

## 4 PHD POSITIONS

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### PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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Deadline for applications	Jan 14, 2019
Foreseen starting date	September 1, 2019
Department	Faculty of Law and Criminology – Human Rights Center
Contract	Limited duration
Degree requirements	Master's degree in law, social and political sciences, anthropology or a related discipline
Occupancy rate	100%
Vacancy Type	Research

### JOB DESCRIPTION

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We are seeking to fill four full-time, 40-months, fully-funded PhD fellowships as part of the ERC-funded research project **“Righting Victim Participation in Transitional Justice”** (ERC-2018-STG-804154). You will primarily be based at the **Human Rights Center at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences**.

The research project is a multi-disciplinary and multi-method study of the **effects of victim participation in transitional justice processes**. It studies the long-term (and often unforeseen) effects of this participation on victims and victim communities by analyzing how their perceptions of justice and of what their rights are change in response to their participation in transitional justice processes. The cases under consideration are **Cambodia, the DRC, Tunisia and Guatemala**. The aim is to map best practices that allow for more victim-oriented approaches to and understandings of transitional justice processes.

The project methodology requires that the PhD candidates spend about three months per year in the – post-conflict- country they are studying, to engage in participant observation, carry out interviews, collect documents, do focus groups and set up experimental designs.

We are looking for mature PhD candidates, ideally speaking with a research degree; and/or experience of doing fieldwork in one of these countries or in other post-conflict settings; and/or who speak one or more of the local languages of the case studies.

Our working language is English.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE BROADER RESEARCH PROJECT

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The question of how to serve justice, facilitate peaceful transitions and empower victims of past large-scale abuses is about as old as the field of transitional justice itself. Increasingly, academics and practitioners are turning to participatory approaches as a promising way to make advances regarding each of these issues. An oft-cited benefit of victim participation in transitional justice processes is that it allegedly increases the legitimacy of these processes by rendering them more locally relevant, and that it empowers participants and turns them into ambassadors of the justice process.

However, little is known about how to organize this participation in practice or under which conditions alleged benefits (for individual victims-participants or for society at large) are likely to materialize. As a result, participation is often organized in an 'add-victims-and-stir' way with little critical reflection about potential unforeseen or long-term effects.

Because formal and informal transitional justice processes often face significant practical, financial and political constraints, it is crucial to better understand how participatory approaches can be developed in ways that contribute to a positive and lasting legacy, especially in a world where a vast number of societies is emerging from violent conflict, and where failure to engender durable justice and peace may lead to more instability and ultimately violence.

The main objective of this project is therefore threefold, (1) to conduct a systematic empirical analysis of the scope, nature and role of victim participation in transitional justice processes, (2) to develop the critical victimology framework that is currently missing, and (3) to establish how this framework can be used to conceptualize victim participation in ways that contribute to transitional justice's goal of engendering just, stable and secure societies.

A multi-disciplinary approach, rooted in legal studies, social psychology, political science, public administration and anthropology is proposed, which allows for a multi-dimensional understanding of these issues, both in academic and in practical terms. The research findings from this project will have the potential to enhance the stability of the global society by creating scientific results and turning them into measurable impact. They will provide policy-makers with empirically supported expertise on pressing policy issues, and, because of the project's attention to international institutions as well as local contexts, findings will enrich our scholarly understanding of the interaction between these policy levels and apply to many post-conflict settings worldwide.

## PROFILE OF THE CANDIDATE

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In order to be eligible, applicants must

- hold a master's degree in law, social and political sciences, anthropology or a related discipline;
- have obtained their degree at the time of application or demonstrate convincingly that they will have that degree in hand by July 1, 2019;
- be fluent in English as their working language and as their primary publication language
- spend longer periods of time abroad for fieldwork and participate in international conferences

Furthermore, applicants who meet the following conditions will be ranked higher during the assessment procedure

- good knowledge of the field of transitional justice, victim-oriented approaches or related fields relevant to the project;
- good knowledge of (at least one of) the other language(s) relevant to the preferred case study;
- experience with fieldwork, ideally in post-conflict settings, or specifically in one of the four case studies
- experience with either ethnographic methods (such as participant-observation, interpretive research design); large-n analysis or legal analysis – and ideally a combination of these;
- pre-existing networks relevant to the research and fieldwork.

In addition to these project specific elements, we expect candidates to

- have the ability to work independently and in a team;
- have excellent academic writing/presentation skills;
- contribute towards the general well-functioning of the team;
- have some social media experience, or interest therein;
- work in a meticulous way and be able to manage deadlines.

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## HOW TO APPLY

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To apply, please send us:

- A **cover letter** outlining how your professional and research experience is relevant for this project, your motivation, and which case study you wish to be considered for
- a **detailed CV** (including publication list if available)
- a transcript of your degree(s)
  - If you have a foreign diploma in a language other than our national languages (Dutch, French or German) or English, please add a translation in one of the mentioned languages.
  - a ‘Certificate of equivalence’ is required for diplomas awarded outside the European Union (This can be requested via [www.naricvlaanderen.be/en](http://www.naricvlaanderen.be/en)).
- two **letters of recommendation**, and
- a **writing sample** on a related topic (10.000 words maximum, in English, ideally an academic or research paper).

Applicants are invited to submit these documents (as **one pdf file**) via **email** to [tine.destrooper@ugent.be](mailto:tine.destrooper@ugent.be) with the subject line “ERC PhD Application – name of the case study”.

The deadline for submission is **January 14, 2019**.

The foreseen starting date is **September 1, 2019**, or soon after.

For inquiries, please contact prof. dr. Tine Destrooper at [tine.destrooper@ugent.be](mailto:tine.destrooper@ugent.be)

## EVALUATION PROCEDURE

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A longlist of applicants will be invited for a home-based written assignment, which will take place in the week of January 21. Candidates can indicate which timeslot best suits their schedule, and will have to send in the assignment before an agreed upon deadline that same week.

On the basis of this assignment, a shortlist of applicants will be invited for an interview in Ghent or through video conference, most likely in the week of January 28. Video conferencing will be available for international applicants. During this interview, we will assess the relevance of your experience for this project, and gauge whether you meet all the requirements.

## CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

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The indicative starting salary is € 2065 net per month (salary scale PhD candidates Flemish Universities) in the first year, based on a full-time position. Several elements are factored into the calculation of the exact salary, including relevant prior experience and family situation.

The University also offers several social benefits to which the candidate has access, such as commuter allowances, access to university restaurants. More information can be found [here](#).

The position must result in a PhD thesis within the contract period.

The selected candidates will be based in Ghent, but are expected to spend longer periods of time in the countries they are studying. In Ghent, you will be part of a small research team working on victim participation in transitional justice processes. This team is embedded in the Human Rights Center of the Faculty of Law and Criminology of Ghent University (see below).

The selected candidates can enroll in relevant courses at the University of Ghent.

The successful candidates will be supported to apply for additional external funding if they wish to extend the duration of their PhD trajectory.

## DEPARTMENT

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### Ghent University

[Ghent University](#) is a top 100 university and one of the major universities in Belgium. Our 11 faculties offer a wide range of courses and conduct in-depth research within a wide range of scientific domains.

Ghent University occupies a specific position among the Flemish universities. We are a socially committed and pluralistic university that is open to all students, regardless of their ideological, political, cultural or social background.

In its mission statement, Ghent University identifies itself as a socially committed university. This implies that the institution reflects about the positive impact that its activities can have upon society, and that it attempts to optimize that impact. It also implies the reflection about the potential negative impact of activities upon society, and the attempt of minimizing such impact.

Research is the motor of Ghent University. Boundaries are pushed. Researchers make discoveries. These discoveries impact people worldwide, give new impulses to teaching, and provide a foundation for a knowledge society.

Over the course of its 200 year history Ghent University has built up a strong scientific reputation. Ghent University invests both in fundamental, high risk science as in applied research. The university is known for its scientific expertise in life sciences and medicine, materials and agricultural science, veterinary medicine, psychology and history, and many more. This university does not just offer a

### Faculty of Law and Criminology

The Faculty provides academic teaching and services based on innovative scientific research.

The education within these programmes is supported by the innovative scientific research performed within the 3 faculty departments encompassing all possible disciplines within the fields of law and criminological sciences.

### Human Rights Center

The Human Rights Centre at the Faculty of Law and Criminology at Ghent University is an academic center specialized in human rights law. We are proud of our dynamic international team, counting many young researchers and of our broad research and teaching expertise, covering international, regional, national and comparative law of human rights. Human Rights Centre members work on a range of thematic issues, including legal pluralism, freedom of expression, gender, indigenous peoples' rights, and the European Court of Human Rights. Members also actively engage with human rights practice by supervising clinical projects and submitting third-party interventions to the European Court of Human Rights.

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## DIVERSITY

We ensure equal opportunities, equal treatment and equal access to the vacancies for all who apply. We ensure an objective and non-biased assessment procedure. Origin, ethnicity, gender, age, employment disability, sexual orientation and other identity factors will not be a factor in assessing the competences. Candidates belonging to vulnerable or minority groups are strongly encouraged to apply.

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## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Prof. Dr. Tine Destrooper

[Tine.destrooper@ugent.be](mailto:Tine.destrooper@ugent.be)