



UNIVERSAL JURISDICTION UPDATES **(July 2026 – September 2026)**

July 2026

1. **Arrest of a suspect, who has been identified only as Innocent S. under German privacy rules (Germany):** German prosecutors arrested Innocent S. in Hesse under universal jurisdiction for his alleged involvement in the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. He is suspected of ordering the deaths of 25 Tutsis while serving as an assistant to the mayor of Kayove, personally killing one victim by stabbing them in the chest, arranging death lists, and inciting the killing of Tutsis in the area- [German prosecutors arrest Rwanda genocide suspect.](#)
2. **Conviction of Khalid Al Halabi and Mussab Abou Rokbh (Austria):** The Vienna Public Prosecutor's Office brought charges against Khaled al-H. (Al Halabi), the former head of Syria's General Intelligence Directorate in Raqqa, and former Raqqa police chief Moussab Abou R. (Abou Rokbh) in November 2025. Their trial began in Vienna on 1 June 2026, and on 6 July 2026, both were convicted of serious offences committed against political opponents of the Assad government in Raqqa between 2011 and 2013. Al Halabi was convicted of torture, aggravated coercion, sexual coercion and multiple serious bodily injuries, while Abou Rokbh was convicted of aggravated coercion, sexual coercion and serious bodily injuries. Both were sentenced to eight years' imprisonment - [Syrian intelligence chief found guilty of torture by Austrian court](#); [Episode 165 – Syrian Torture, Austrian UJ Sachertorte with Astrid Reisinger Coracini – asymmetrical haircuts](#)
3. **Eugene Rwamucyo (France):** France's Appeals Court upheld Eugène Rwamucyo's 27-year prison sentence for his involvement in the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. His appeal trial opened in Paris on 9 June 2026 and lasted six weeks. He was again found guilty of complicity in genocide, complicity in crimes against humanity, and participation in a criminal conspiracy to prepare those crimes, but was acquitted of genocide and crimes against humanity charges. Rwamucyo had initially been sentenced in October 2024. The case was prosecuted under France's universal jurisdiction framework, which permits French courts to try certain international crimes committed abroad. Rwamucyo denied wrongdoing, while prosecutors alleged that he spread anti-Tutsi propaganda and

participated in the execution and burial of wounded patients - [Eugene Rwamucyo: Appeal dismissed - 27 years for genocide upheld - Rwanda Justice for Genocide](#)

4. **Chin war crimes survivors filed second motion (Philippines)-** War crimes survivors from Myanmar's Chin State and human rights advocates have filed a second "motion to resolve" at the Philippines Department of Justice (DOJ), escalating legal pressure on Manila to launch a formal investigation into the military's 2021 destruction of Thantlang town. The landmark legal action, initially lodged in 2023 under universal jurisdiction laws, seeks criminal accountability for the mass arson assault by regime forces that destroyed approximately 1,500 homes, churches, schools, and medical facilities, forcing thousands of civilians to flee across the border into India - [Chin war crimes survivors file second motion for Myanmar military investigation - DVB](#)
5. **Conviction of Twana H.S. and Asia R.A. (Germany)-** The Munich Higher Regional Court convicted Twana H.S. and Asia R.A. of genocide and multiple international crimes committed against Yazidi girls held as slaves by the Islamic State (IS). The court found that the defendants, who lived together in IS-controlled territory between 2015 and 2017, enslaved, tortured and sexually abused two Yazidi girls, aged approximately six and twelve when they entered the household, with the crimes motivated by their Yazidi identity. Twana H.S., an IS fighter, was sentenced to life imprisonment, while Asia R.A. received a youth sentence of nine years and six months. The court also convicted the defendants of crimes against humanity, war crimes and membership in a foreign terrorist organisation. The judgment was based principally on testimony from the victims and other Yazidi witnesses and was issued under Germany's universal jurisdiction over international crimes. The verdict is not yet final and may be challenged before the Federal Court of Justice- [Press release 48/2026 - Bavarian State Ministry of Justice](#).

August 2026

6. **Refusal of an Appeal of Ammar A. (Germany):** On 6 August 2026, Germany's Federal Court of Justice (BGH) rejected a Syrian defendant's appeal against his life sentence, making the conviction final. The Stuttgart Higher Regional Court had sentenced him on 3 June 2025 for crimes against humanity, including killing, forcible displacement resulting in death and torture, as well as war crimes against persons and property. The defendant, who had joined a local Shiite militia in Busra al-Sham after the Syrian civil war began in 2011, was found to have participated in attacks, killings, looting, the displacement of Sunni civilians and the torture and abuse of detainees. The BGH confirmed that German criminal law applied under universal jurisdiction, pursuant to § 1 of the Code of Crimes against International Law, despite the crimes having been committed in Syria and the defendant not being a German citizen- [The Federal Court of Justice - Homepage - Federal Court](#)

[of Justice confirms conviction of a member of a Shiite militia for several crimes in the Syrian civil war](#)

7. **Conviction of a Rwandan national whose name was undisclosed (The Netherlands)**- A Dutch court in The Hague convicted a 66-year-old Rwandan national of participating in the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda and sentenced him to life imprisonment. The court found that he participated in attacks in two predominantly Tutsi communities, including looting and burning homes, and threw a grenade into a crowd of Tutsis sheltering in a football stadium. The defendant had fled Rwanda after the genocide and later settled in the Netherlands, where he was arrested and prosecuted. The conviction followed a years-long investigation involving interviews with more than 30 witnesses, most in Rwanda, and testimony from victims and relatives- [Dutch court sentences Rwandan man to life for 1994 genocide crimes | AP News](#)
8. **Torden War Crimes Appeal (Finland)**: The Helsinki Court of Appeal reduced Russian national Voislav Torden's life sentence to 12 years and six months for three war crimes committed in eastern Ukraine in 2014. Torden, a former deputy commander of the Rusich paramilitary group, was found to have participated in an ambush in Luhansk in which 22 Ukrainian soldiers were killed, including by firing a light machine gun and using a Ukrainian flag to deceive the troops. The court rejected charges concerning the shooting of wounded soldiers and the carving of a Rusich symbol into a wounded soldier, but upheld other convictions relating to photographs with a dead Ukrainian soldier and Rusich statements threatening no mercy or prisoners. Torden was tried in Finland after the Finnish Supreme Court blocked his extradition to Ukraine, making the case a significant example of domestic prosecution of international crimes committed in Ukraine- [Voislav Torden's life sentence cut to 12.5 years - Helsinki Times](#)
9. **Complaint Against Israeli Reservist, Matan Jerafi (Vietnam)**: The Hind Rajab Foundation (HRF) filed a criminal complaint in Vietnam against Israeli reservist Matan Jerafi, alleging war crimes, genocide and direct and public incitement to genocide. The complaint concerns alleged destruction of civilian infrastructure in Gaza (December 2023–January 2024) and southern Lebanon (October–November 2024), as well as public statements advocating the removal of Palestinians and characterising Gaza's civilian population as connected to Hamas. HRF argues that the alleged conduct falls within relevant provisions of the Geneva Conventions, the Genocide Convention, and the Rome Statute, and called on Vietnamese authorities to investigate under universal jurisdiction. [HRF Files Criminal Complaint in Vietnam Against Israeli Reservist | THE HIND RAJAB FOUNDATION](#)
10. **Unnamed Israeli Soldier (India)**: The Hind Rajab Foundation (HRF) filed a criminal complaint in India against an Israeli soldier vacationing in the country, alleging war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide arising from the destruction of civilian property in Gaza. The complaint concerns the alleged

systematic demolition of civilian infrastructure in Abasan al-Saghira, Khan Younis, between March and April 2024, supported by satellite imagery, social media footage and open-source intelligence. HRF alleges that the destruction occurred after Israeli forces had established operational control of the area and invokes relevant provisions of the Geneva Conventions, Additional Protocol I, Rome Statute and Genocide Convention- [HRF Files Criminal Complaint in India Against Israeli Soldier | THE HIND RAJAB FOUNDATION](#)

September 2026

- 11. Appeal trial of Yuri Harauski over Belarus Enforced Disappearances (Switzerland)**- On 22 September 2026, the appeal trial of Yuri Harauski concluded after a day of hearings before the Cantonal Court of St Gallen, Switzerland, concerning his alleged involvement in the enforced disappearances of Yury Zakharenka, Viktor Gonchar and Anatoly Krasouski in Belarus. Harauski acknowledged during questioning that he had been a member of the Belarusian SOBR and stated that he had “abducted and liquidated” the three men, allegedly on orders from Alexander Lukashenko relayed by Dmitry Pavlichenko. The prosecution and plaintiffs argued for a guilty verdict, while the defence sought to uphold his first-instance acquittal, arguing that the elements of enforced disappearance under Article 185bis of the Swiss Criminal Code were not satisfied and that the provision was too vague. The Court also rejected certain evidence submitted by the complainants and ruled that they could not participate as parties concerning Viktor Gonchar’s disappearance because they were not close relatives. The verdict was not delivered on 22 September; it is expected to be announced orally in October 2026, with the exact date yet to be communicated- [Yuri Harauski - TRIAL International](#)
- 12. Prosecution against Dr Vincent Brown (The UK)**- On 22 September 2026, the UK Crown Prosecution Service announced charges against Dr Vincent Brown (formerly Vincent Bajinya), 65, in connection with alleged crimes committed during the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. He has been charged with one offence of conduct ancillary to genocide and six offences of conduct ancillary to murder as a crime against humanity, under s 52 of the *International Criminal Court Act 2001* (UK). The charges allege that Brown directed and incited acts of murder and genocide carried out by others. The decision followed an evidentiary review by the CPS of material submitted by the Metropolitan Police’s War Crimes Team. This is the first time the UK has brought charges relating to the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. Brown appeared before Westminster Magistrates’ Court on 22 September 2026- [First genocide offences in the UK as man charged following Tutsi killings in Rwanda | The Crown Prosecution Service](#)
- 13. Samir Ousman al-Sheikh (The USA)**- On 17 September 2026, a US federal court in Los Angeles sentenced Samir Ousman al-Sheikh, former head of Syria’s Adra

Prison, to 60 years' imprisonment for torture and immigration fraud. Al-Sheikh oversaw the prison's notorious "Wing 13", where regime opponents were subjected to severe torture, including beatings, suspension and the "flying carpet" method. A federal jury had convicted him in March 2026 following testimony from several victims and witnesses. Al-Sheikh, who moved to the US in 2020 and was arrested in 2024, is the first Assad-regime official to stand trial in the United States and one of only five people prosecuted under the US Torture Act, which permits prosecution of persons present in the US for torture committed abroad- [US court sentences ex-Syrian official who ran notorious 'punishment wing' to 60 years | US news | The Guardian](#).

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