

The Reckoning:

The Battle for the International Criminal Court

The International Criminal Court (ICC) represents the most ambitious attempt ever to apply the rule of law on a global scale and to protect the most basic human rights. Launched in 2002, it is the first permanent international court set up to prosecute individuals for crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide.

The film is a David & Goliath battle of titanic proportions as International Criminal Court Prosecutor Luis Moreno-Ocampo faces down warlords, genocidal dictators and world superpowers in his struggle to tame the Wild West of global conflict zones and bring perpetrators of crimes against humanity to justice.

Budget:

Production Budget \$1.3 million

What the Critics Said...

"[*The Reckoning*] conveys the extreme trickiness of achieving both peace and justice amid politically loaded situations."

Variety

"*The Reckoning* is a riveting look at the ICC's efforts to bring to justice the perpetrators of some of the world's worst crimes while those offenses are still taking place."

USA Today

"We tend to steer away from film recommendations here, but a documentary about the International Criminal Court, airing on PBS, should be worth your while."

Americanlawyer.com

IMDB

7.4/10 (39votes)

User Reviews Average

Awards

Nominated for 10 awards including 2 Emmys.

One World Film Festival

Audience Award

Politics on Film Festival, Washington DC

Best Documentary

Who saw it?

Cinema:

Independent touring cinemas

in **US** and **Africa**

Broadcast:

shown in **6** territories including US, Uganda and Kenya

Estimated

Global Audience:

unknown

Festivals:

51 Internationally including Sundance, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty

Online Film
Views:

approximately **60,000**

Facebook:

250

Twitter:

1,672

THE CAMPAIGN

The Reckoning's ambitious campaign focused both on the United States and countries that have had cases brought against them by The ICC. Their aim was educate and inform, and the campaign was at the very centre of the film constructing ideas of ways the campaign could work at the very early research and development stage of the film.

The film team's campaign in the US initially focused on ways to maximise awareness off the back of the television broadcast - through media coverage and engagement with institutions, and community-based organisations working in related areas such as human rights, politics and law.

Their international campaign focused on ensuring that communities affected by the kind of violations that the ICC aims to tackle would have the opportunity to see the film and understand there were steps being taken to end impunity.

Campaign Aims

- 1) To increase awareness of human rights
- 2) To generate debate on the role of the ICC
- 3) To encourage viewers to join and support human rights campaigning groups
- 4) To educate viewers on subject of genocide
- 5) To support the ICC

How the Campaign Worked

Community screenings and educational programmes were at the heart of the campaign. The Community screenings allowed the film to be seen throughout Kenya and Uganda (regions not usually associated with documentary screenings) as well as throughout the US.

Web Presence

The team created a website called International Justice Central (<http://ijcentral.org/>) in 2008 to foster a global conversation about international justice through an early customization of Twitter. The site acts as a resource for members and a collective voice to press political leaders to fulfill the mandate of the ICC. They are continuing to develop this site in order to build the community which currently consists of 20,000 users.

Screenings

The screenings are at the heart of the engagement campaign. Local NGOs are given educational resources and training on how to facilitate the screenings in order to inform communities about the work of the ICC. Showing the film to communities affected by human rights abuses demonstrates that these crimes do not always go unpunished and that there is a global movement attempting to end impunity.

A few examples of key screenings include;

Refugee Law Project Screening

The Reckoning was screened in October 2010 as part of the 4th Beyond Juba Peace Film Festival, organised by the Refugee Law Project of Uganda.

Kenya Magistrates and Judges Association Screening

The screening in March 2010 was attended by 15 judicial officers including judges and magistrates. It was followed by a plenary discussion facilitated by the Head of the ICTJ Kenya office, Njonjo Mue.

Dunia Moja Trust (DMT) ongoing screenings
DMT has conducted a series of screenings throughout Kenya since 2009, taking *The Reckoning* to communities directly affected by the 2008 Post-Election Violence (PEV), which triggered an investigation by the ICC to identify the perpetrators of the PEV and bring them to account.

ICTJ, AIUSA, HRW, AMICC and ENOUGH Project screenings

These organisations have sponsored screenings of *The Reckoning* in Washington DC and New York for US lawmakers, the foreign policy establishment, U.S. State Department staff and military academies.

Partnerships

Strategic partnerships were to key to the film's public awareness campaign. Surprisingly, despite work in very similar fields, many of the partners had not worked together before. The film team brought them together through a series of collaborative summits which helped to refine the campaign aims and ensure the success of its delivery.

The way in which the campaign partners used the film illuminates the success and reach of *The Reckoning*:

- The ICTJ headed the African campaign, integrating the film into their existing country programs around the world
- The Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC) - Uses *The Reckoning* to support its campaign for universal ratification, and as a primer on the ICC for its 2,500-strong global network of NGOs. Such a huge network of NGOs means that the message of the film is amplified through their partnership with CICC.
- The American NGO Coalition for the ICC (AMICC) uses *The Reckoning* in Washington DC to influence policy makers and in community screenings throughout the US.
- Facing History and Ourselves - hosted a 'Teaching *The Reckoning*' workshop where 700 educators from 70 countries discussed international justice for 2 weeks and developed curriculum materials for their network of over 25,000 high school teachers. They also created an online "self-paced workshop module" for their network of 25,000 teachers, on how to include *The Reckoning* in their curricula about understanding the history and practice of international justice and how to engage with it as citizens.
- Human Rights Watch - International Justice Program deploys the film in their conferences and meetings around the world.
- Amnesty International USA - Provided materials for their international justice program advocating for a more favourable position on the ICC from the US administration.

Campaign Impact and Achievements

The ongoing on-the-ground and grassroots nature of this campaign can make the impact and achievements more complicated to assess. However, some successes are outlined here

- In May 2011 the film team conducted a programme in Kenya, Uganda, eastern DRC and Lebanon where they

connected with local NGO partners in each of those countries to launch the translated versions of *The Reckoning*.

With a portable projector system and workshops in each location they trained the local NGOs in conducting screenings to educate and facilitate debate on the issues covered in the film. This was part of an ongoing programme that they wish to continue if they can secure additional funding.

- Release of the Arabic version of the film on Facebook, making it available to the millions of Facebook users in the Arab world (especially in these critical times with the arrest warrants issued for Col. Muammar Qaddafi of Libya and President Omar al-Bashir of Sudan). They will seek to spark and monitor an ongoing discussion about justice and accountability

Whilst it is hard to measure the impact of a grassroots campaign, a number of the NGOs and partnership organisations have given powerful endorsements of the importance of the film:

"*The Reckoning* was vitally important for our association... This film was a moral support for women that we support in our association, most of whom are victims of rape and sexual violence. The film explained to these women that perpetrators are not above the law. Women in the DRC are not able to seek justice easily, but seeing other women stand before the judges of the International Criminal Court to testify to rape they have suffered gave them hope, and courage. In short, *The Reckoning* has been an indispensable tool to understanding the ICC."

Pierre Lokeka Heshima, Coordinator,
Kitumaini Center for Abused Women,
Democratic Republic of Congo

"Screenings across northern Uganda have increased the understanding of the judicial role of the ICC and its mandate. The Luo (local language) version of *The Reckoning* is doing an exceptional job. Misconceptions have been corrected directly by the outreach team disseminating accurate information and responding directly to the enquiries of the audiences at these screenings. "

Jimmy Otim (former child soldier), Outreach

Coordinator,
International Criminal Court – Kampala Field
Office

“*The Reckoning* is such a critical resource for our grassroots leaders because it allows them to interest sectors of the public that we would never otherwise reach.”

Hannah Dunphy, Youth Organizer
Amnesty International - US

Official Campaign Partners

International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC), American NGO Coalition for the ICC (AMICC), Facing History and Ourselves, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International USA

Campaign Nuts & Bolts

Campaign Funding

US\$300,000: MacArthur Foundation

US\$276,000: Humanity United

US\$60,000: Ford Foundation

US\$20,000: Fledgling Fund

Funding received (total budget: US\$656,000)

Length of Campaign

So far, 5 years and they are planning a further 2 years, with the option to continue beyond that.

CONCLUSION

The campaign around this film had bold and international ambitions for audience engagement. By working alongside local NGOs they have been able to increase the reach of the film accessing, quite literally, hard-to-reach audiences.

It was vital that the message of the film reached the communities who benefit from the work of the ICC. The film was translated, not just into various national languages, but into local dialects. They worked with local editors in-country to ensure the nuance was not lost in translation. This was a campaign with the intended audience at its heart.

The significance and power of this film's impact is not in its traditional reach through cinema or broadcast but through the strength of its public awareness campaign which accessed over 30 million people in the US through online partnerships, community outreach, educational activities, and national media campaigns.

The campaign is ongoing, as they begin to spread the word through the Arabic world, and if they can access further funding they would like it to continue in years to come.

This documentary is a vital human rights advocacy tool that has educated, informed and empowered audiences calling for an end to impunity and for accountability and justice.



Director of The Reckoning: The Battle for the International Criminal Court, Pamela Yates

Pamela Yates was born and raised in the Appalachian coal-mining region of Pennsylvania, US. Yates is a co-founder of Skylight Pictures, dedicated to creating films and digital media tools that advance awareness of human rights and the quest for justice by implementing multi-year outreach campaigns designed to engage, educate and activate social change.

She is currently working on a quartet of films about transitional justice. The first, *State of Fear* based on the findings of the Peruvian Truth Commission, was translated into 47 languages and broadcast in 154 countries. The second film, *The Reckoning: The Battle for the International Criminal Court* is an international thriller about the possibilities and pitfalls facing humanity's quest for world justice. *Granito: How To Nail A Dictator*, the third film, revisits the subjects of her 1982 film *When the Mountains Tremble* after the film and its outtakes become forensic evidence in an international war crimes case.