In the past decades, great strides have been made to ensure that crimes against humanity and state-sponsored organized violence are not committed with impunity. Alongside states, large international organizations such as the United Nations and forums such as the International Criminal Court, ‘de facto international prosecutors’ have emerged to address these crimes. Acting as investigators and evidence-gathers to identify individuals and officials engaged in serious human rights violations, these ‘private’ non-state actors, and state legal ‘officials’ in a foreign court, pursue criminal accountability for those most responsible for core international crimes. They do so when local options to investigate fail and an international criminal tribunal remains unavailable. This study outlines three case studies of witnesses and victims who pursue those most responsible, including former heads of state. It examines their practices and strategies, and shows how witnesses and victims of core crimes emerge as key leaders in the accountability process.

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For
Ashla Bott
and
de facto international prosecutors everywhere
Contents

Acknowledgements

Introduction

PART I  FRAMEWORK I: CONCEPTUALISING DE FACTO INTERNATIONAL PROSECUTORS IN A GLOBAL ERA

1 Extending the Reach of International Criminal Law (ICL)

PART II  THREE BIOGRAPHICAL CASE STUDIES: DE FACTO INTERNATIONAL PROSECUTORS IN PRACTICE

2 De Facto International Prosecutors and Prosecuting Pinochet (Chile)

3 De Facto International Prosecutors and a Verdict for Habré (Chad)

4 De Facto International Prosecutors and the Commission for International Justice and Accountability (CIJA) (Syria)

5 A Legal Obligation to Prosecute: From De Facto to De Jure International Prosecutors? (Germany/Syria)
viii Contents

PART III FRAMEWORK II: HOW DE FACTO INTERNATIONAL PROSECUTORS CONCEPTUALISE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL LAW

6 A Basic Law for International Criminal Law? 199

Conclusion 217

References 221

Index 248
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