHRL on the issue of undue delay can be characterized as selective. They have referred to decisions of the ECtHR, IACtHR, and HRC in support of

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239 ibid.

240 ibid.

241 ibid.

242 ibid.

243 ibid.

244 ibid.

245 ibid.
their reliance on the complexity of cases before them to justify their length, or to underline that human rights law sets no predetermined limits for the length of criminal proceedings. However, many other aspects of their case law are not supported by IHRL, and the Tribunals have neither acknowledged this nor justified any departure from it. In particular, the addition of the requirement of prejudice cannot be traced back to IHRL. Quite the contrary, it is arguably in contravention of the nature of the right to be tried without undue delay. In addition, the ICTs’ recurring reliance on the gravity of crimes as a parameter relevant to the determination of undue delay finds no support in IHRL. Finally, the Tribunals’ actual application of the parameters determining undue delay has also been different from the approach in IHRL. The Tribunals have over-relied on the complexity of cases before them and have neglected to truly assess the responsibility of the prosecutorial and judicial authorities for possible delays. One commentator concluded that the Tribunals’ reference to human rights law in their case law on undue delay is mere lip service.

This is further supported by an examination of the actual length of the proceedings before the Tribunals. On average, the total length of the proceedings has been six years and two months before the ICTY and nine years and two months before the ICTR. Furthermore, the period between arrest and the first instance judgment, when the presumption of innocence still fully applies, has been four years and five months before the ICTY and seven years and eleven months before the ICTR. Another striking number is the time between arrest and the commencement of trial, the time that is generally spent in detention, which has been two years and seven months before the ICTY and three years and eleven months before the ICTR. Although IHRL does not set specific limits for the length of criminal proceedings, the length of proceedings before the Tribunals is substantial. It is therefore suspect that the Tribunals have only found the right to be tried without undue delay to have been violated once. This can be attributed to their very different approach to this right, as compared to IHRL, which has made it well-nigh impossible for defendants to establish a violation of their right to be tried without undue delay.

If human rights courts and supervisory bodies had been confronted with proceedings of the length comparable to that of the proceedings before the Tribunals, they would have probably required the state in question to provide justifications. In IHRL, the conduct of the authorities is determinative of the question whether the right to be tried without undue delay

246 See supra section 3.2.5. and Fedorova and Sluiter (n 208), 53.
247 Christoph Safferling and others, International Criminal Procedure (OUP 2012), 387.
248 See Annex 1 for a table containing an overview of the data collected.
249 ICTR, Appeals Judgement, Prosecutor v. Gatete (ICTR-00-61-A), 9 October 2012, 44.
has been violated. However, the Tribunals have downplayed the importance of this factor, focusing on the complexity of cases instead. It is questionable whether this can be justified by the specific circumstances in which they operate. Admittedly, the cases before ICTs are far more complex than an average domestic criminal trial, which could, to a certain extent, justify their increased reliance on this factor. However, there are significant differences both within and between the Tribunals. The ICTR is significantly slower than the ICTY, which is a fact that has never been addressed in the former’s case law. Nor have the decisions of the ICTR truly engaged with the arguments raised by two dissenting judges regarding the lengthy deliberation process. Instead of simply asserting the complexity of the cases before them, the Tribunals should critically inquire into the prosecutorial and judicial authorities’ possible responsibility for delays, including their responsibility for the complexity of cases and for ensuring expeditious trials despite such complexity. At the very least, they should justify how the complexity of a case has impacted on its length, instead of operating on an assumption of complexity without further substantiation. The fact that there are substantial differences in the length of cases both within and between the Tribunals is an additional reason why such an explanation is necessary. For example, one of the longest and most complex cases before the ICTY was Popović et al, which took a little under four years from the commencement of trial until the first instance judgment. A comparable case before the ICTR, Bizimungu et al, took almost eight years from the commencement of trial until the first instance judgment. Perhaps the latter case was much more complex than the former, and perhaps this could justify the length of the proceedings. However, the Tribunals have not critically engaged with the reasons for such substantial differences in length between arguably comparable cases. The blanket reliance on ‘complexity’ oversimplifies the matter and does not do justice to accused persons’ right to be tried without undue delay.

4. Trial without Undue Delay before the ICC

The ICC has not thus far addressed the question whether the right to be tried without undue delay has been violated in a particular case. Its case law is therefore less instructive for the purposes of the present Chapter than that of the ad hoc Tribunals. That does not mean that the ICC has not engaged with this right at all. However, its references have mainly been limited

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250 In Bizimungu et al, Trial Judge Short and Appeal Judge Robinson both considered the defendants’ rights to be tried without undue delay to have been violated. See supra section 3.2.4.
251 To be able to compare these multi-accused cases, the pre-trial periods have been omitted because they differ between accused persons.
252 The only exception is a dissenting opinion by Judge Christine van den Wyngaert, discussed below.
to cases of procedural streamlining aimed at preventing undue delay. Article 67(1)(c) of the ICC Statute provides the right to be tried without undue delay. It thus follows the wording of the ICCPR and of the Statutes of the ad hoc Tribunals. Like in the ad hoc Tribunals’ Statutes, there is also a provision that enshrines a duty of the Trial Chamber to ensure that trials are fair and expeditious. The Court has also emphasized that expeditiousness is also in the interests of victims. It has held that an expeditious trial relieves victims ‘as soon as possible of the anxiety of having to appear in court to give evidence’. The Court also held that delays would ‘diminish public interest and public support for, and cooperation with, the Court’, and it held that ‘[w]ithout such support and cooperation the Court would find it difficult to have its decisions and orders respected or enforced.

4.1. The right to be tried without undue delay in the case law of the ICC

The ICC has held that its legal system evinces that expeditiousness is a recurring theme. It has limited the use of procedures by the parties in order to ensure that trials proceed expeditiously. The Appeals Chamber has held that all defence rights must be exercised in a manner that does not frustrate the aims of a fair trial, which includes the reasonableness of the time in which the proceedings must be completed. For example, the translation of documents has been limited in order to prevent delays. The number of witnesses the defence may call for the purpose of the confirmation hearing has also been restricted for the same reason. Similarly, a Chamber, when establishing a timetable for trial, determined the time allotted to the

253 Art 64(1) ICC Statute.
254 ICC, Decision on the Admission into Evidence of Materials Contained in the Prosecution's list of Evidence, Prosecutor v. Bemba (ICC-01/05-01/08-1022), 19 November 2010, 23; see also ICC, Judgment on the Appeal of Mr Katanga Against the Decision of Trial Chamber II of 20 November 2009 Entitled “Decision on the Motion of the Defence for Germain Katanga for a Declaration on Unlawful Detention and Stay of Proceedings”, Prosecutor v. Katanga and Ngudjolo (ICC-01/04-01/07-2259), 12 July 2010, 47.
256 ibid.
257 ibid, 43.
260 ICC, Order to the Defence to Reduce the Number of Witnesses to Be Called to Testify at the Confirmation of Charges Hearing and to Submit an Amended List of Viva Voce Witnesses, Prosecutor v. Samoei Ruto, Kiprono Kosgey and Arap Sang (ICC-01/09-01/11-221), 25 July 2011, 11; ICC, Urgent Order to the Defence to Reduce the Number of Witnesses to Be Called to Testify at the Confirmation of Charges Hearing and to Submit an Amended List of Viva Voce Witnesses, Prosecutor v. Kirimi Muthaura, Muigai Kenyatta and Hussein Ali (ICC-01/09-02/11-226), 10 August 2011, 16.
defence presentation of evidence with reference to the right to be tried without undue delay.\textsuperscript{261} In this light, one Chamber has held that the defence strategy must respect both the procedural framework established by the Court's legal instruments and the overall interests of the administration of justice.\textsuperscript{262}

The right of victims to call witnesses has been considered to be subject to the accused’s right to be tried without undue delay.\textsuperscript{263} Chambers have also urged the Prosecution to proceed more expeditiously with various matters, such as disclosure and the translation of documentary evidence, in order to prevent delays in the trial process.\textsuperscript{264} Similarly, the defence has been urged to carefully select portions of its evidence that had to be translated, in order to safeguard the accused’s right to be tried without undue delay.\textsuperscript{265} Similarly, Chambers have kept a tight hold on the scheduling of trial proceedings, emphasizing that promptness is crucial in light of the right to be tried without undue delay.\textsuperscript{266} Furthermore, the Appeals Chamber has found that a Chamber must weigh the effect of admission of evidence against this right.\textsuperscript{267} In that regard, it has been held that the broad admission of evidence will speed up proceedings, since this avoids extensive arguments about the evidence.\textsuperscript{268} However, it has

\textsuperscript{261} ICC, Decision on the “Submissions on Defence Evidence”, \textit{Prosecutor v. Bemba} (ICC-01/05-01/08-2225), 7 June 2012, 11.

\textsuperscript{262} ICC, Judgment on the Appeal of Mr Katanga Against the Decision of Trial Chamber II of 20 November 2009 Entitled “Decision on the Motion of the Defence for Germain Katanga for a Declaration on Unlawful Detention and Stay of Proceedings”, \textit{Prosecutor v. Katanga and Ngudjolo} (ICC- 01/04-01/07-2259), 12 July 2010, 77.

\textsuperscript{263} ICC, Directions for the Conduct of the Proceedings and Testimony in accordance with Rule 140, \textit{Prosecutor v. Katanga and Ngudjolo} (ICC- 01/04-01/07-1665-Corr), 1 December 2009, 22.


\textsuperscript{265} ICC, Decision on the “Demande de la Défense aux fins de traduction en kinyarwanda de certains des principaux éléments de preuve”, \textit{Prosecutor v. Ntaganda} (ICC-01/04-02-06-115), 24 September 2013, 12.


also been held that a Chamber should exclude evidence if the time anticipated for its presentation is disproportionate to its potential probative value.\(^{269}\)

Like the ad hoc Tribunals, the ICC has addressed the right to be tried without undue delay in joint trials. In one decision, the Court appears to have found that the right of one co-accused to a trial without undue delay may not be invoked to prevent the other from using procedural remedies.\(^{270}\) However, two later decisions have held that the rights of accused persons rights must be ascertained in light of their co-accused’s rights to be tried without undue delay.\(^{271}\) Finally, a Prosecution request to amend the indictment has been rejected because this would result in undue delay.\(^{272}\)

The decisions quoted in the above contain no more than perfunctory references to the right to be tried without undue delay. There are only a few examples of more extensive discussions of this right, and the parameters used that determine its violation. One example, touching upon issues of delay was the Katanga and Nugdjolo Chui Chamber’s decision to sever the cases against the two accused, and use Regulation 55 to recharacterize the facts charged against Katanga in November 2012 (‘Notice Decision’). The majority of the Chamber acknowledged that employing regulation 55 at such a late stage of the proceedings might result in delays, but noted that establishing whether this would be undue would depend on the facts and circumstances of the case.\(^{273}\) In justifying its approach, it relied on case law of the ECtHR, and noted specifically that the Chamber could compensate for possible delays by granting the accused a reduction of his sentence.\(^{274}\) On a general level, the Appeals Chamber had already found that a recharacterization of facts charged was not prohibited under the

\(^{269}\) ICC, Decision on the Prosecutor's Bar Table Motions, Prosecutor v. Katanga and Ngudjolo (ICC-01/04-01/07-2635), 17 December 2010, 41.

\(^{270}\) ICC, Judgment on the Appeal of Mr Katanga Against the Decision of Trial Chamber II of 20 November 2009 Entitled “Decision on the Motion of the Defence for Germain Katanga for a Declaration on Unlawful Detention and Stay of Proceedings”, Prosecutor v. Katanga and Ngudjolo (ICC-01/04-01/07-2259), 12 July 2010, 82-84.

\(^{271}\) ICC, Order to the Defence to Reduce the Number of Witnesses to Be Called to Testify at the Confirmation of Charges Hearing and to Submit an Amended List of Viva Voce Witnesses, Prosecutor v. Samoei Ruto, Kiprono Kosgey and Arap Sang (ICC-01/09-01/11-221), 25 July 2011, 13; ICC, Urgent Order to the Defence to Reduce the Number of Witnesses to Be Called to Testify at the Confirmation of Charges Hearing and to Submit an Amended List of Viva Voce Witnesses, Prosecutor v. Kirimi Muthaura, Muigai Kenyatta and Hussein Ali (ICC-01/09-02/11-226), 10 August 2011, 17.

\(^{272}\) ICC, Decision on the “Prosecution's Request to Amend the Updated Document Containing the Charges Pursuant to Article 61(9) of the Statute”, Prosecutor v. Ruto and Sang (ICC-01/09-01/11-859), 16 August 2013, 42.

\(^{273}\) ICC, Decision on the implementation of regulation 55 of the Regulations of the Court and severing the charges against the accused persons, Prosecutor v. Katanga and Ngudjolo (ICC-01/04-01/07-3319-tENG/FRA), 21 November 2012, 43; see also ICC, Judgment on the appeals of Mr Lubanga Dyllo and the Prosecution against the Decision of Trial Chamber I of 14 July 2009 entitled “Decision giving notice to the parties and participants that the legal characterisation of the facts may be subject to change in accordance with Regulation 55(2) of the Regulations of the Court”, Prosecutor v. Lubanga (ICC-01/04-01/06-2205), 8 December 2009, 86.

\(^{274}\) ICC, Decision on the implementation of regulation 55 of the Regulations of the Court and severing the charges against the accused persons, Prosecutor v. Katanga and Ngudjolo (ICC-01/04-01/07-3319-tENG/FRA), 21 November 2012, 43.
ECHR or the ACHR, or in the case law of their respective Courts.\textsuperscript{275} The Chamber further noted that it was premature to assess whether its decision would cause undue delay, and held that its decision was necessary to ‘close accountability gaps’.\textsuperscript{276}

Judge Christine van den Wyngaert strongly dissented from the majority’s approach, because, amongst other things, the recharacterization of facts charged would necessarily cause undue delay. She argued that a proper trial on the new charges would ‘entail lengthy additional proceedings at a point in time where the trial should already have come to an end.’\textsuperscript{277} She employed the criteria developed in IHRL to support her conclusion, noting the limited complexity of the case, the diligent defence presented by the accused, and the fact that therefore, any and all substantial delays caused by the Notice Decision ‘would be entirely attributable to the Majority itself’.\textsuperscript{278} Nevertheless, the Appeals Chamber subsequently confirmed the approach of the Trial Chamber’s majority. It held that the defendant’s arguments regarding undue delay were ‘premature’, although it did caution the Trial Chamber to be ‘particularly vigilant’ in guarding against delays.\textsuperscript{279} Judge Cuno Tarfusser dissented from the majority, but his dissent did not touch upon the issue of delay.\textsuperscript{280}

The Judgment in the case followed in March 2014, one year and four months after the Notice Decision. Regarding the issue of delay, the Trial Chamber considered that it had constantly been guided by considerations of expeditiousness, and that the right to be tried without undue delay had been fully respected.\textsuperscript{281} The majority’s consideration of this issue occupied one paragraph, which is striking given the strongly worded and extensive dissent of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{275} ICC, Judgment on the appeals of Mr Lubanga Dyilo and the Prosecutor against the Decision of Trial Chamber I of 14 July 2009 entitled “Decision giving notice to the parties and participants that the legal characterisation of the facts may be subject to change in accordance with Regulation 55(2) of the Regulations of the Court”, \textit{Prosecutor v. Lubanga} (ICC-01/04-01/06-2205), 8 December 2009, 84.
  \item \textsuperscript{276} ICC, Decision on the implementation of regulation 55 of the Regulations of the Court and severing the charges against the accused persons, \textit{Prosecutor v. Katanga and Ngudjolo} (ICC-01/04-01/07-3319-tENG/FRA), 21 November 2012, 45.
  \item \textsuperscript{277} ICC, Decision on the implementation of regulation 55 of the Regulations of the Court and severing the charges against the accused persons, Dissenting Opinion of Judge Christine van den Wyngaert, \textit{Prosecutor v. Katanga and Ngudjolo} (ICC-01/04-01/07-3319-tENG/FRA), 21 November 2012, 49.
  \item \textsuperscript{278} ibid, 51.
  \item \textsuperscript{279} ICC, Decision on the implementation of regulation 55 of the Regulations of the Court and severing the charges against the accused persons, Dissenting Opinion of Judge Germain Katanga against the decision of Trial Chamber II of 21 November 2012 entitled “Decision on the implementation of regulation 55 of the Regulations of the Court and severing the charges against the accused persons”, \textit{Prosecutor v. Katanga} (ICC-01/04-01/07-3363), 27 March 2013, 98.
  \item \textsuperscript{280} ICC, Judgment on the appeal of Mr Germain Katanga against the decision of Trial Chamber II of 21 November 2012 entitled “Decision on the implementation of regulation 55 of the Regulations of the Court and severing the charges against the accused persons”, \textit{Prosecutor v. Katanga} (ICC-01/04-01/07-3363), 27 March 2013, 98.
  \item \textsuperscript{281} ICC, Juge rendu en application de l’article 74 du Statut, \textit{Prosecutor v. Katanga} (ICC-01/04-01/07-3436), 7 March 2014, 1590, 1591: “pour la Chambre, les exigences de l’article 67-1-c ont donc été pleinement respectées.” As a result, its subsequent sentencing judgement thus did not lower the sentence, which the Chamber had suggested earlier as a possible compensation for delays: ICC, Décision relative à la peine (article 76 du Statut), \textit{Prosecutor v. Katanga} (ICC-01/04-01/07-3484), 23 May 2014.
\end{itemize}
Judge Christine van den Wyngaert. Amongst other things, she considered the accused’s right to be tried without undue delay to have been violated, a finding which she supported with many references to IHRL, including the ICCPR, ECHR, ACHPR, and ACHR, and to the jurisprudence of their supervisory mechanisms.\textsuperscript{282} Furthermore, she quoted the parameters employed in human rights law to determine whether a delay has been undue, relying on case law of the ECtHR, and she considered that, while complexity may impact on the length of the proceedings, the ‘decisive element’ is the conduct of the authorities.\textsuperscript{283} In her opinion, the Chamber was itself solely responsible for the delays subsequent to the Notice decision and these could have been prevented ‘had the Notice Decision been rendered in due time and with sufficient specificity.’\textsuperscript{284} Regarding the complexity of the case, she noted that ‘[t]he charges now concern one accused and are based on a single attack on a single location on a single day, which renders the case factually far less complex than many multi-accused cases before other international courts and tribunals. In these circumstances, the delays are inexplicable and unjustifiable.’\textsuperscript{285} She therefore concluded that ‘the extreme tardiness of the Notice Decision, in combination with the poor handling of the ensuing proceedings, has resulted in inexcusable delays’, which she considered to have violated the accused’s right to be tried without undue delay.\textsuperscript{286} Finally, referring to case law of the ECtHR, Judge van den Wyngaert cited the specificity of international criminal trials as requiring a more stringent obligation for the authorities to act diligently, because any case before the ICC ‘necessarily involves very high stakes for the accused’.\textsuperscript{287}

Before assessing these decisions, two further decisions that have touched upon the issue of delay are first discussed. In \textit{Gbagbo}, the Chamber tested its decision to postpone the confirmation of charges hearing against the right to be tried without undue delay, recalling its obligation under article 21(3) to respect internationally recognized human rights.\textsuperscript{288} The Chamber cited the ECtHR in support of the contention that assessments of undue delay must


\textsuperscript{283} ibid, 122.

\textsuperscript{284} ibid, 126.

\textsuperscript{285} ibid, 128; similarly ICC, Decision on the implementation of regulation 55 of the Regulations of the Court and severing the charges against the accused persons, Dissenting Opinion of Judge Christine van den Wyngaert, \textit{Prosecutor v. Katanga and Ngudjolo} (ICC-01/04-01/07-3319-ENG/FRA), 21 November 2012, 51.


\textsuperscript{287} ibid, 125.

\textsuperscript{288} ICC, Decision adjourning the hearing on the confirmation of charges pursuant to article 61(7)(c)(i) of the Rome Statute, \textit{Prosecutor v. Gbagbo} (ICC-02/11-01/11-432), 3 June 2013, 39.
be ‘determined on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the particularities of the case.’

Despite its initial reliance on ECtHR case law, including of the parameters used by it to determine undue delay, the Chamber subsequently balanced the possible delays caused by the postponement against the seriousness of the charges, the complexity of the case, and the fact that postponement was provided for by the ICC Statute. Judge Fernandez de Gurmendi dissented, amongst other things, because she believed the postponement would be ‘to the detriment’ of the accused’s right to be tried without undue delay. Neither the majority nor the dissenting Judge provided extensive reasoning in supporting their conclusion.

In *Kenyatta*, the Chamber weighed the Prosecution’s request to adjourn the trial date against the possible implications this would have for the accused’s right to be tried without undue delay. Although the Chamber was quite critical of the conduct of the Prosecutor thus far, it nonetheless considered that the relative complexity of the case, as well as the fact that he was awaiting trial in freedom, made that ‘an adjournment of limited duration … would not be inconsistent with the rights of the accused.’

These three examples reflect an approach to the right to be tried without undue delay that is comparable to that of the ad hoc Tribunals, particularly of the ICTR. The decision in *Kenyatta* relied mainly on the case’s complexity to justify further delays in the commencement of the trial, without substantiating what this complexity entailed, or reflecting on the possible responsibility of the judicial or prosecutorial authorities for this. The decision in *Gbago* also relied on the complexity of the case without adding any substantiation, and on the seriousness of the charges, which is not an acceptable parameter in IHRL that may impact on assessments of undue delay. Finally, the decisions in *Katanga* fail to engage with serious allegations of undue delay raised by one of the members of the bench. Her and the defence’s allegations of delay were summarily discarded, with no reference to IHRL, which raises questions regarding the ICC’s obligation to adhere to internationally recognized human rights, enshrined in Article 21(3) of the Statute. On a general level, the ICC has found that the complexity of cases mitigates possible delays. In assessing such complexity, various as-

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289 ibid.
290 ibid, 41 and 39, n 55, where the Chamber said to ‘pay heed to the criteria established by the ECtHR including the complexity of the case and the conduct of the applicant and the relevant authorities.’
292 ICC, Decision on Prosecution’s applications for a finding of non-compliance pursuant to Article 87(7) and for an adjournment of the provisional trial date, *Prosecutor v. Kenyatta* (ICC-01/09-02/11-908), 31 March 2014, 80.
293 ibid, 97.
pects specific to the context in which the ICC operates have been mentioned. For example, one Chamber has specified that both the fact that all the evidence is situated abroad, as well as the enormous amount of it significantly complicate the pre-trial process. A Single Judge has similarly considered that the volume of the evidence, the disclosure process and the number of filings contribute to the case’s complexity. Another has examined the multiplicity of the crimes alleged, the distance between the accused’s actions and the scene of the actual crimes, and the reliance on novel forms of individual responsibility as contributing to the complexity.

4.2. Analysis: Comparison and the ICC’s use of IHRL

To a certain extent, not much can yet be said about the ICC’s approach to the right to be tried without undue delay. Like the ad hoc Tribunals, it has employed this right as a device to streamline its proceedings, and to limit certain procedural actions by the parties. However, it has not to date addressed the question whether a specific accused person’s right to be tried without undue delay has been violated. Having commenced its operations eleven years ago, it is too early to judge the ICC’s performance regarding the right to be tried without undue delay. Thus far, the pace of the proceedings before the Court seems similar to that of those before its ad hoc predecessors. In addition, it has followed in the footsteps of their problematic approach to the right to be tried without undue delay.

When it comes to reliance on IHRL, the ICC’s case law regarding the right to be tried without undue delay has included summary references to the ECHR, ICCPR, ACHR, and the ACHPR. The Court has also referred to the case law of the ECtHR and the IACtHR.

297 ICC, Order to the Defence to Reduce the Number of Witnesses to Be Called to Testify at the Confirmation of Charges Hearing and to Submit an Amended List of Viva Voce Witnesses, Prosecutor v. Samoei Ruto, Kiprono Kosgey and Arap Sang (ICC-01/09-01-11-221), 25 July 2011, 12; ICC, Urgent Order to the Defence to Reduce the Number of Witnesses to Be Called to Testify at the Confirmation of Charges Hearing and to Submit an Amended List of Viva Voce Witnesses, Prosecutor v. Kirimi Muthaura, Muigai Kenyatta and Hussein Ali (ICC-01/09-02-11-226), 10 August 2011, 16.
as well as to the observations of the HRC. 300 None of its decisions discussed the basis on which the Court referred to these sources. It is difficult to draw general conclusions from this limited amount of case law about the impact of IHRL on the ICC’s practice – even more so because the decisions that did refer to IHRL, including precedents from human rights courts and supervisory bodies, did so in a perfunctory way. The Chambers tend to include a reference to either the provisions of human rights treaties or case law of the ECtHR and the IACtHR, but have failed to engage with the content of respective guarantees and principles developed in the case law. In one case, the Court held that an excessive workload cannot excuse violations of the right to be tried without undue delay, which it supported by a reference to ECtHR case law. 301 At the same time, the Court has emphasized the relevance of its own specific context and has stated that although it paid careful attention to the case law of ‘other international bodies’, the Court’s decisions must always be taken in the context of its own work and the requirements of the particular case before it. 302 This has been held to impact on the expeditiousness of its trials. According to the Court, the complexity of the crimes that it adjudicates renders it essential that a trial be properly managed. 303 On a general level, however, the ICC has thus far only made limited use of IHRL regarding the right to be tried without undue delay. It has included references to human rights conventions or case law of human rights courts and supervisory bodies, but it has not truly engaged with the content of such sources.

The average length of proceedings before the ICC thus far is somewhere between the ICTY and the ICTR. To date, the ICC has completed three trials at first instance, which took around four-and-a-half, six, and six-and-a-half years for Ngudjolo, Lubanga, and Katanga respectively. The appeal in Lubanga has taken more than two-and-a-half years. Two further trials have commenced but are not proceeding expeditiously: Bemba has been in ICC custody for around six-and-a-half years and closing arguments have taken place in November 2014.

299 ICC, Decision on the Prosecutor's application for leave to appeal Pre-Trial Chamber III's decision on disclosure, Prosecutor v. Bemba (ICC-01/05-01/08-75), 25 August 2008, 17.
300 ICC, Decision regarding the Timing and Manner of Disclosure and the Date of Trial, Prosecutor v. Lubanga (ICC-01/04-01/06-1019), 9 November 2007, 21; ICC, Decision on the Prosecutor's application for leave to appeal Pre-Trial Chamber III's decision on disclosure, Prosecutor v. Bemba (ICC-01/05-01/08-75), 25 August 2008, 17.
301 ICC, Decision on the “Prosecution's Urgent Application to Be Permitted to Present as Incriminating Evidence Transcripts and translations of Videos and Video DRCOTP-1042-0006 pursuant to Regulation 35 and Request for Redactions (ICC-01/04-01/07-1336), 27 July 2009, 6.
302 ICC, Decision regarding the Timing and Manner of Disclosure and the Date of Trial, Prosecutor v. Lubanga (ICC-01/04-01/06-1019), 9 November 2007, 21.
Furthermore, Ruto and Sang, who are not provisionally detained, waited around two-and-a-half years between indictment and the commencement of trial in September 2013. Some of the cases currently at the pre-trial stage have been plagued with delays. Gbagbo has been in ICC custody since late 2011, the confirmation of charges hearings have been completed on 28 February 2013 and the decision confirming the charges was issued in June 2014, but it is difficult to predict when his actual trial might commence.\(^{304}\) The charges against incumbent Kenyan president Kenyatta were confirmed on 23 January 2012, less then a year after he was summoned. However, after almost three years of uncertainty, the Prosecutor dropped the charges against him in December 2014.\(^{305}\) Finally, Ntaganda has been in ICC custody since March 2013, the confirmation of charges hearings have been concluded on 14 February 2014, and the charges have been confirmed in June 2014. His trial is set to commence in June 2015, so the relatively swift progress in this case so far is promising.\(^{306}\)

It may be premature to judge the ICC’s performance on the numbers presented here, particularly given the fact that the length of these proceedings cannot be attributed to the Court alone.\(^{307}\) However, the conduct of prosecutorial and judicial authorities has undoubtedly contributed to delays in several of these instances. For example, the proceedings against Lubanga have been stayed twice for a total of around eight months as a result of prosecutorial misconduct.\(^{308}\) Although the Appeals Chamber has noted the negative impact of those stays on the accused’s right to be tried without undue delay,\(^{309}\) the trial judgment contained no con-


\(^{306}\) ICC Website <http://icc-cpi.int/en_menus/icc/situations%20and%20cases/situations/situation%20icc%200104/related%20cases/icc%200104%200206/Pages/icc%200104%200206.aspx> accessed 28 October 2014.


\(^{309}\) ICC, Judgment on the appeal of the Prosecutor against the Decision of Trial Chamber I entitled “Decision on the Consequences of non-Disclosure of Exculpatory Materials Covered by Article 54(3)(e) Agreements and the
sideration of possible violations of this right. In addition, the consequences of the decision to recharacterize the facts charged in *Katanga* have been subject to criticism, including from one of the members of the Chamber. In that regard, it is even more striking that the majority failed to properly consider the possible violation of the accused’s right to be tried without undue delay. Instead of assessing the parameters established in IHRL, like Judge Van den Wyngaert did in her dissent, the majority simply asserted that it had constantly been guided by considerations of expeditiousness. 310 Similarly, the two other decisions that contained a more than perfunctory reference to the right to be tried without undue delay failed to properly consider these parameters. 311 Even though one of them cited these parameters, the Chamber instead relied on the seriousness of the charges and the complexity of the case to justify its decision to postpone the confirmation hearing. 312

5. Conclusion

Much has been written about the slow pace of international criminal justice. From the perspective of this study, the interesting question is how this has impacted on the ICTs’ interpretation and application of the right to be tried without undue delay. As has been seen, the ICTs’ claim to be guided by IHRL and practice regarding this right. Upon closer scrutiny, however, it appears that the ICTs’ use of IHRL is quite selective. They often rely on case law of human rights courts and supervisory bodies to underline the casuistic nature of this right, and that there are no absolute time limits for the length of proceedings to remain reasonable. Similarly, they have often referred to IHRL to support their reliance on the complexity of the cases before them as a justification of the length of proceedings. However, other aspects of the ICTs’ practice regarding the right to be tried without undue delay significantly depart from IHRL, but the ICTs’ have not thus far justified, or even acknowledged such departures.

The ICTs rely far more on the complexity of the cases before them than would appear admissible in IHRL. In addition, they have failed to truly connect the complexity of their cases to the length of their proceedings. When defendants raise allegations of undue delay, the

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310 See supra section 4.1.
ICTs’ generally invoke the case’s complexity without truly substantiating this, or, importantly, assessing the possible responsibility of the judicial and prosecutorial authorities for that complexity, or ways in which the case could have proceeded more expeditiously despite such complexity. In IHRL, the conduct of the authorities is the key factor in determining whether a delay has been undue, another aspect of IHRL that the ICTs have not recognized. Furthermore, the ICTs have relied on parameters additional to those that have been recognized in IHRL as relevant to determinations of undue delay. The ad hoc Tribunals have invented the requirement of ‘prejudice’, which, in their reigning approach to undue delay, must be proven by the defence in order for delays to be found undue. In addition, Tribunals and the ICC have relied on the gravity of the crimes charged as a factor impacting on undue delay assessments, which suggests that individuals who are accused of serious crimes are entitled to a lesser degree of human rights protection, a notion that goes against the very foundation of IHRL. Finally, the ICTs have consistently imposed the burden of proof regarding the parameters to establish undue delay on the defence. The reigning approach in IHRL is the opposite: the defence must show that the proceedings were lengthy, on a prima facie level, whereupon the burden of proof shifts to the authorities to explain and justify this length.

It thus appears that the ICTs have a very distinct approach to the right to be tried without undue delay, as compared to IHRL. However, the ICTs themselves have not rationalized their approach as a departure from internationally recognized human rights, which renders it more difficult to assess whether their approach might be justifiable from the perspective of the unique context in which they operate. Admittedly, the inherent complexity of an international criminal trial should grant the ICTs a certain measure of leeway regarding the length of their proceedings. However, the blanket and at times unsubstantiated manner in which they have invoked the complexity of their cases detracts from such a justification, particularly in the context of several cases, discussed in the above, where the defence and even members of the bench have claimed that delays resulted from the ICTs’ own actions. Proper contextualized interpretations of the right to be tried without undue delay would require better substantiation and justification. What is more, ICC Judge Van den Wyngaert has argued that the particular context of an ICT, where so much is at stake for defendants, would perhaps imply a stronger obligation of special diligence on the part of the judicial authorities.\(^{313}\)

\(^{313}\) See supra section 4.1.