



## **UNIVERSAL JURISDICTION UPDATES** **(January – March 2026)**

### January 2026

- 1. Timorese authorities opened legal proceedings against Myanmar Military Junta:** [A group representing survivors of war crimes committed by Myanmar's junta has filed a criminal complaint](#) with Timor-Leste's Public Prosecutor, seeking an investigation. The Chin Human Rights Organisation, which represents survivors and documents abuses, stated that the case includes evidence of mass killings, sexual violence, attacks on civilians and hospitals, and the targeting of religious leaders and churches. Judicial authorities in Timor Leste have appointed a senior prosecutor to examine the case. [Timor Leste Opens War Crimes Proceedings Against Myanmar Junta](#).
- 2. Rifaat al-Assad Case (Switzerland):** Rifaat al-Assad, former Syrian vice president and known as the "Butcher of Hama," was accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity for his role in the 1982 Hama massacre, where he commanded the Defense Brigades that besieged the city, resulting in an estimated 10,000–40,000 deaths and countless cases of torture and enforced disappearances. In 2013, TRIAL International filed a complaint after learning he was in Switzerland, prompting a formal investigation under universal jurisdiction by the Swiss Office of the Attorney General (OAG). The OAG issued an international arrest warrant in November 2021 and indicted him in March 2024. Following the fall of the Assad government in December 2024, Rifaat reportedly fled to Dubai, where he died in January 2026 without facing trial. [Rifaat al-Assad](#)

### February 2026

- 1. Nicolás Maduro (Argentina):** An [Argentine judge has requested the extradition of Nicolás Maduro](#), the former Venezuelan President captured by the USA in January 2025 for narco-terrorism and conspiracy. The case against Maduro was filed in 2023 in Buenos Aires by plaintiffs who suffered torture, arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance, among other abuses, at the hands of Venezuelan security forces

and intelligence agents. The Argentinian inquest accuses Maduro of crimes against humanity. [Nicolás Maduro](#)

## March 2026

- 1. Rom Kovtun Case (Chile):** A Chilean court is reviewing a criminal complaint against Rom Kovtun, a former Israeli army sniper in Gaza, accused of war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity. Kovtun, an Israeli-Ukrainian who served in Israel's 424th Shaked Battalion, was identified in Chile vacationing. The complaint is being (or has been) filed by the Hind Rajab Foundation under the principle of universal jurisdiction. [Rom Kovtun](#)
- 2. Salem Al-Salem case (The United Kingdom):** Salem Al-Salem, a former Syrian air force intelligence colonel, is charged with murder and torture as crimes against humanity, allegedly committed during the Syrian government's crackdown in Jobar near Damascus. He appeared via video at Westminster Magistrates Court with a breathing tube, suffering from motor neurone disease. Arrested in Buckinghamshire in 2021, he remains under a 24-hour curfew and on bail. The case marks the first time the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) has brought charges of murder as a crime against humanity under the International Criminal Court Act 2001. [Salem Al-Salem](#)
- 3. Samir Ousman Alsheikh Case (The United States of America):** A federal jury in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California has convicted Samir Ousman Alsheikh, 73, of serious human rights violations stemming from his role in Syria's detention system. He was found guilty of one count of conspiracy to commit torture and three counts of torture for his involvement in the abuse of prisoners at Adra Prison in Damascus, where detainees were subjected to brutal treatment under his authority. [Samir Ousman Alsheikh](#)
- 4. Claude Muhayimana (France):** The Paris Criminal Court has upheld the 14-year prison sentence of Claude Muhayimana, a 65-year-old French-Rwandan dual citizen, following his appeal. Muhayimana, a former street sweeper from Rouen and driver at a small hotel in Kibuye, western Rwanda, was found guilty of complicity in genocide and crimes against humanity for transporting Hutu Interahamwe militiamen to multiple massacre sites in April 1994, at the start of the genocide against the Tutsi. [Claude Muhayimana](#)

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