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L'ÉDITORIAL

L'ère des Sirènes ou le miroir du monde

Marie-Laure **Salles**
Directrice

Boris PALEFROY

« Tu arriveras d'abord jusqu'aux Sirènes, celles qui charment tous les mortels lorsque quiconque arrive près d'elles, s'approche par ignorance et entend leur timbre de voix […]. »

C'est ainsi que Circé, dans le chant XII de l'*Odyssée*, prévient Ulysse du danger qui les attend, lui et ses compagnons, sur le long chemin du retour… juste un peu avant Charybde et Scylla. Les Sirènes, précise Circé, sont allongées sur les ossements et les chairs desséchées des victimes qu'elles ont fait périr.

L'expression « écouter le chant des Sirènes » s'est depuis imposée comme une métaphore puissante du pouvoir de séduction et de mystification du discours, révélant la propension humaine à se laisser captiver — voire égarer — par des récits, des paroles ou des promesses dont la beauté masque souvent l'illusion.

Nous vivons à l'ère des Sirènes. Plus l'époque est troublée, plus leurs chants sont séduisants, insaisissables et dangereux. Marc Bloch, le grand historien qui entrera au Panthéon en 2026, avait déjà identifié ce phénomène au cœur de la Grande Guerre. Dans son ouvrage au titre évocateur, *Réflexions d'un historien sur les fausses nouvelles de la guerre* (1921), il soulignait que les fausses nouvelles ne naissent pas des faits mais des émotions collectives. Elles prennent racine dans les peurs, les colères et les désirs partagés. « Une fausse nouvelle, écrivait-il, naît toujours de représentations collectives […]. » L'erreur ne vit qu'à une condition : « trouver dans la société un bouillon de culture favorable ». Ce n'est donc pas l'événement qui engendre la rumeur ou la fausse nouvelle, mais l'état d'esprit qui l'attend. Les Sirènes, après tout, se contentent de chanter. Ce sont les hommes — uniquement des hommes dans l'*Odyssée* — qui se laissent séduire, captiver, et qui en tentant de les rejoindre finissent engloutis.

Il n'en demeure pas moins que le « chant » reste essentiel — et que les manipulations de récits, de discours ou de promesses par les Sirènes contemporaines, démultipliées et amplifiées par la puissance de nos technologies de communication, peuvent devenir de redoutables détonateurs. Marc Bloch l'avait bien vu : dans les tranchées, les fausses nouvelles et les rumeurs naissaient souvent dans des moments de tension extrême. Les soldats, confrontés à l'incompréhensible ou à l'insoutenable, cherchaient à donner sens à une défaite ou à un revers. La rumeur ou la fausse nouvelle permettait ainsi de désigner un bouc émissaire, voire de justifier sa propre violence en déshumanisant l'ennemi. Dans ce contexte, la rumeur ou la fausse nouvelle n'est pas un simple accident : elle surgit comme une réponse individuelle et encore plus collective à la peur, à l'incompréhension, et parfois à un sentiment diffus de honte et de culpabilité qu'il serait trop douloureux de reconnaître. Plutôt que d'affronter cette part de soi ou du groupe auquel on appartient, on la projette vers l'extérieur. La rumeur devient alors un mécanisme de défense collectif, une manière de rétablir un semblant de cohérence ou de maîtrise face à l'absurde ou à l'inacceptable. C'est pourquoi elle prend souvent la forme du rejet de l'autre, de la stigmatisation, de la haine ou de l'exclusion — autant de tentatives de transformer une angoisse intérieure en certitude combattante.

Marc Bloch nous rappelle aussi que l'un des terreaux les plus fertiles pour la rumeur et la fausse nouvelle est l'absence de sources d'information fiables, qui pourraient servir de pare-feu et offrir un contrepoids. Sur le front, dans les tranchées, les soldats ne disposaient que des lettres reçues, de la propagande officielle et de son interprétation dans les conversations informelles, souvent dans les cuisines de campagne. La censure, en restreignant l'accès à des sources vérifiées, ne fait qu'accentuer ce phénomène. L'information devient alors un produit social, façonné par les interactions, les émotions et les croyances partagées. Mais au fond, quelle différence entre les cuisines de campagne et nos chambres d'écho numériques où chacun s'informe au sein de bulles algorithmiques façonnées par ses préférences, ses peurs et ses colères ? Quelle différence entre la censure d'hier et la mise en récit algorithmique d'aujourd'hui, pilotée par des logiques de pouvoir économiques et technopolitiques ? Les régimes autoritaires l'ont bien compris : leurs ennemis les plus redoutables sont les institutions capables de produire une information libre, rigoureuse et vérifiable — les médias indépendants, les universités, la recherche scientifique.

Mais Marc Bloch ne se contente pas d'identifier et de poser le problème. Il esquisse aussi un chemin d'action. Nous ne devons pas nous satisfaire de rectifier l'erreur portée par une rumeur ou une fausse nouvelle, faits et preuves à l'appui. Il nous faut aussi prendre la fausse nouvelle comme un objet d'étude en soi, qui nous renvoie comme en miroir les blessures et les enjeux profonds de l'imaginaire collectif d'une époque. La fausse nouvelle est un révélateur. À ce titre, elle constitue ce que Marcel Mauss — intellectuellement proche de Bloch — appelait un « fait social total » : un phénomène qui engage à la fois l'individuel et le collectif, le politique, l'émotionnel, le symbolique. La comprendre, c'est donc aussi comprendre ce que la société cherche à fuir, à projeter ou à justifier.

Plus que jamais aujourd'hui, cette démarche devrait s'imposer comme un axe central de recherche pour nos communautés académiques. Regarder notre monde dans le miroir des fausses nouvelles, de la manipulation et de la désinformation, ce n'est pas seulement analyser des dérives informationnelles. C'est aussi interroger les fractures profondes de nos sociétés. C'est accepter de regarder en face les blessures structurelles — sociales, politiques, culturelles — que ces phénomènes révèlent, amplifient ou exploitent. Faire de la fausse nouvelle et de la désinformation un objet d'étude, c'est donc aussi faire un pas vers une compréhension lucide de ce que nos sociétés cherchent à dissimuler, à projeter ou à fuir. Et c'est, en ce sens, une condition essentielle pour pouvoir affronter ces blessures avec lucidité, et, peut-être, commencer à les panser.

L'INSTITUT

Enjeux, avancées et perspectives de la finance durable

Entretien avec
Marie-Laure **Salles**
Directrice de l'Institut

Patrick **Odier**
Président de la Fondation Building Bridges

Marie-Laure Salles (à gauche) et Patrick Odier (à droite). Michelle OLGUIN FLÜCKLIGER & François WAVRE

La 6e édition de la conférence Building Bridges s'est tenue du 30 septembre au 2 octobre derniers. Comment définissez-vous la finance durable et en quoi ces conférences se distinguent-elles dans le paysage international ?

Patrick Odier (PO) : Pour moi, la finance durable consiste à orienter la dette et les fonds propres vers des solutions qui créent de la valeur à long terme tout en réduisant les impacts négatifs dans les limites planétaires. Bien menée, elle permet aux investisseurs de gérer les risques physiques, juridiques et réputationnels, de renforcer la résilience, d'attirer les talents et de réduire l'exposition aux chocs.

Chaque année, Building Bridges réunit à Genève, en Suisse — dans un cadre neutre —, un écosystème international de leaders de la finance durable. Lors de notre événement phare, des dirigeant·es d'organisations internationales, d'ONG, d'entreprises, de la finance, de gouvernements et du monde académique se rassemblent pour façonner un récit positif et axé sur les solutions, mettre en lumière des réussites concrètes et catalyser des avancées tangibles.

Nos initiatives menées tout au long de l'année visent à créer les conditions propices à une collaboration intersectorielle et à un véritable échange d'idées. Aux côtés de l'engagement constant de nos partenaires, nos efforts contribuent à positionner la Suisse comme un acteur de premier plan dans le paysage international de la finance durable.

L'Institut de hautes études internationales et du développement est partenaire de Building Bridges. Pourquoi est-il essentiel que le monde académique soit associé à une telle initiative ?

Marie-Laure Salles (MLS) : L'implication du monde académique dans une initiative comme Building Bridges est essentielle car elle permet l'inscription de la démarche dans le temps long. Les institutions académiques comme l'Institut abordent les questions du lien entre enjeux planétaires et finance en privilégiant la contextualisation et l'analyse fine des dynamiques historiques et contemporaines. L'Institut, par l'intermédiaire de ses centres de recherche (Centre Hoffmann pour la durabilité globale et Centre finance et développement en particulier), mobilise la pensée critique et la rigueur intellectuelle de ses chercheur·es pour déployer une analyse systémique enrichie d'une approche interdisciplinaire. Les institutions académiques comme l'Institut vont aussi s'engager dans une action de formation qui permet d'inscrire ces préoccupations dans la projection de nouvelles générations de leaders — autant de professionnel·les engagé·es, capables de penser le monde autrement et de contribuer à l'invention de solutions durables et responsables. En s'associant à Building Bridges, l'Institut affirme sa vocation : celle de relier savoirs et actions, recherche et engagement, pour construire des ponts entre les mondes, les disciplines et les générations.

Depuis la première édition en 2019, quels progrès concrets ont été réalisés dans la finance durable en termes de perceptions de pratiques et quels sont vos objectifs pour le futur ?

PO : Depuis 2019, la finance durable est passée d'un sujet de niche à une tendance de fond. Les risques climatiques, naturels et sociaux sont désormais intégrés dans les processus d'investissement et d'octroi de crédit, et les flux de capitaux sont de plus en plus orientés vers des solutions durables.

L'adoption de normes communes — comme celles du Conseil international des normes de durabilité (ISSB), de l'ancienne Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) et de la Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) — permet d'harmoniser et de rendre comparables les rapports en matière de durabilité. La poursuite de ces avancées aidera les investisseurs et les entreprises à mieux évaluer les risques de transition et les risques physiques, réduisant ainsi l'exposition aux actifs échoués à mesure que les modèles non alignés perdent de leur valeur.

Je considère le renforcement des capacités comme une étape essentielle de la prochaine phase. Chez Building Bridges, nous concevons des programmes qui enrichissent les connaissances et partagent des outils pratiques pour une analyse de durabilité applicable de manière cohérente à toutes les classes d'actifs. Pour les étudiant·es et les universitaires, c'est un champ d'innovation vaste, notamment en matière de données, de valorisation et d'impact sur l'économie réelle.

Les objectifs de développement durable (ODD) définis par les Nations Unies constituent une feuille de route universelle pour un avenir plus équitable et durable. Selon vous, quel rôle la finance durable peut-elle jouer dans l'atteinte de ces objectifs, et comment l'Institut contribue-t-il à renforcer cette articulation entre finance et développement ?

MLS : La finance durable peut et doit jouer un rôle déterminant dans la réalisation des ODD. Sans la contribution des financements privés, cette feuille de route pour l'humanité restera lettre morte — le risque étant même d'un recul important sur un certain nombre de ces objectifs. La finance durable doit se saisir de ces enjeux parce qu'ils conditionnent la pérennité même de nos sociétés. Il ne s'agit donc pas simplement ici d'une démarche philanthropique mais bien d'un intérêt bien compris et d'une double logique, à la fois de résilience mais aussi de profit pour le secteur financier. Nous sommes à un tournant historique pour l'humanité : soit nous sommes capables d'investir et de nous investir pour une transformation majeure qui permettra adaptation, résilience et nouveaux modèles de productivité et de production de valeur, soit nous devons accepter une longue spirale dystopique qui nous touchera toutes et tous et qui à terme détruira une grande partie de la valeur produite jusqu'alors.

L'Institut contribue activement, depuis de nombreuses années, à cette articulation entre finance et développement en formant des leaders capables de penser ce lien et donc de porter une finance de la transition. Notre rôle est aussi de produire une recherche d'excellence, critique et interdisciplinaire, sur le rôle de la finance dans et pour le développement et la transition. Enfin, nous sommes un lieu de rencontres et de débats : en créant des espaces de dialogue et d'échange entre chercheur·es, praticien·nes, décideurs et décideuses politiques et une future génération d'intervenant·es, nous animons une agora indispensable à l'action collective, permettant de concevoir et d'opérationnaliser une finance qui sait réconcilier production de valeur et bien commun.

Découvrez-en plus sur Building Bridges.

COLOMBIA, Bogotá.
Devasahayam
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L'INSTITUT

Fondation Soli Renews Support for Students from Peru and the Andean Region

Interview with
Catherine **Mulder**
Alumna (1977) and Founder of Fondation Soli

A Swiss non-profit foundation committed to improving the quality of life in vulnerable communities across Latin America, Fondation Soli has generously contributed to the Geneva Graduate Institute's efforts to advance education and research in Peru and the Andean region.

Catherine Mulder, an entrepreneur and alumna of the Institute (MINT 1977), with deep professional roots in Latin America, founded Fondation Soli in 2018 to combine strategic philanthropy with a commitment to long-term social integration. Each year, Fondation Soli makes it possible for talented students from Peru and the Andean region to pursue their studies at the Institute by funding full scholarships. These scholarships are awarded based on financial need and academic excellence, opening doors to transformative opportunities for the recipients.

In addition to supporting students, Fondation Soli also funds research scholarships that enable both Master's and PhD students to conduct fieldwork in Peru and the Andean region as part of their PhD thesis or Master's dissertation. This support is vital in fostering meaningful, locally grounded research.

We are also grateful that the partnership includes the opportunity to invite a visiting professor, further enriching our academic community and strengthening ties with the region.

This continued commitment and trust from Fondation Soli makes a lasting difference.

Catherine Mulder discusses her international experiences and time at the Institute:

Can you tell us a little bit about your personal journey before founding Fondation Soli?

I was born in Lima, Peru, to a Swiss father and a Greek mother who had arrived in Peru in 1947. I grew up going to a British-Peruvian school in Lima and a prep-school in Lausanne, Switzerland. In 1973, I was admitted to the University of Geneva and later graduated from the Geneva Graduate Institute with a degree in International Relations in 1977. I then returned to Lima, where I worked in an Anglo-Peruvian publishing company as a photojournalist, covering the country's tourism sector and later mining and economics before moving to New York City to attend the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University (SIPA) in 1980. After graduating from SIPA, I worked in banking and then in the family business, which I managed with my brothers.

Why did you decide to study at the Geneva Graduate Institute?

Friends in Geneva had spoken highly of the Institute, its courses and faculty. Whilst studying political science at the University of Geneva, I became interested in the Institute's faculty and interdisciplinary programme: international history, international law, and international economics. For admission at the time, there was a requirement to interview with Professor Jacques Freymond, Director of the Institute (IUHEI). I was admitted to the Institute and graduated in Summer 1977.

What inspired you to found Fondation Soli and support students from the Andean region?

Through the years, I met many wonderful, outstanding young people in Peru and the Andean Region, eager to improve and lead, but scarce economic resources limited their ability to pursue graduate studies and specialisation. Together with the urgency to contribute to public policy, local and international governance, and peace-building, I felt it important to invest in the next generations and so, founded Fondation Soli.

As an alumna, how has your own experience at the Geneva Graduate Institute shaped your perspective on education and giving back?

My career path has given me the opportunity to continue education, attending events and other executive programmes specific to the business positions I held. I kept contact with the Institute via invitations to conferences, webinars during the Covid-19 pandemic, and their alumni mailing. Knowing the value of education, during the Covid-19 lockdowns, I reflected on how to help youth to develop their talent and professionalism. A great respect for the Institute motivated me to share my project with them. In 2021, it was a pleasure and honour to begin a draft with the Institute, detailing the partnership, mainly focused on Peru and the Andean Region. I am grateful to the Institute for this opportunity.

For any inquiries, candidates must contact the Geneva Graduate Institute directly. Fondation Soli does not respond to unsolicited requests.

"I extend my sincere gratitude for your continued support, which has been invaluable in enabling me to pursue my studies and career goals. As I continue my professional journey, I am more committed than ever to leveraging my education to promote social inclusion and human rights in Peru and beyond."

Grecia Pillaca Burga, Master in International and Development Studies (MINT)

"My deepest thanks to Fondation Soli for supporting international students from South America. I consider that we have a unique perspective of the world that should be taken into account, and it is through the support of scholarships that we can pursue our academic goals. Once again, thank you for believing in our potential. You can be certain that we will strive to make a meaningful impact in the world."

Carolina Changoluisa Barahona, Master in International Law

Fondation Soli

Dedicated to improving the quality of life of vulnerable communities across Latin America, Fondation Soli focuses on three main areas: supporting access to education from elementary to higher levels, with a particular emphasis on science and technology, communication, life skills and the arts; investing in initiatives that enhance living conditions; and promoting cultural integration through artistic, musical, and cultural activities.

L'INSTITUT

Construire un monde meilleur

Rencontre avec
Irina **du Bois**
Présidente de la Fondation Pierre du Bois pour l'histoire du temps présent

La Fondation Pierre du Bois a été créée en mémoire de votre mari, historien passionné par l'histoire du temps présent. Comment avez-vous transformé cette vision personnelle en une institution aussi active et reconnue aujourd'hui ?

Créer cette fondation était le projet de Pierre du Bois, un historien qui était aussi passionné par la politique et l'actualité. Il avait depuis longtemps formulé les objectifs : susciter des recherches sur l'histoire du temps présent et soutenir des chercheur·es et des étudiant·es travaillant dans ce domaine. Mais Pierre nous a quittés prématurément en 2007, à 64 ans, et n'a pas pu réaliser son projet. J'ai donc créé la fondation en 2008 avec mon ami Philippe Pidoux, ancien conseiller d'État vaudois, avec la ferme intention de la développer dans la durée.

Il était évident pour nous que la fondation déploierait ses activités en partenariat avec l'Institut. J'ai eu la grande chance d'être soutenue par Philippe Burrin, son directeur de 2004 à 2020 et historien réputé, et par le cercle d'ami·es qui composent notre conseil de fondation ; outre Philippe Burrin, ce sont Christiane Kuehne, Katrin Milzow et Roger de Weck. Ensemble, nous avons établi au fil des années un programme d'activités, avec la même ambition : contribuer au mieux à la connaissance de l'histoire du temps présent, et aider en particulier les jeunes chercheur·es. Je suis profondément reconnaissante aux professeur·es et doctorant·es du Département d'histoire et politique internationales (HPI) pour tout leur apport durant ces années. J'ai aussi de la gratitude envers l'Institut, dont je suis devenue par la suite étudiante en HPI et alumna et où j'espère continuer à me sentir « à la maison ».

Les colloques annuels et les ateliers pour doctorant·es Pierre du Bois jouent un rôle central dans vos activités. Quels sont, selon vous, les apports les plus marquants de ces événements pour la recherche en histoire contemporaine ?

Les colloques internationaux Pierre du Bois sont organisés depuis 2009 chaque année à tour de rôle par un·e professeur·e de HPI. La richesse des thèmes traités, la rencontre entre historien·nes de grande réputation et les jeunes chercheur·es de l'Institut et d'ailleurs, et les publications qui s'ensuivent — 75 % des colloques ont abouti à une publication — en ont fait une réussite qui nous réjouit considérablement.

Depuis 2021, les ateliers *(workshops)* organisés par et pour les doctorant·es en HPI avec des expert·es externes leur permettent d'approfondir leurs connaissances sur des sujets liés à leur thèse et de mieux faire connaitre leur travail à l'extérieur. Les doctorant·es s'exercent ainsi à monter des projets et se créent des réseaux interinstitutionnels et intergénérationnels.

La Chaire Pierre du Bois L'Europe et le monde aura bientôt une nouvelle titulaire. Qu'attendez-vous de cette prochaine étape pour la fondation ?

Cette chaire a été créée en 2018 en partenariat avec l'Institut pour combler l'absence d'un enseignement sur l'histoire des relations entre l'Europe et le monde. Occupée jusqu'en 2021 par le professeur Michael Goebel, elle est depuis restée vacante, à notre très grand regret. Une nouvelle titulaire rejoindra l'Institut au semestre de printemps 2026, à savoir la professeure Stella Ghervas, qui vient de l'UCLA.

De gauche à droite : Le professeur Cyrus Schayegh, responsable du Département d'histoire et politique internationales ; Oluwaseun Otosede Williams, co-lauréat du Prix Pierre du Bois ; Irina du Bois, présidente de la Fondation Pierre du Bois ; Fernanda Conforto de Oliveira, co-lauréate du Prix Pierre du Bois ; et Marie-Laure Salles, directrice de l'Institut. Eric ROSET.

L'Europe est préoccupée aujourd'hui par des sujets graves sur lesquels elle doit se positionner face au reste du monde : sécurité, économie et compétitivité, géopolitique, environnement, migration, et j'en passe. Nous pensons que la Chaire Pierre du Bois revêt plus que jamais une importance stratégique et ferons tout ce qui est en notre pouvoir pour aider Stella Ghervas à lui donner le plus grand rayonnement possible.

Nous constatons, d'ailleurs, avoir fait œuvre de pionnier à l'Institut en élaborant le concept « L'Europe *et le monde* » puisque plusieurs enseignements ont adopté maintenant cette formulation en l'appliquant à d'autres régions géographiques.

Dans notre contexte mondial marqué par de grands bouleversements géopolitiques, quel rôle l'histoire du temps présent peut-elle jouer pour éclairer les débats publics et les décisions politiques ?

C'est une lapalissade, mais rappelons-le quand même : la compréhension de l'actualité exige la connaissance du passé, d'où l'importance de se référer à l'histoire en général et à celle du temps présent en particulier.

Mais la connaissance n'est qu'une première étape. L'historien·ne du temps présent peut aussi assumer le rôle de l'« intellectuel public » qui s'engage dans la cité pour faire avancer les idées et empêcher l'instrumentalisation de l'histoire. Enfin, en enseignant cette discipline aux leaders de demain, il ou elle contribue (in)directement à la résolution de certains conflits, à la construction d'un monde meilleur… Je reste une optimiste indécrottable !

Découvrez-en plus sur la Fondation Pierre du Bois.

Pierre du Bois Foundation

The Pierre du Bois Foundation for Current History was established by Irina du Bois after the premature death of her husband, Professor Pierre du Bois, in 2007. An expert of European integration and contemporary international relations, Pierre du Bois was a Professor of International History and Politics at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva between 1992 and 2007. The Foundation seeks to perpetuate his passion for research. The Foundation's mission is to stimulate research in current history and to support researchers and students in this field.

The Pierre du Bois Chair Europe and the World at the Geneva Graduate Institute will be held by a new Professor of International History and Politics, Stella Ghervas, who will start during the Spring semester.

The Pierre du Bois Prize is awarded every year to the best doctoral thesis in International History and Politics at the Geneva Graduate Institute. This year the co-laureates are Oluwaseun Otosede Williams and Fernanda Conforto de Oliveira.

L'INSTITUT

War and Peace: Master Thesis Prize in Honour of Professor Mohamed Mahmoud Mohamedou

The Geneva Graduate Institute has created a prize to honour Mohamed Mahmoud Mohamedou, Professor in the Department of International History and Politics and Vice-Director of the Geneva Graduate Institute, who left us prematurely in September 2024.

Professor Mohamedou leaves behind a rich and highly original body of academic and critical work. A brilliant intellectual, he pushed the boundaries of research on key issues such as terrorism, political violence, new forms of conflict, state-building, democratic transitions, and the history of racism. His work earned him the Collège de France Recognition Award in 2017 and the Global South Distinguished Award from the International Studies Association in 2021.

The prize aims to distinguish an excellent Master's thesis that falls within the thematic range of war and peace from a historical and/or a political science perspective. The thesis must relate to one or several of Professor Mohamedou's areas of research: state-building processes in the Global South; political violence before, beneath, beyond, and after the state (hinting to terrorism, self-determination, non-state armed groups, region open); comparative histories of democracies and democratic regimes (region open); *longue durée* histories of discriminations in comparative perspective (racism); diplomacy and new diplomacies.

The selection of eligible Master's theses is made by the International History and Politics (IHP) Department and the Head of the Master in International and Development Studies (MINT). The prize is then awarded to the best Master's thesis by a jury composed of the Head of the IHP Department, another professor from the department, and the Head of the Conflict, Peace and Security specialisation from the MINT programme.

The first "War and Peace" prize was awarded publicly during the Graduation Ceremony on 12 September 2025 to Shivam Kumar for his thesis "Enduring Disappearance: Memory, Refusal, and the Gendered Afterlives of Violence in Kashmir".

Boris PALEFROY

Learn more about our academic awards and prizes.

L'ACTUALITÉ

The Economic Consequences of the Second Trump Administration

Ugo **Panizza**
Professor and Head of the International Economics Department, Pictet Chair in Finance and Development, and Deputy Director of the Centre for Finance and Development, Geneva Graduate Institute; Director of the International Centre for Monetary and Banking Studies

Beatrice **Weder di Mauro**
Professor of International Economics, André Hoffmann Chair of Global Economics, Climate and Nature Finance, and Co-director of the Hoffmann Centre for Global Sustainability

INDIA, Amritsar. An artist gives final touches to a painting of US President Donald Trump. 19 January 2025. Narinder NANU/AFP

Since the very beginning of his second administration, President Trump implemented a flurry of policies aimed at reshaping US trade, fiscal, and foreign policy. These policies are also redefining the country's economic and political relationships with its traditional allies like the European Union and Japan.

Together with Gary Gensler and Simon Johnson, we invited a group of leading experts to contribute concise essays analysing the main economic consequences of the President's actions and proposals. The result is *The Economic Consequences of the Second Trump Administration: A Preliminary Assessment*, a volume that brings together diverse perspectives on how this policy agenda is reshaping the domestic and international economic landscape.

The volume highlights several themes that define the first 100 days of the administration. First, heightened uncertainty, with rapid policy reversals and mounting legal litigation. Second, risk-taking, as the President embraces confrontation with allies and rivals. Third, executive action on overdrive, with over 140 executive orders by mid-May 2025. Fourth, testing boundaries of power, reviving constitutional debates over the unitary executive and regulatory independence.

Domestically, consumer confidence has fallen and inflation expectations diverge. US fiscal policy was already unsustainable before the implementation of the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act", and the act is likely to make the situation even worse. Cuts to science funding, immigration, and rural programmes will have lasting costs to innovation and productivity.

Internationally, the administration accelerates what might be called the "end of the End of History". US retrenchment undermines the two global public goods it long supplied — security and financial stability — while tariffs and attacks on multilateralism challenge the WTO and the dollar's reserve role. Withdrawal from climate action, pandemic preparedness, and aid weakens the world's ability to manage collective risks.

Spillovers to advanced economies are profound. Europe's model — cheap Russian energy, Chinese demand, US security — is shattered. This pushes the EU toward greater defence spending, technological upgrading, and completing its internal market, making strategic autonomy essential. Beyond Western Europe, we examine US frictions with Canada, Greenland, Japan, and Ukraine.

Emerging and developing economies face acute vulnerability but also opportunities to shift in the dollar's role. China confronts tariffs atop structural fragilities. Mexico, deeply tied to US trade, is highly exposed, while India may seize opportunities to liberalise and deepen EU ties. Cuts to US aid could trigger devastating health consequences in poorer countries.

While financial markets have so far remained resilient, the volume warns of deeper risks: a US retreat from supplying global public goods, erosion of the rule of law, and a weakening of international institutions. Market indifference to long-term threats might thus be misinterpreted and lead to policies that undermine both US dynamism and global stability.

Yet disruption is also driving recalibration: Europe is rearming and integrating, other nations are adapting, and external pressure may catalyse overdue reforms. In this sense, US withdrawal could hasten a transition to a more multipolar global economic order.

The eBook is available for free download on the CEPR website. A second edition is planned for release in late November/early December.

zabeline/iStock

L'ACTUALITÉ

The Ukrainian Stalemate

Vassily **Klimentov**
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Started in February 2022, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is continuing unabated with daily fighting in Eastern Ukraine. As of late October 2025, there seems to be no prospects for a quick resolution of the conflict despite the expectations born from the meeting between US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska in August 2025.

On the ground, the Russian and Ukrainian military are locked in a war of attrition. Only at the price of massive casualties can Russian forces slowly advance. According to Russian and Ukrainian military, significant stretches of the front line, especially in open terrain, have become a 20 km or wider "kill zone" where drones dominate. While Ukraine still has an advantage in this drone warfare, Russia has been catching up in 2025. The drone war also remains a technological competition where each side tries to outinnovate the other.

Longstanding characteristics of the war continue, meanwhile, to hold true. The smaller Ukraine has issues with recruiting soldiers and is unsure about the steadiness of the West's support to compensate for its weapons' shortages. Russia also struggles with replenishing its massive losses, although not as much as Ukraine, and sees Western sanctions and the war effort degrade its economy and social cohesion. In the mid-term, both sides seem unlikely to gain a decisive advantage without a fundamental shift in factors external to the conflict such as a significant drop in Western support to Ukraine or a political-economic crisis in Russia.

In this context, Kyiv hopes that its resolve to fight, helped by Western military support, and US pressure on Russia will bring Moscow to the negotiating table. Moscow, assessing that the US support to Ukraine has waned, has increased hybrid warfare against Western Europe in hope that it would undermine its willingness to back Ukraine. Both sides continue to believe that they can improve their positions militarily, seeing no reason to rush into negotiations that would necessarily force them to compromise on their war goals.

To advance a peace settlement, the United States, the world's largest military and economic power and Ukraine's main individual backer, is holding many of the cards. On 10 October, Putin confirmed that Russia and the United States still operated "as part of the agreements [reached] in Alaska". One of his advisers elaborated that Russia "had made certain concessions" during the summit without likewise explaining what had been agreed. Whatever one makes of such comments, it is notable that the failure, so far, to organise another summit between Trump and Putin and the new sanctions adopted by the United States against Russia did not pause the US-Russian talks on Ukraine. Putin's special representative travelled to the United States on 24 October where he praised Trump's peace-making efforts.

To Moscow, it remains crucial to discuss a settlement in Ukraine directly with Washington because many of its war goals relate to the broader security architecture in Europe and the bilateral relation with the United States. Beyond this, Moscow continues to try to undermine US support to Kyiv and drive a wedge between the United States and Western Europe. However, the success of that strategy remains to be seen given the volatility of Trump's policies and his apparent lassitude with Russia's uncompromising stance on Ukraine.

Le président sénégalais Léopold Sédar Senghor prononce un discours à l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies. 1er novembre 1961. AFP

L'ACTUALITÉ

L'Afrique dans le monde

Panafricanisme pluriel et horizon commun

Dêlidji Eric **Degila**
Professeur de pratique de relations internationales

« Je dis qu'alors, […] ressuscitant les vertus de nos bâtisseurs, de nos sculpteurs, de nos peintres, de nos poètes, au Nord et au Sud du Sahara, l'Afrique contribuera puissamment à l'édification de la Civilisation de l'Universel. Par son unité, elle aura été, auparavant, un facteur de paix : de cette Paix sans laquelle, il n'est pas de civilisation. »[1]

En posant l'unité comme pierre angulaire d'une Afrique forte et pleinement investie dans le système international, Léopold Sédar Senghor a contribué dès les indépendances, aux côtés des autres pères fondateurs de l'Organisation de l'Unité africaine — Kwame Nkrumah, Abdel Gamal Nasser, Hailé Sélassié entre autres —, à l'émergence d'un panafricanisme polysémique. À l'instar des communautés de destin imbriqué qui façonnent l'Afrique d'aujourd'hui, le panafricanisme constitue la matrice politique qui porte l'engagement du continent sur la scène mondiale. Il convient de souligner que l'idéologie panafricaniste, une des plus anciennes doctrines régionalistes, promeut une approche plurielle de l'ordre mondial. En effet, loin de projeter une vision univoque du monde, elle offre différentes perspectives de la société internationale, à la fois par sa trajectoire idéationnelle et par sa *praxis*.

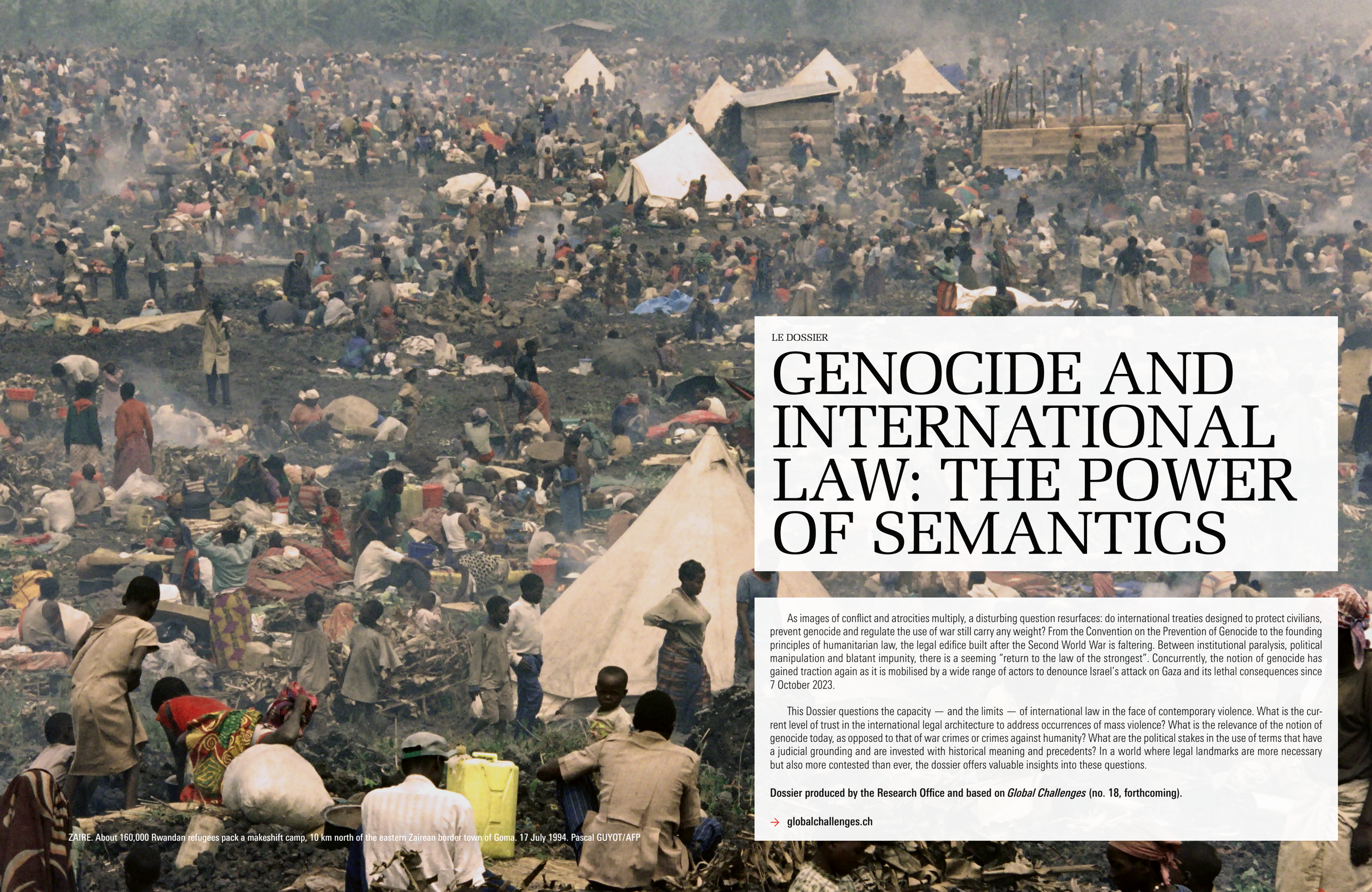
Par-delà une lecture de courte vue le présentant comme un angle mort de la scène mondiale, le continent africain a toujours été un « agent » catalyseur d'un système international « pluriversel » qui accorde une juste place à toutes nos *polities* — au sens de Baechler[2]. Riche de ses 54 États, et bien que toujours marquée par les stigmates de la colonisation et des conflits, l'Afrique s'investit avec ingéniosité dans la fabrique d'une nouvelle gouvernance mondiale en prenant appui sur la doctrine panafricaniste. Il n'est pas surprenant que l'Union africaine ait désigné la diaspora africaine comme la sixième sous-région du continent, faisant parfaitement écho à la philosophie *Ubuntu* du « nous ». D'un point de vue heuristique, le panafricanisme donne ainsi à voir une diversité d'approches sur les possibles structurations de l'ordre mondial.

Cependant, demeure le défi d'appropriation par les peuples africains du projet d'intégration régionale que porte l'organisation continentale de concert avec les institutions sous-régionales. Son succès passe par l'ancrage d'un sentiment d'appartenance plus fort, gage que chaque citoyenne et chaque citoyen africain s'identifie davantage aux institutions supraétatiques panafricaines. Cela suppose la promotion d'un *panafricanisme des peuples* en tant que véritable levier de développement au bénéfice des populations africaines.

Il n'en demeure pas moins que plus d'attention doit être accordée aux contributions de la doctrine panafricaniste dans la fabrique d'une gouvernance mondiale plus inclusive : le prochain Congrès panafricain de Lomé en décembre 2025 représente à cet égard une occasion unique pour imaginer, ensemble, un autre ordre mondial.

1 Léopold Sédar Senghor, Président de la République du Sénégal, *Discours d'ouverture lors de la création de l'Organisation de l'Unité africaine*, Addis-Abeba, 23 mai 1963.

2 Jean Baechler, *Les morphologies sociales* (Presses Universitaires de France, 2005).



ZAIRE. About 160,000 Rwandan refugees pack a makeshift camp, 10 km north of the eastern Zairean border town of Goma. 17 July 1994. Pascal GUYOT/AFP

LE DOSSIER

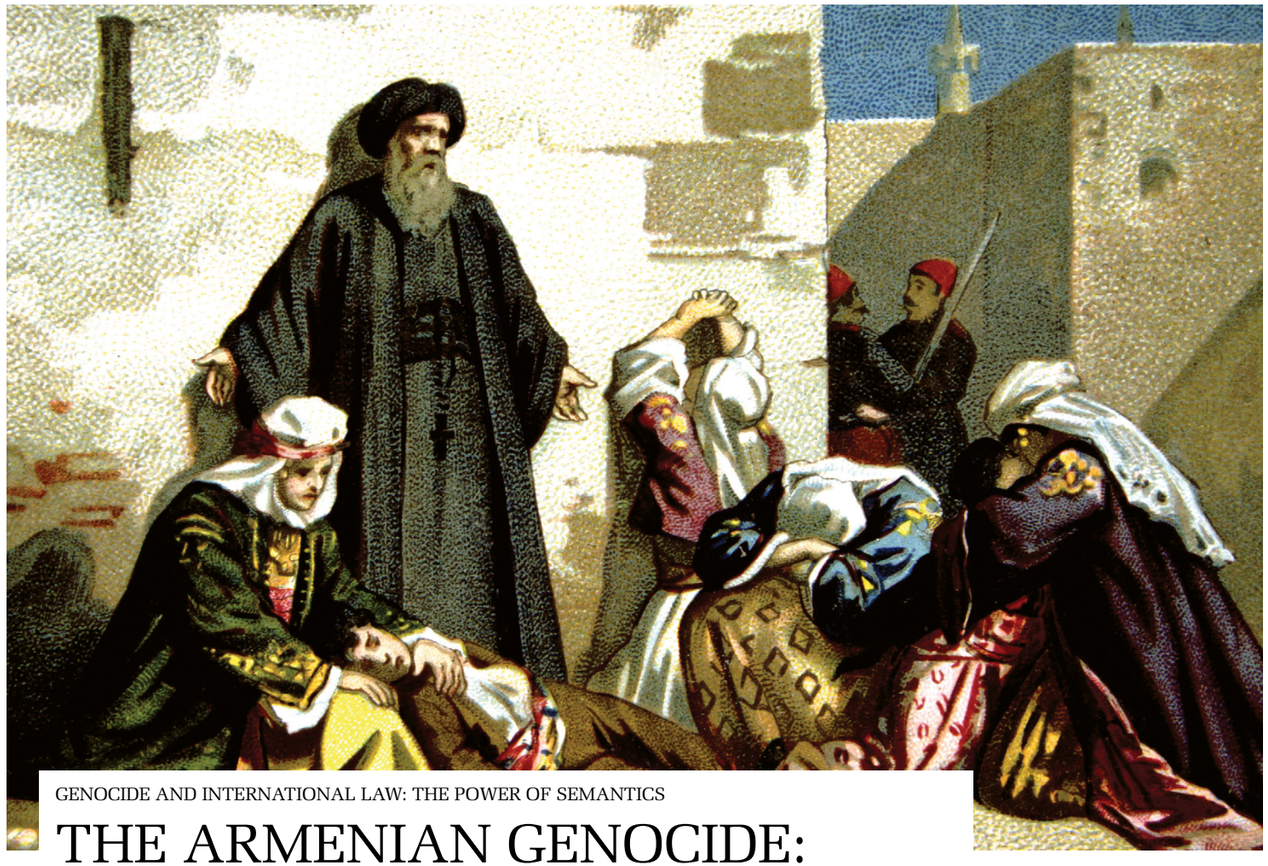
GENOCIDE AND INTERNATIONAL LAW: THE POWER OF SEMANTICS

As images of conflict and atrocities multiply, a disturbing question resurfaces: do international treaties designed to protect civilians, prevent genocide and regulate the use of war still carry any weight? From the Convention on the Prevention of Genocide to the founding principles of humanitarian law, the legal edifice built after the Second World War is faltering. Between institutional paralysis, political manipulation and blatant impunity, there is a seeming "return to the law of the strongest". Concurrently, the notion of genocide has gained traction again as it is mobilised by a wide range of actors to denounce Israel's attack on Gaza and its lethal consequences since 7 October 2023.

This Dossier questions the capacity — and the limits — of international law in the face of contemporary violence. What is the current level of trust in the international legal architecture to address occurrences of mass violence? What is the relevance of the notion of genocide today, as opposed to that of war crimes or crimes against humanity? What are the political stakes in the use of terms that have a judicial grounding and are invested with historical meaning and precedents? In a world where legal landmarks are more necessary but also more contested than ever, the dossier offers valuable insights into these questions.

Dossier produced by the Research Office and based on *Global Challenges* (no. 18, forthcoming).

→ **globalchallenges.ch**



GENOCIDE AND INTERNATIONAL LAW: THE POWER OF SEMANTICS

THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE: THE BEGINNING OF IT ALL?

Cyrus **Schayegh**
Professor and Chair of the Department of International History and Politics

The scholar-lawyer-activist who coined the term "genocide", Raphael Lemkin, was born in 1900 into a Jewish family in Bezwodne, then part of the Russian Empire, today in Belarus; he would die in 1959, in New York City. The violence of World War I and of the 1920 Polish-Soviet War deeply shaped Lemkin. Driven by a keen sense of justice, he studied law in the Polish city of Lviv (Lwow), and then specialised in international criminal law codification. It would be "only" in World War II, as a refugee in 1940–41 in Sweden, where he gathered material for his *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, and from 1941 in the United States, that he developed "genocide" as a legal term.

Lemkin's dedication to the question of genocide began long before World War II, however. It took concrete shape first in a report to the 1933 Fifth International Conference for the Unification of Penal Law, where he proposed to define "vandalism" and "barbarity", the latter as the "premeditated destruction of racial, religious, or social collectivities". And already in the early 1920s, Lemkin was deeply touched by Armenians such as Soghomon Tehlirian who assassinated ex-Ottoman officials involved in the Armenian Genocide — in this case, Talaat Pasha, in 1921 in Berlin. What is now known as the Armenian Genocide — which in fact was wider, for the Ottoman state targeted also some other Christian denominations, including Assyrians and in some regions Greek Orthodox — was crucial in shaping Lemkin's interest and thinking about genocide. In a draft of his autobiography, housed in the New York Public Library, he writes: "I was shocked" reading that "some 150 Turkish war criminals were arrested [but] … then released [following World War I]. … A nation was killed and the guilty persons were set free." And he was deeply affected by Tehlirian's trial in Berlin. "The court in Berlin acquitted Tehlirian", his autobiography draft reads. "It decided that he had acted under psychological compulsion. Tehlirian, who upheld the moral order of mankind, was classified as a so-called insane defendant who was incapable of discerning the moral nature of his act. Tehlirian had acted as the self-appointed legal officer for the conscience of mankind. But can a man appoint himself to mete out justice?" He should not, Lemkin thought — which would drive his work on genocide.

Armenian genocide carried out by the Turks in 1894–1896. Christian prisonners in Aradkir. Advertising for Aiguebelle chocolate. Chromolithograph. Late 19th century. Private collection. 1 January 1894. Photo12/AFP

"The Armenian Genocide was central to Lemkin's thinking."

Lemkin did not see the Armenian Genocide as History's first, however. In fact, he gathered material on, and traced genocide back to, Antiquity, a view echoed e.g. in historian Norman Naimark's 2017 *Genocide: A World History*. Moreover, especially crucial for genocide debates today, there is an ongoing (though presently in the US increasingly difficult) public discussion about colonial authorities and/or colonising settlers committing genocides and about present-day consequences. Cases abound. They include, to just mention three, native Americans especially in the 1800s, treated e.g. in US historian Jeffrey Ostler's 2019 *Surviving Genocide*; Algerians especially in the first decades after France's 1830 occupation, a nuanced analysis of which is historian William Gallois' 2013 "Genocide in Nineteenth-century Algeria"; and the German 1904 Herero and Nama Genocide (supported even by citizens of foes of Germany such as Britain out of "racial" solidarity). The German case is particularly relevant for two reasons. In 2021, Germany and Namibia signed a genocide agreement that, however, is controversial especially in Namibia, whose communities were not consulted. (Also, to sidestep future legal problems, Germany framed the development funds it promised as a "gesture of reconciliation"; the agreement has not [yet] been ratified.) And there has been a vivid debate, first academic, soon public, about links between colonial genocides and the Holocaust; think of historian Jürgen Zimmerer, whose English works include *From Windhoek to Auschwitz?* (2024).

This said, the Armenian Genocide *was* central to Lemkin's thinking. Moreover, Armenians had an enormous stake in early post-World War II debates that would lead to the adoption, in 1948, of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. It defined genocide as "any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: killing members of the group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; [and] forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."

The UN discussions were hotly debated in the Armenian press worldwide. And more important, Armenians directly urged the UN to pass that convention. As historian Khatchig Mouradian has noted in a contribution to a yet unpublished primary source collection, in 1959 Lemkin recounted to Boston's *Hairenik Weekly* how "the Armenians of the entire world were specifically interested in the Genocide Convention. They filled the galleries of the drafting committee at the third General Assembly of the United Nations in Paris when the Genocide Convention was discussed. [And] an Armenian, Levon Keshishian, the well-known UN correspondent for Arab newspapers, helped considerably through his writings in obtaining the ratifications of many Near Eastern and North African countries."

Armenians were not only relieved, though. Many also thought the UN definition fell short, and were incensed that, to quote another text Mouradian analysed, printed in 1950 in the Lebanese Armenian *Aztag*, "a second World War was necessary for the Western nations to feel on their skins what it means to devise a crime against the very existence of a nation, and to condemn it with the concept of 'genocide'".

Unbelievably, it is "much too little, too late" that is characterising the genocide that unfolded until recently in Gaza and that will continue to shape Gazans' lives for generations — and this although it has been defined as such even by some Israeli genocide scholars such as Omer Bartov and by the Israeli NGOs B'Tselem and Physicians for Human Rights–Israel.

“A PERVERSE VERSION OF THE NOBEL PRIZE”: THE SYMBOLIC POWER OF THE LABEL OF “GENOCIDE”

Fuad **Zarbiyev**
Professor of International Law

Mahmood Mamdani once described the term “genocide” as “a perverse version of the Nobel Prize”, by which he meant that “genocide has become a label to be stuck on your worst enemy”. Comparing genocide with the Nobel prize — even with the perverse version of the latter — may not seem a felicitous move. But it has the merit of stressing some key questions that are often overlooked in public discussions. What difference does it make to call a mass crime a genocide? Why do accusations of genocide typically trigger intense contestations of the kind that are not seen in the case of other mass crimes? Why does genocide receive a special treatment in international legal discourse, often being described as “the crime of crimes”, “the crime of all crimes” or “an odious scourge”, even though international law does not rank mass crimes according to their level of atrocity or otherwise distinguish them in terms of gravity?

It is sometimes argued that the response lies in the doctrine of “the responsibility to protect”. The alleged culprit and its possible allies among powerful countries are said to be allergic to the label of genocide because of the latter’s potential to trigger the mechanisms of the responsibility to protect. But the doctrine of the responsibility to protect is not limited to genocide (its official articulation refers to “the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity”) and it is a largely toothless doctrine adding nothing meaningful to the mechanisms already existing under the Charter of the United Nations. Genocide is also not distinguishable from war crimes and crimes against humanity as a ground for universal jurisdiction, which gives every country the possibility of criminal prosecution even in the absence of territorial or nationality-related connections.

> “One can even ask, as the philosopher Paul Boghossian does, ‘whether it’s true that targeting a particular group really is morally worse than simply killing large numbers of people’.”

A more plausible explanation can be found in the symbolic power of the label of genocide. But where this symbolic power comes from is not immediately obvious. According to the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, “genocide” means a series of specifically enumerated harmful acts “committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such”. It is not clear why only a national, ethnical, racial or religious group can be the victim of a genocide and not, for instance, a political or cultural group. One can even ask, as the philosopher Paul Boghossian does, “whether it’s true that targeting a particular group really is morally worse than simply killing large numbers of people”.

Much of the symbolic power of the label of genocide most probably lies in what could be described (in George Lakoff’s words) as the “idealised cognitive model” that we typically associate with genocide. For most of us, that model is the Holocaust; not because, as a lawyer acting as a council for a government appearing before the International Court of Justice recently stated rather inelegantly, any group has trademark rights over the label of “genocide”, but simply because the very concept of genocide emerged in response to the Holocaust. It is true that, as Jean-Paul Sartre pointed out, unlike the word “genocide”, “the thing itself is as old as humanity”. The United Nations Genocide Convention acknowledges this in its preamble, stating that “at all periods of history genocide has inflicted great losses on humanity”. But the concept did not exist until the Polish jurist Raphael Lemkin coined it in *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* published in 1944.

The Holocaust is also arguably the most widely known genocide. It would be hard today to come across any decently educated person who has not read a book or has not seen a film about the atrocities committed by Nazi Germany against the Jews. The magnitude of the horrors that the Holocaust represents — starting with the sheer number of its victims in a single ethnoreligious group (six million) — defies imagination and stands for quintessential representation of human evil. It is thus no wonder that any serious accusation of genocide carries with it a serious potential for stigmatisation, at the very least in global public opinion.

It is also the symbolic power of “genocide” that explains the reluctance of many — not only in Israel, but in the official circles of numerous Western countries as well — to even consider the possibility that Israel — a country whose origin and history are so inextricably linked with genocide — has committed genocide in Gaza with its indiscriminate killing and starvation inflicted upon the population of Gaza, as the UN-mandated Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory has recently concluded. The then French Foreign Affairs Minister probably spoke for many Western countries when infamously stating in January 2024 that “to accuse the Jewish state of genocide is to cross a moral threshold”.[1]

But although they exercise a powerful hold over our imagination, symbols do not have the power to erase reality. The growing consensus that many Israeli actions in Gaza amount to a genocide shows that when the credibility gap between a symbol and the facts is too big, the facts have the last word.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, New York. A wide view of the Security Council meeting on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. 23 September 2025. Manuel ELÍAS / UN Photo

1 Aurelien Breeden, “France Rejects Genocide Accusations against Israel in Gaza”, *The New York Times*, 17 January 2024.

GENOCIDE AND INTERNATIONAL LAW: THE POWER OF SEMANTICS

NOMMER L'EXTERMINATION : HISTOIRE ET ENJEUX D'UN VOCABULAIRE

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Dès le procès de Nuremberg (1945-1946), puis avec l'ouverture progressive des archives, la recherche met au jour la phraséologie employée par l'appareil nazi pour désigner la déportation puis l'extermination des Juifs par le IIIe Reich. Le syntagme nominal « solution finale de la question juive » *(Endlösung der Judenfrage)* s'impose comme une désignation administrative à la suite de la conférence de Wannsee (janvier 1942), qui en systématise et en coordonne la mise en œuvre. La communauté historienne, à l'instar de Saul Friedländer, y recourt avec circonspection, en la maintenant entre guillemets et en l'écrivant parfois en italique. L'expression, qui relève du lexique bureaucratique, saturé d'euphémismes et intégré à la syntaxe codée des bourreaux, tend en effet à dissimuler la nature et l'ampleur du projet exterminateur.

Se formule dès lors un dilemme : inventer un néologisme au risque d'essentialiser l'événement ou utiliser métaphoriquement un nom préexistant avec la difficulté persistante de nommer l'innommable ?

Durant la guerre et dans l'immédiat après-guerre, le mot hébraïque *hourban* (*hurbn* en yiddish), utilisé notamment par les diaristes des ghettos, sert à signifier la destruction des Juifs d'Europe. Dans la tradition juive, ce vocable renvoie d'abord aux destructions du Temple de Jérusalem (586 av. J.-C. et 70 apr. J.-C.), puis, par extension, aux expulsions, persécutions et massacres collectifs subis au cours de l'histoire juive. Central dans les milieux culturels et religieux ashkénazes, il demeure cependant marginal dans les langues occidentales. Ceci s'explique par sa forte connotation scripturaire et son ancrage dans une vision continuiste de l'histoire juive comme enchaînement de catastrophes, mais surtout par la quasi-disparition des yiddishophones.

ALLEMAGNE, Berlin. Vue partielle du Mémorial aux Juifs assassinés d'Europe. 8 décembre 2004. John MACDOUGALL / AFP

Sur le plan juridique, une première tentative de qualification survient dès le procès de Nuremberg. Les inculpés y sont poursuivis pour quatre chefs d'accusation : complot, crimes contre la paix, crimes de guerre et crimes contre l'humanité, cette dernière catégorie ayant été définie dans la Charte de Londres (août 1945). En 1944, le juriste juif polonais Raphaël Lemkin forge parallèlement le néologisme « génocide » afin de doter le droit international d'un instrument de répression adapté aux crimes de masse. Le concept reçoit, en 1948, une consécration normative avec l'adoption de la Convention des Nations Unies pour la prévention et la répression du crime de génocide. Sa portée universaliste en fait une catégorie opératoire majeure, mais son abstraction typologique peine à saisir la singularité de l'anéantissement des Juifs.

Le vocable « holocauste », employé avec une minuscule, dérive du grec *holókaustos* et désigne, dans son acception originelle, le sacrifice rituel d'un animal entièrement consumé par le feu à la gloire d'une divinité. Avant même la Seconde Guerre mondiale, le terme avait déjà été mobilisé, dans plusieurs langues européennes, pour qualifier des massacres collectifs ou des destructions massives. Employé avec une majuscule, son usage pour désigner la persécution et l'extermination des Juifs par les nazis garde une connotation sacrificielle, suggérant une offrande ou une finalité transcendante, ce qui le rend problématique. Malgré ces réserves, la diffusion mondiale de la mini-série télévisée *Holocaust* (1978) a contribué à en assurer la prééminence dans l'espace anglo-saxon, où il demeure la désignation la plus courante.

C'est dans le sillage d'une reconfiguration des régimes de mémoire — marquée notamment par l'avènement de la figure du survivant après le retentissement du procès Eichmann (1961) — que s'impose le terme *Shoah*. Tiré de l'hébreu biblique, où il renvoie à l'idée de catastrophe, calamité ou désastre causé par Dieu, la nature ou un ennemi, le vocable est attesté dès les années 1930, notamment dans la presse juive du *Yishouv* (communauté juive en Palestine mandataire). Il ne constitue toutefois pas encore une désignation stabilisée ni une appellation générique consacrée à la persécution et à l'extermination des Juifs. Le glissement sémantique, amorcé durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale, s'officialise au début des années 1950 avec l'instauration en 1951 de *Yom HaShoah* (« Journée de la Shoah ») et la création en 1953 du mémorial Yad Vashem. Selon Francine Kaufmann, « le sens théologique et la référence biblique ne sont plus perceptibles dans l'hébreu contemporain » de sorte que le vocable entre peu à peu dans la langue du quotidien et tend à se substituer à « Holocauste » dans l'usage hébraïque et francophone[1]. Elle ajoute que le mot évite à la fois l'implicite sacrificiel associé à « Holocauste » et la lecture continuiste des catastrophes juives véhiculée par *hourban*, pour instituer une nomination qui singularise l'événement.

> « Le terme *Shoah* n'abolit pas les autres désignations et, comme elles, n'est pas dénué d'implications politiques. »

Son internationalisation accompagne la revalorisation du témoignage comme instance de légitimation. Le rôle de l'œuvre monumentale *Shoah* de Claude Lanzmann (1985) est, de ce point de vue, décisif. En récusant tout recours aux archives visuelles et en érigeant la parole survivante en matrice du récit, le film éponyme opère un geste performatif qui inscrit durablement le terme dans l'espace public français et international. Ce glissement lexical correspond à un déplacement épistémologique : longtemps cantonné au rôle d'auxiliaire probatoire de l'historien·ne, le témoin survivant, qui n'est plus seulement victime, accède au statut de sujet producteur de sens. Le témoignage cesse d'être une illustration subalterne de l'histoire pour devenir l'un des vecteurs de son intelligibilité.

Le terme *Shoah* n'abolit pas les autres désignations et, comme elles, n'est pas dénué d'implications politiques. Sans se substituer à la catégorie juridique de génocide, il en souligne les dimensions existentielles et mémorielles. Là où le droit international tend à universaliser, son usage affirme l'incommensurabilité de l'événement et la nécessité d'une nomination issue de l'expérience des victimes. Plus qu'une désignation historique, *Shoah* institue un espace de reconnaissance symbolique et dépasse le cadre strictement normatif du génocide. En ce sens, il cristallise un effort collectif de nomination et érige le témoignage des survivant·es en clé herméneutique majeure de l'intelligibilité de l'extermination des Juifs.

1 Francine Kaufmann, « Holocauste ou Shoah ? Génocide ou *'Hourbane* ? Quels mots pour dire Auschwitz ? Histoire et enjeux des choix et des rejets des mots désignant la Shoah », *Revue d'histoire de la Shoah* 184, nº 1 (2006).

GENOCIDE AND THE CAR THAT HAS LEFT THE GARAGE

Paola **Gaeta**
Professor of International Law; Director of the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights

When adopted in 1948, the Genocide Convention quickly joined the ranks of treaties long on promise but short on practice — a text that, like the British lawyer Ian Brownlie once said of *jus cogens* (the category of peremptory norms in international law), seemed a car that would not leave the garage.

That began to change in the 1990s. The atrocities in Rwanda and Bosnia forced the world to confront genocide again, this time with international courts at hand. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda delivered the first conviction for genocide in *Akayesu*; the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) recognised genocide in Srebrenica in *Krstić*. The "car" had left the garage.

Since then, the Convention has travelled into the courtrooms of The Hague and beyond. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has been seized of several genocide cases. In *Bosnia v. Serbia*, it did not hold Serbia directly responsible for genocide but did find it responsible for failing to prevent and punish the genocide committed by the Bosnian Serbs. In *Croatia v. Serbia*, the ICJ again declined to establish state responsibility. Today, two high-profile cases are pending: *South Africa v. Israel*, concerning allegations of genocide by Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, and *The Gambia v. Myanmar*, concerning the allegations of genocide for the atrocity crimes committed by the Burmese military against the Rohingya. Rwanda itself has prosecuted thousands of genocide suspects domestically, and national courts have tried cases on genocide charges under universal jurisdiction. The International Criminal Court has gone as far as indicting a sitting head of state, Sudan's Omar Al Bashir, on charges of genocide in Darfur. Most recently, on 16 September 2025, the UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory concluded, after two years of investigation, that Israel has committed and is committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. The Commission called on Israel and on all states to comply with their obligations to stop the genocide and hold perpetrators accountable.

However, the Convention's application reveals its deficiencies. The definition of genocide enshrined in Article II is narrowly formulated. Drafted in the shadow of the Holocaust, it reflects not only the horror of the Holocaust but also the political calculations of states eager to shield their own practices of mass violence. Racial segregation in the United States, Stalinist purges in the Soviet Union, and colonial violence in Africa and Asia were supposed not to fall within its scope.

The mainstream legal interpretation has reinforced this narrowness. Genocide is usually equated with the intent to *physically or biologically* annihilate a group, through one of the five acts listed in the Convention: killing members, causing serious harm, inflicting life conditions leading to destruction, preventing births, or transferring children to another group. But this interpretation is flawed in two respects. First, groups are social entities, not biological bodies. They can be destroyed without bloodshed. The forcible transfer of children, for instance, may erase the group's future existence as a community even if no one is killed. Second, the Convention does not require the group to be actually destroyed. What matters is the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, no matter if the intent is achieved. Genocide is a preventive crime: it can be recognised even before destruction is complete.

Courts have occasionally broadened the scope. In Srebrenica, the ICTY held that the killing of men, coupled with the forced displacement of women and children, sufficed to find genocidal intent, because these actions clearly threatened the survival of the Muslim community in Eastern Bosnia. Social scientists and victim groups go further, insisting that the destruction of culture, forced displacement, or erasure of social cohesion can all constitute genocide. The history of residential schools in Canada, where Indigenous children were removed from their families and cultures, exemplifies how assimilation policies can be genocidal. Yet, our collective imagination remains tied to the Holocaust model: industrialised killing of defenceless people. This historical collective imagination continues "unconsciously" to shape the legal debate.

> "Genocide is a preventive crime: it can be recognised even before destruction is complete."

War complicates everything further. International humanitarian law tolerates collateral damage (a neutral term to describe harm and death on innocent civilians and destruction of civilian objects) in military operations. In *Croatia v. Serbia*, the ICJ ruled that killing of civilians as collateral damage during military operations did not amount to killings under the definition of genocide. The result is troubling, to say the least: belligerent violence that kills civilians may not qualify as genocide unless one demonstrates that the military attack was unlawful. This is hard to prove, because of the impossibility to get official information from the military on the conduct of their operations.

The conflict in Gaza has made this debate painfully concrete. Some UN experts, NGOs, and states argue that Israel's actions in the context of the conflict in Gaza amount to genocide; others insist that using the term is premature because one shall first have to verify that the killing of civilians is unlawful under international humanitarian law. Moreover, Israel denies genocidal intent, and asserts that its only intent behind the conflict was to destroy Hamas and guarantee the security of its population. As for Western governments, they remain split. The ICJ has already ordered provisional measures against Israel, finding that the allegations of genocide by South Africa against Israel are plausible, but a final judgment may take years. Meanwhile, the word itself is a political weapon: to pronounce it or to avoid it is to take a side.

Eighty years ago, Raphael Lemkin gave a name to a crime without a name: *genocide*. Today, that word is no longer just a legal term — it is a battlefield of law, politics, and memory. The Convention's "car" has indeed left the garage, but it is travelling on uneven roads. Its definition, anchored in 1948, is too narrow to capture the many ways groups can be destroyed and too powerful to be invoked lightly. The challenge for the future is to preserve genocide's special standing — sometimes, together with aggression, labelled the "crime of crimes" — while recognising its many possible manifestations. From colonial policies of forced assimilation to the devastation of Gaza through military means, genocide is not only about bodies. It is about denying human groups the possibility to exist as such. Bridging the rigidity of the Convention with the evolving realities of war and oppression will decide whether the car can keep moving forward.

YUGOSLAVIA, Izbica. Burnt cars belonging to Kosovo Albanians sit in a field in the central Kosovar village of Izbica, where Yugoslav forces divided on or about 28 March 1999 local Albanians into two groups and opened fire, killing 130 of them before burning all their vehicles and houses, according to an indictment published on 22 May 1999 by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (Case No. IT-99-37). 19 June 1999. Eric FEFERBERG/AFP

GENOCIDE AND INTERNATIONAL LAW: THE POWER OF SEMANTICS

NEVER AGAIN? RWANDA AND THE PARADOX OF THE LAW

Ravi **Bhavnani**
Professor and Chair of the Department of International Relations/Political Science

During the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the horrific slaughter of hundreds of thousands of Tutsi carried out in plain sight of the global community and its institutions forced a reckoning with the Geneva Conventions and the Genocide Convention. Out of this arguably preventable tragedy rose the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), a landmark experiment that later fed into the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). Yet, Rwanda's story since 1994 effectively complicates these outcomes, with the law serving as a national conscience of sorts, albeit one that is repeatedly subject to political exploitation.

The ICTR was the first tribunal to define rape as a weapon of genocide, and it expanded the understanding of crimes against humanity. At the same time, its distance from Rwandan society, its tribunal in Arusha and appeals court in The Hague, created resentment. The tribunal prosecuted génocidaires, while atrocities attributed to the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) — the force that ended the genocide and assumed power — largely evaded prosecution. Many survivors saw justice, but just as many saw selectivity.

Inside Rwanda, the RPF built its legitimacy by means of commemoration and control. The *gacaca* courts, Rwanda's experiment with community justice, processed more than a million cases. They brought a sense of accountability but they, too, reproduced asymmetry: Hutu suspects were punished, while alleged RPF crimes remained unprosecuted. The official phrase "genocide against the Tutsi" became the central pillar of national identity, legally codified with the 2008 "genocide ideology" law criminalising denial in terms that allowed it to be used against critics. Opposition leader Victoire Ingabire was jailed after calling for the recognition of Hutu victims; journalists faced exile or harassment; dissidents abroad, like former spy chief Patrick Karegeya, were killed in suspicious circumstances.

Beyond its borders, Rwanda invested heavily in crafting the image of a responsible international actor. Its troops served in United Nations and African Union peacekeeping missions from Darfur to Mozambique. Yet, Rwanda's reputation was further unsettled by reports from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) that described killings of Hutu refugees and abuses by Rwandan-backed militias — what some suggest amount to crimes against humanity or even genocide. The contradiction is stark: a state born from genocide, elevated as a champion of "Never Again", simultaneously faces accusations of grave violations. International admiration for Rwanda's post-genocide recovery has arguably muted criticism of these contradictions.

The term "genocide" has unparalleled force, legally and politically. Kigali insists on the precise formulation "genocide against the Tutsi" to preserve historical clarity and block narratives that equate different kinds of violence, an insistence that further restricts and narrows. In Rwanda's case, the vocabulary itself has become part of governance, used simultaneously to preserve and dismantle.

Do international treaties — designed to protect civilians, prevent genocide and regulate the use of war — then continue to carry any weight? The broader system of international justice, once galvanised by Rwanda's tragedy, is now faced with growing disillusionment. The ICTR's one-sided record alienated many Rwandans. The ICC, hailed as universal, is criticised for its selectivity, raising concerns of a great-power bias. Rwanda, not a state party to the Rome Statute, never fully cooperated with it, all the more so after it indicted Rwandan-backed commanders of DRC militias. And while the International Court of Justice continues to issue important rulings, it is faced with geopolitical paralysis. As confidence wanes, atrocities multiply.

Until 1994, Rwanda and Burundi resembled mirror images of each other: while Tutsi elites dominated politics in Burundi, Hutu elites held sway in Rwanda. Burundi's minority regime systematically targeted the country's Hutu community, whereas the reverse held sway in majority dominated Rwanda. Since 1994, Rwanda's own reflection has come to be distorted. The regime, forged in the aftermath of genocide, reveals how laws against genocidal ideologies can be used to enforce official memory and silence dissent, to foster accountability and enable domination. The lesson from Rwanda is therefore paradoxical: the law, far from being irrelevant, is vulnerable.

RWANDA, Kigali. Illustration picture showing people at the *gacaca* tribunal, a traditional justice system supposed to help Rwanda to cope with the aftermath of the 1994 genocide. 10 February 2004. Jacques COLLET/ BELGA MAG/Belga via AFP)

"The regime, forged in the aftermath of genocide, reveals how laws against genocidal ideologies can be used to enforce official memory and silence dissent, to foster accountability and enable domination."

GENOCIDE IN GAZA: THE END OF INNOCENCE

Vincent **Chetail**
Professor of International Law and Director of the Global Migration Centre

The word *genocide* once belonged to history — a term of horror reserved for humanity's darkest chapters: Rwanda, Srebrenica, the Holocaust. And yet, today, it resurfaces, not in textbooks, but in real time, from the shattered ruins of Gaza.

More than 65,000 Palestinians have been killed, the vast majority women and children. Over 169,000 have been wounded.[1] Entire neighbourhoods have been wiped from the map. Still, the world hesitates to call it by its name.

Why this reluctance? What does it reveal about us? And what lessons can we draw from our silence?

To accuse Israel of genocide feels unbearable to many in the West. The very idea that the state created as a refuge after the Holocaust could now be accused of such a crime seems too heavy to confront. Moral confusion is exacerbated by a mix of caution, historical guilt, and the fear of being accused of antisemitism.

Western hesitation to name the crime unfolding in Gaza is not only psychological. It is also geopolitical. Since its creation, Israel is a strategic ally and a mirror of Western democracy in the Middle East. To question Israel's actions would mean questioning the self-representation of the West, but also decades of alignment and, for some, confronting their own complicity.

In public opinion, accusations of genocide are countered by allegations of antisemitism, in a confrontation that is both Manichean and sterile. The toxic polarisation between pro-Israel and pro-Palestine replaces moral clarity with tribal allegiance and becomes, in turn, the seed of inaction. Far from awakening consciences, the emotional weight attached to the notion of genocide paralyses political leaders, who fear taking sides.

After almost two years of carnage, the last-minute recognition of Palestine by some Western countries is important but mainly symbolic. Meanwhile, lengthy discussions whether the massacre is a genocide or not further paralyse any urgent action and turn into an obscene exercise as if legal qualification is more decisive than human sufferings.

And yet, international law is not ambiguous. "International humanitarian law is not an à la carte menu", UN Secretary-General António Guterres reminded the world. The right to self-defence does not grant license to starve or bomb an entire population. Reciprocally, the apocalyptic situation in Gaza does not erase the horror of 7 October 2023, the largest massacre of Jews in a single day since the Holocaust. But atrocity perpetrated by one side never justifies slaughter by the other.

To call what happened in Gaza genocide is not rhetorical excess; it is legal accuracy. The 1948 Genocide Convention defines genocide as the "intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group" through acts such as killing, causing serious harm, or inflicting conditions calculated to bring about its destruction.

Every element is met. The devastation of Gaza is not a collateral damage; it is systematic and widespread. The International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for Israel's Prime Minister and Defence Minister, for the war crime of using starvation as a method of warfare and for crimes against humanity of murder, persecution, and other inhumane acts.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is also examining the accusation of genocide brought by South Africa with the support of several other states. In January 2024, the Court issued an initial order finding that there was a "real and imminent risk" of "irreparable harm", after acknowledging the "disastrous living conditions" and "massive destruction of homes".[2]

The ICJ pinpointed several official statements exhibiting a genocidal intent, when for instance Israel's Defence Minister called Gazans "human animals" and the President declared that "it is an entire nation that is responsible".[3] These statements are not incidental but repeated and public. Rarely in modern history has genocidal intent been so openly declared by state's officials. Lawyers, historians of the Holocaust and experts of genocide studies have reached the same conclusion. UN rapporteurs, the International Commission of Inquiry, the UN Special Committee on Israeli practices, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have published lengthy and detailed reports acknowledging the genocide.

What Gaza reveals is not just the failure of politics and a blatant abuse of international law. It is a test of what remains of the values and moral authority of the West. Its inability or unwillingness to act reveals Western schizophrenia — always prompt to give lessons for others but rarely for itself. Though not new, this double standard is more obvious than ever; it erodes trust, fuels cynicism, and emboldens other regimes to act with impunity. The fragile ceasefire imposed by the United States after two years of massacre shall not mask the collective responsibility of the West, whose long inaction reveals a tiredness of empathy. This moral desensitisation is not accidental. It is the result of decades of political storytelling that divides the world into "us"and "them", "civilised" and "terrorist", "good nationals" and "bad migrants". When Palestinians are dehumanised by being labelled as human shields, the unthinkable becomes possible.

To restore moral coherence, Western governments must act decisively and consistently: ensure humanitarian access, demand accountability, and reject the false equivalence that confuses empathy with partisanship. Solidarity with Palestinians is not hostility toward Jews. Condemning genocide is not an ideological act, it is a legal duty.

The lesson of Gaza is revealing about what kind of democracies we have become — polarised and morally selective, apathic and distant with the others. What happened in Gaza is our collective failure and marks the end of innocence. "Never again" was never a promise to the past. It was a responsibility to the present.

> "To call what happened in Gaza genocide is not rhetorical excess; it is legal accuracy."

1 Statista, *Guerre Israël/Hamas : nombre de morts et de blessés 2023-2025*.

2 *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel), Provisional Measures, Order of 26 January 2024, I.C.J. Reports 2024*, p. 3.

3 Ibid.

GAZA. People walk towards their homes through the destroyed streets of Gaza City as a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas allows displaced individuals to return. 19 January 2025. Abood ABUSALAMA/ Middle East Images/ AFP

GENOCIDE AND INTERNATIONAL LAW: THE POWER OF SEMANTICS

WATER CRIMES AND INTERNATIONAL LAW: THE NEED FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

Mara **Tignino**
Senior Lecturer at the Faculty of Law and Global Studies Institute, University of Geneva; Senior International Law Specialist at the Platform for International Water Law, Geneva Water Hub

The need for accountability for violations of international law during armed conflicts is increasingly growing. The current conflicts in Ukraine, Gaza or Sudan vividly illustrate the extent of non-compliance with international humanitarian law together with other bodies of law, such as international human rights law and international environmental law, as endorsed in the Geneva Principles. Both deliberate attacks on water systems and the deprivation of civilian access to water supplies, as well as incidental damage to the infrastructure, are emerging as a deeply worrying trend in contemporary armed conflicts.

The Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) is clear in affirming that intentionally using starvation of civilians as a method of warfare by depriving them of objects indispensable to their survival, including wilfully impeding relief supplies, is a war crime in international armed conflicts. Besides, it criminalises intentionally directing attacks against civilian objects and launching clearly excessive disproportionate attacks, including those that would cause widespread, long-term and severe damage to the natural environment (at least in international armed conflicts).

Deprivation of fresh water may constitute a crime against humanity. Depriving people of water implies the commission of inhumane acts, which is part of the definition of crime against humanity. The commission of inhumane acts involves that those responsible of those acts are intentionally causing great suffering and injury to the physical or mental health of people. Crimes against humanity can take place in both armed conflicts and peacetime. A report of the Geneva Water Hub has underlined

GAZA. Facing a siege imposed by Israel and deprived of the basic life necessities, Palestinians collect their drinking water in buckets and jerry cans from limited sources. 3 August 2024. Abood ABUSALAMA/ Middle East Images/AFP

“The definition of water crimes will also contribute to the protection of fundamental human rights such as the human right to safe drinking water.”

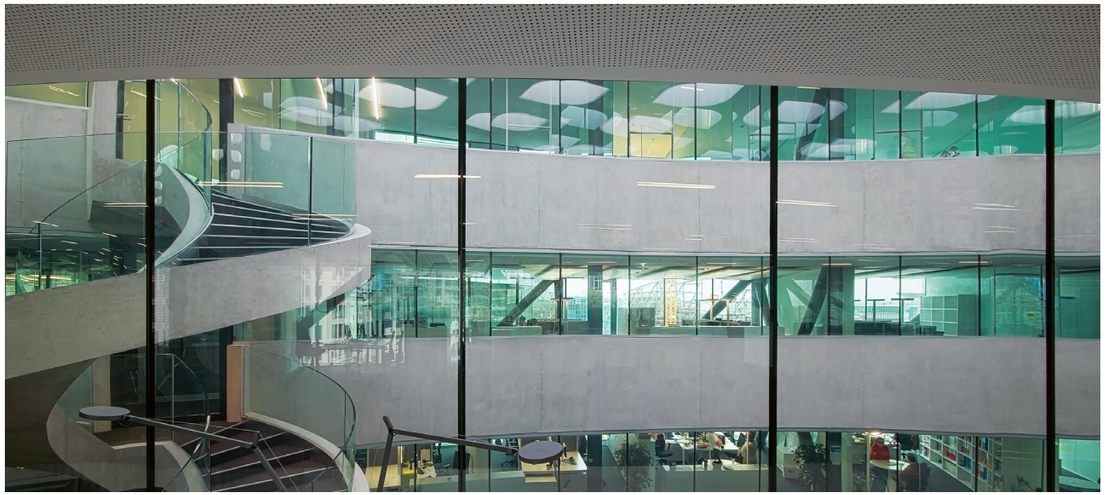
the multiple and far-reaching consequences of the deprivation of clean water on public health. Moreover, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in its Order of March 2024 discusses together starvation and dehydration of Palestinians in Gaza as possible grounds for the violation of the Convention on the Prevention and Punish ment of the Crime of Genocide. In parallel, before the ICC, although the warrants of arrest for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant are classified as confidential to safeguard the conduct of the investigations, the Pre-Trial Chamber indicated that there are reasonable grounds to believe that both individuals have intentionally and knowingly deprived the civilian population in Gaza of objects indispensable to their survival including water.

The topic of weaponisation of water is still a neglected topic in the case law of international jurisdictions. There are however some cases in the past. For example, the 2010 second decision on the ICC Prosecution’s Application for a warrant of arrest for Omar al-Bashir finds that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the elements of genocide are fulfilled. This conclusion also relies on the acts of contamination of water which according to the Pre-Trial Chamber were committed in the furtherance of a genocidal policy and the fact that deprivation of water inflicts inhumane conditions of life to the civilians calculated to bring the destruction of an ethnic group.

Water crimes are closely connected to environmental crimes. In international law there is a debate on the emergence of the ecocide as a new international crime which should be included in the Rome Statute. The ICC Prosecutor’s Draft Policy on Environmental Crimes under the Rome Statute (2024) links severe harm to water systems with the Court’s four core crimes, advancing the recognition of water-related offenses under international law. Based on previous research, I propose two main types of water crimes: 1) crimes that affect the quantity or the quality of freshwater resources and the ecosystems dependent on these resources; 2) crimes that affect water installations, works and facilities. Such crimes can take place both in armed conflicts and peacetime. I argue that a possible avenue to make these crimes more visible is the development of an analytical framework focused on their normative content. This framework can rely on green criminology and on social and ecological justice theories to support the need to develop scientific knowledge on water crimes. The goal of such an analytical framework will be to ensure accountability in cases of criminal offences as well as adequate forms of repression such as civil and penal sanctions.

The aim of the analysis of the normative content of water crimes is to enhance accountability in cases of violation of international law norms that prevent or reduce environmental harm to water resources. The definition of water crimes will also contribute to the protection of fundamental human rights such as the human right to safe drinking water. The study of water crimes should also include the development of an inventory to monitor how States respond to them. Monitoring and accountability can be facilitated by global, regional and bilateral agreements on transboundary water resources. For example, the Annex on Environmental Protection to the Water Charter of the Niger Basin includes aspects related to criminal law stating that the authors and accomplices of bushfires shall be liable to civil and criminal penalties.

The increasing use of water as a method or means of warfare — and thus its weaponisation — urges scholars to adopt multidisciplinary approaches to the analysis of the nature and qualification of the harm to water. In a time where rivers acquire legal personhood, the adoption of criminal law lenses to the study of the response of States to offences of domestic or international laws can support the accountability of those responsible of violations of laws. This is especially important given the fact that water is not only a resource but a fundamental human right of individuals and communities.



L'ENSEIGNEMENT

Welcome to Our New Faculty Member

Nuala **Caomhánach**
Assistant Professor, International History and Politics
PhD, New York University

Nuala Proinnseas Caomhánach is a historian of environmental history, specialising in the modern life sciences, particularly evolutionary theory and ecology. Her research focuses on the history of science and the environment at the intersection of indigenous knowledge, conservation science, environmental law, and the climate crisis in Madagascar; molecular biology, biotechnology, artificial intelligence, and biotechnology governance; museums, natural history collections, and intellectual property; scientific diplomacy and science communication; gender and science. She is also interested in writing and questions of formal expression and the politics of historical production.

Nuala Caomhánach is currently at work on a book project, "Curating Madagascar: The Rise of Phylogenetics in an Age of Climate Crisis, 1921–2025". It tells the unknown global story of how botanists and plant scientists collected, studied, interpreted, molecularised, and aimed to conserve the island's diverse ecosystems in the face of increasing environmental destruction and development projects. Madagascar's long history, as a site of botanical research, allows her to highlight how changing scientific practices have generated novel legal and social challenges in conservation policy with far-reaching ramifications.

Her second book project, "The Tree Builders", is an ethnographically informed history into the world(s) of plant scientists who reconstruct the evolutionary histories of extant and extinct plant species using genetics. Focusing on the period between the 1970s and the present, it examines how plant phylogeneticists have conceived of, conceptualised, and delineated biological and evolutionary time. This project demonstrates how the history of biotechnology and the molecularisation of the natural world cannot be understood without taking into account the simultaneous rise of neoliberalism as a political force and an economic policy.

L'ENSEIGNEMENT

From Research to the Classroom and Back

Alice **Pirlot**
Assistant Professor of International Law

Boris PALEFROY

What makes teaching at the Graduate Institute special is the incredible freedom granted to professors to design their own courses. In many institutions, professors are free to design their syllabus as they wish. However, this freedom is often limited to the content and method of pre-assigned courses. At the Institute, for optional courses, professors are free to create entirely new courses. This approach has clear benefits, not just for the professors, but also for the students who get the opportunity to engage with topics at the forefront of academic research and contemporary debates.

Research-led Teaching

The freedom to create new courses means that professors can introduce students to very specific subjects close to their research interests. For instance, in my case, I designed a research seminar on "Carbon Pricing in a Globalised World" that directly builds on my past and current research on the global governance of carbon pricing instruments and its impact on international climate change law. In the course, students examine, from an interdisciplinary perspective, the most recent research on carbon pricing instruments, such as carbon taxes and emissions trading schemes, asking key questions: To what extent are such instruments effective and fair? How do they interact with international climate change law? This enables them to develop their own informed opinion about the desirability of such instruments. The course culminates in students conducting their own research project on carbon pricing in a specific country, region, or sector. Throughout this process, they gain a firsthand understanding of what it means to do academic research. In particular, they often come to the realisation that research is a "craft" (a description I borrow from Liz Fisher), that it takes time and that arguments significantly evolve from a first draft to a final version.

Teaching-led Research

Beyond its positive impact on the quality of teaching, the ability to create new courses has positive effects on academic research, which also directly enriches the experience of students in the classroom. For instance, while preparing my outline for the course on "International Tax Law and Policy" which I teach as part of the International Law programme, I began to reflect on why international tax law was so rarely connected to the broader field of international law. After sharing my initial thoughts with students, I challenged them to think about the differences and similarities between international tax law and other areas in international law. The discussion with students was insightful and stimulating: it did not only confirm that the topic was worth exploring in an article, but it also enriched the debate within the classroom. This is the essence of what one could refer to as "teaching-led research" where students are the first audience of new research ideas. It makes courses at the Institute particularly attractive and inspiring as it places students at the heart of academic research.

L'ENSEIGNEMENT

Reforming the Last Semester of the Master in International and Development Studies (MINT)

Interview with
Davide **Rodogno**, Antonella **Ghio**, Claudia **Seymour**, Guillemette **Carlucci**, and Bahiya **Mohamedou**
MINT team members

From left to right: Claudia Seymour, Guillemette Carlucci, Antonella Ghio and Professor Davide Rodogno, Deputy Director of the Institute and Head of the MINT Programme.
Boris PALEFROY

What prompted the decision to reform the final semester of the Interdisciplinary Master's programme, and how did the MINT team approach the development of this reform?

The revision of the final semester represents the culmination of a reform process initiated in 2020, and marks a significant milestone in our ongoing efforts to adjust the programme to the needs of our time. The new format includes dedicated professional courses, a transversal career forum, and the option to apply for a Master's thesis. With regard to the method, we followed the same inclusive process as for the overall reform, working with colleagues from various services and consulting employers and students. This allowed us to build consensus on the reform and carry out due diligence.

What are the distinctive features of this reform, and what sets the updated version of the programme apart from similar offerings from other academic institutions?

In an environment where there is a growing disconnect between universities and the professional world, it is imperative that we re-evaluate our models to remain relevant to students, employers, and society at large. This necessitates aligning our teaching with professional realities without compromising on the rigour and excellence that universities stand for. This is exactly what we are achieving with the reform: students will select two professional courses from a list of approximately 15 options. The topics have been selected to ensure their relevance to the professional sphere. The objective is to align with specific job roles and in-demand skills, while also ensuring relevance and connection to our area of expertise: international relations. The overarching goal is to ensure that the programme prepares students for their next step.

What added value does this reform offer to students, and how might it enhance their appeal to future employers?

It equips students with the skills to adapt to a professional environment characterised by constant change and adaptability, where nobody really knows the types of jobs that will exist. Students will bring to employers strong analytical skills to bridge gaps between different disciplines, and both hard and soft skills. Students will also have participated in more hands-on courses, strengthening their agility and capacities to respond effectively in new positions and circumstances.

From your perspective, what are the most pressing challenges facing higher education today, particularly in light of the profound transformations shaping our world?

The widespread adoption of generative AI tools by society at large, and therefore by our students, is perhaps the most significant challenge facing higher education today. At the same time, we recognise the immense opportunities and possibilities offered by advances in AI for research and teaching. At the Institute, we are actively engaging with this issue at every level and shifting our educational approaches, with greater emphasis on co-construction of knowledge, interdisciplinarity, and practical engagement.

Learn more about MINT.

SWITZERLAND, Geneva. Place des Nations during the Geneva summit on plastic pollution. 7 August 2025.
Sophie FLEURY

LES ÉTUDIANT·ES

Behind the Scenes of the Plastic Treaty

Interview with
Vania **Petlane**
Master Student in International and Development Studies (MINT)

In early August, you attended the negotiations towards a Global Plastics Treaty as a support volunteer with the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN). What was it like to be behind the scenes at such an important conference as a student?

I felt immense gratitude to have been part of the FOEN conference support team. It gave me a front-row seat to the intricate choreography of multilateral negotiation, where every word carries weight and strategy unfolds alongside procedure. What struck me most was witnessing the human side of multilateralism, something I had only studied in theory — the exhaustion, the humour, the fragile compromises. I also came to appreciate how much depends on invisible background work. Even in my supporting role, I felt part of history being written.

What were some of the most inspiring and, on the other hand, most frustrating arguments you heard at the conference?

The most inspiring arguments came from Panama, Colombia, Palau, and other small island states that pressed for justice with urgency despite visible exhaustion. In stark contrast, the like-minded states consistently resisted production caps, refusing to budge while vulnerable states pleaded for meaningful action. This tension was not only frustrating to witness but deeply sobering about the reality of global governance.

Over 100 countries took part in the negotiations, but they were not able to come to an agreement. What do you hope is next?

While many describe the outcome as a failure, I see it as revealing fundamental structural challenges rather than a collapse of ambition. Being in the rooms taught me how painstaking the process truly is — a single sentence can take days of negotiation. How much courage it takes to bring conflicting priorities into one text. What I hope for now is that the suggestions voiced by delegates are taken seriously, particularly exploring voting instead of strict consensus or considering alternative institutional avenues beyond the UN. Success will require courage not just to refine content, but to rethink its very methods.

What are you studying at the Geneva Graduate Institute, and how has your time in Geneva affected your vision for the future?

I am completing my Master in International and Development Studies, specialising in human rights and humanitarianism. Geneva has been a rollercoaster of dreams becoming reality, studying negotiation theory in class, then experiencing it first hand at INC-5.2 and last year's ICRC/IFRC conference.

My interests span education policy as a human right, AI innovation, and gaps between international law and implementation. The Graduate Institute's freedom to connect these diverse fields has been invaluable. My goal is to work with organisations developing forward-looking education policies grounded in scientific research, ultimately bringing this expertise back to South Africa to strengthen education as both a fundamental right and foundation for societal resilience.

LES ÉTUDIANT·ES

Africa at the Heart of a Changing World

Afrique Students Association's 2025 Africa Summit

Unyime **Eyo**
Co-Director of the Afrique Students Association (ASA) for 2024–2025 and Master Student in International and Development Studies (MINT)

The third edition of the Africa Summit, organised by the Afrique Students Association (ASA), offered a front row view of Africa's demographic dynamism, drawing diplomats, scholars, and students to debate how a continent with a median age of 19 can shape, rather than merely endure, a rapidly shifting global order where Africa is a central actor in global transformation.

Under the theme *Africa at the Heart of a Changing World*, the ASA aimed to position Geneva as a neutral platform where African perspectives can shape agendas, not merely respond to them. The summit featured three panel discussions across the themes of democracy, technology, and health and humanitarian resilience, with contributions from nine expert speakers: Dr Lucy Koechlin, Dr Saba Kassa, and Michael Asiedu on democracy; Caty Fall Sow, Daouda Diouf, and Fred Awindaogo on health and humanitarian resilience; and Amb. M. M. O. Kah, Dr Aminata Garba, and Achille Yomi on technology and innovation — along with a keynote address from Vera Paquete-Perdigão.

The opening panel conversation on "Strengthening Africa's Democratic Future" addressed the year's wave of coups and political uncertainty without succumbing to fatalism, while highlighting the vibrancy of civic spaces in political life and the growing engagement of young people. The discussions underscored that democratic backsliding is not a predetermined outcome but a consequence of weakened accountability mechanisms, which can be rebuilt through collective commitment and institutional reform.

The focus then turned to "Rethinking Health and Humanitarian Financing for Africa". Panellists reflected on the limitations of reactive aid models and stressed the urgency of designing sustainable, locally led systems in a shifting global landscape where traditional solidarity is less predictable. Africa must lead in shaping a new vision of resilience, one grounded in strong local health infrastructure, long-term investments, and a reimagined approach to humanitarian response that prioritises autonomy and preparedness.

"Tech Leapfrogging: How Africa Can Innovate on Its Own Terms" explored the continent's growing engagement with digital technologies and the opportunities for homegrown innovation. Discussions centred on the need to develop sovereign digital infrastructures that reflect local priorities, reduce dependence on external platforms, and foster robust ecosystems for innovation. Panellists stressed the importance of inclusive policy reforms, cross-border collaboration, and access to financing to ensure that African countries and entrepreneurs can lead in shaping their digital futures.

"Stories matter", and the 2025 Africa Summit made it clear that Africans are not waiting for permission to tell their own: they are already telling them, with clarity, conviction, and purpose as an active shaper of global change.

From left to right: Fred Awindaogo, PhD Researcher in International Law, Geneva Graduate Institute; Caty Fall Sow, Head of the Department of Africa and Middle East, Grant Management Division, The Global Fund, Geneva; Daouda Diouf, Head of Climate Action and Health Resilience, Foundation S – The Sanofi Collective; and moderator Naomi Samake-Bäckert, PhD Researcher in International History and Politics, Geneva Graduate Institute. Divine AGBOTRO & Kenny BROWN

LES ÉTUDIANT·ES

A Semester Abroad in Melbourne

Mia **Kirsch**
Master Student in International Relations/Political Science

After spending a year studying in the international and vibrant city of Geneva, I was able to take my academic journey in International Relations and Political Science to Australia, a region in which I had a long-standing interest, thanks to the Institute's exchange partnership with the University of Melbourne.

Melbourne was a particularly perfect fit for me because it tied directly into my master's dissertation on the financial inclusion of First Nations people in Australia. I had the amazing opportunity to conduct field research on-site and to connect with Indigenous communities, professors, and local experts. It was an incredibly enriching experience for which I am very grateful. Melbourne was a place where I could access valuable academic resources, but it also had this amazing atmosphere where I got to experience Indigenous traditions and perspectives in everyday life, something which is not possible in Switzerland. I'm so glad I got the chance to experience this unique extension of my studies, where coursework, fieldwork and cultural encounters all came together.

Studying outside of Europe for the first time also allowed me to discover important perspectives that don't actively centre Europe. In Australia, these discussions were shaped by the country's unique geographical location, regional security concerns, the ongoing impacts of its colonial history, and its constantly changing role on the global stage. Speaking to Indigenous Australians showed that inequalities and ongoing struggles for recognition shape everyday realities.

My time abroad opened my eyes and changed the way I approached my dissertation. I became more and more aware of my positionality as a white, educated European woman researching within a racialised field. I realised that in addition to my Swiss background, I further had the advantages of my identity, academic training, and ability to navigate complex and new systems. This taught me to be more attentive to privileging Indigenous voices, to resist the urge to impose Western frameworks, and to respect ethical boundaries in interviews. As a result, I have a better understanding of how important it is to acknowledge structural violence without actually perpetuating extractive dynamics.

My semester at the University of Melbourne was an unforgettable journey. My time there taught me to seek alternative worldviews — ones that were more centred on nature than on humans — and challenged everything I had learned before in my studies. It taught me to approach my academic work with humility, reflexivity, and a deeper cultural sensitivity.

Studying in Melbourne with its amazing mix of cultures allowed me to expand both my academic and personal horizons, while enriching my research and shaping me as a person. This exchange has been one of the most formative chapters of my studies as well as my life so far.

Learn more about the exchange programmes.

AUSTRALIA, Melbourne. Inside one of the University of Melbourne's campus buildings. Mia KIRSCH.

LES ÉTUDIANT·ES

“We Forgive but We Don’t Forget”

Interview with
Daniela **Wildi**
Recent Alumna (MINT 2025)

CAMBODIA, Phnom Penh. Queen Mother Library. Daniela Wildi (right) interviews Farina So (centre), Cham Muslim Educator and Principal Deputy Director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia. Rotha SUONG

As part of her recently completed master thesis in International and Development Studies supervised by Professor Achim Wennmann, Daniela Wildi produced the documentary *We Forgive but We Don’t Forget*, co-directed with Cambodian filmmaker Rotha Suong. The film documents the local, everyday, and often unseen efforts of peacemakers in post-conflict Cambodia.

What inspired you to make *We Forgive but We Don’t Forget*? Can you tell us a little bit more about it?

The idea took shape slowly: through lectures that challenged my understanding of peace, conversations in Cambodia that stayed with me, and the powerful films of Rithy Panh and Joshua Oppenheimer, which showed how storytelling can confront silence. Out of these moments grew a renewed desire to use film to tell stories that matter.

That desire brought me back to Cambodia to document the experiences and voices of local peacebuilders — religious and community leaders, artists, educators, activists, and genocide survivors — who, through their daily peace efforts, continue to rebuild lives and relationships in the long shadow of violence. The film title reflects what I heard repeatedly in Cambodia.

How did the film contribute to your thesis, and what was it like to be able to integrate multimedia elements into an academic work?

The film was central to my written thesis. Through it, I explored how filmmaking can deepen our understanding of peacebuilding, especially its “local” and “everyday” peace dimensions. I approached the film as both a research method and a central outcome, placing it in dialogue with the written analysis. Integrating it opened new ways of studying and representing peace — challenging dominant narratives, capturing emotional and embodied dimensions that words alone can’t convey, and showing the places where local peace efforts unfold. Filmmaking itself became part of the peacebuilding process, leaving behind a visual archive that I hope will continue to spark dialogue and learning beyond academia.

We Forgive but We Don’t Forget, which shows that peace is not a finished state, but an ongoing practice, premiered as part of the Geneva Peace Week 2025 in collaboration with the Geneva Graduate Institute. How does it feel to be sharing your work at a time when the world is facing more conflict than ever?

It feels urgent. When images of violence and conflict fill the headlines, it’s easy to feel that peace is unattainable: distant, fragile, and beyond our reach. Yet it’s precisely in such moments that we need to talk about it.

Too often, we picture peace as a grand political moment: leaders shaking hands or treaties being signed. But what happens after? How is peace nurtured and carried forward? This is where my documentary film steps in. It looks beyond those symbolic moments to the work of local peacebuilders in post-conflict Cambodia: the quiet, local, daily efforts that rarely make the headlines but shape life after conflict. Having screened the film at GPW 2025 felt especially meaningful because this year’s theme, *Peace in Action*, spoke directly to that essential work.

LES ALUMNAE·I

From Rural Development to Sustainable Coffee

Interview with
Andres **Torrico**
Founder of 4 Llamas Coffee

Can you tell us a little about your career path and the key milestones along the way?

Inspired by my grandfather’s lifelong work in rural Bolivia, I studied law and developed a strong interest in agrarian and Indigenous rights — a foundation which showed me the power of legal and organisational tools.

Although I initially envisioned a career in international organisations, an unexpected opportunity took me to an NGO focused on rural development in Bolivia’s tropical lowlands, which pushed me to blend legal, economic, and practical development work.

To deepen my understanding, I received a Fundación Patiño scholarship and studied at the Geneva Graduate Institute. There, I focused on rural development and food systems, honing skills in impact evaluation and econometrics, tools I saw as essential for meaningful development work. The Institute’s diversity of people and ideas expanded my worldview in profound ways.

Through the Applied Research Seminar, I worked on a project in Cambodia and met Christophe Gironde, Senior Lecturer at the Graduate Institute, who later became my mentor. That led to five years in the DEMETER Project, where I studied land governance and rural livelihoods. Seeing parallels between Cambodia and Bolivia shaped how I addressed challenges back home.

Eventually, I returned to Bolivia and co-founded 4 Llamas Coffee with my partner, a company rooted in sustainability, people, and innovation. It’s a project that brings together years of learning, dreaming, and doing.

What motivates you in your daily work, and how did your studies at the Institute feed this motivation?

My work is a blend of everything I love: fieldwork, creativity, and research. I get to be in constant contact with producers, work with communities, and, at the same time, think critically and innovate with ideas. This combination is a rare privilege.

Along the way, I’ve met inspiring people who bring passion and perspective to our shared efforts. These connections are among the most rewarding parts of my journey.

The Institute gave me the tools and space to grow. It sharpened my technical skills, but more importantly, it helped me think critically about how to connect theory with practice. The diverse community made me grow not only as a professional but also as a person.

Today, our work with 4 Llamas Coffee is more than just producing coffee. It’s about embracing a way of living, sharing, and connecting. Coffee, for us, is not just a product; it’s a language that carries stories, dreams, and identity. That purpose, mixed with joy and learning, is what keeps me going every day.

What advice would you give to current Institute students for their future careers?

Don’t be afraid to get your hands dirty. Real impact often happens far from a desk. Build things (projects, relationships, systems) and let failure teach you. Some of the best ideas are born from constraints.

And don’t obsess over having the “perfect plan”. Stay open, stay humble, and stay grounded in what truly matters to you. If you hold on to that, the rest will follow, sometimes in ways far more rewarding than you imagined.

LES ALUMNAE·I

Interview with Giorgia Linardi

Spokesperson of Sea-Watch in Italy and Visiting Lecturer in International Law

Can you tell us a little about your career path and the key milestones along the way?

My career began days after submitting my Master's thesis in International Law, which explored the tension between protecting people and protecting borders in the Mediterranean. I joined Sea-Watch in Lampedusa as a legal advisor and soon became directly involved in rescue missions at sea.

From there, I coordinated operations on Lesbos and later joined Doctors without Borders, first on the *Aquarius* collecting testimonies and supporting vulnerable survivors, and then in Libya as Advocacy Manager, working on medical activities in detention centres. Such experience deepened my understanding of the conditions faced by migrants on the "other side" of the Mediterranean, and fuelled a sense of responsibility to not let this be overlooked in Europe.

I returned to Sea-Watch as spokesperson at a time when civilian sea rescue was increasingly criminalised and under constant attack from politics, media, and even courts. This role confirmed to me how political advocacy had become inseparable from humanitarian work, as in the case of Carola Rackete, who was arrested for fulfilling her duty to rescue as Captain of Sea-Watch's rescue boat.

Since 2024, I have coordinated a multi-country project with Avocats sans Frontières against structural racism in the Euro-Mediterranean region, while also teaching Refugee Law in the University of Milano-Bicocca and a course at the Geneva Graduate Institute on seaborne migration and civil engagement in the Central Mediterranean Sea.

What motivates you in your daily work, and how did your studies at the Institute feed this motivation?

Even in today's discouraging climate for human rights, what drives me is the determination not to remain indifferent. I see it as my responsibility, especially as a white European, to use my privilege to confront racism and injustice in migration policies. My time at the Graduate Institute was the entry point that made this path possible: without my degree, I would not have joined Sea-Watch as a legal advisor, applying international law directly to the realities of migration at sea. Today, returning as a Visiting Lecturer allows me to "give back" what I have witnessed at sea and to help students connect academic knowledge with real-world practice.

What advice would you give to current Institute students for their future careers?

Use your time at the Institute to discover where you truly want to make a difference, and then pursue that focus with conviction. You don't need to excel in every subject — your added value will be in the areas that inspire your passion and commitment. At the same time, push the Institute to stay connected to reality, because what we study in books often differs dramatically from practice. Human rights and international law remain deeply relevant, but they require constant defence. Keeping theory accountable to practice is the responsibility of every new generation of students, scholars, and practitioners.

LES ALUMNAE·I – INSPIRING STORIES

Pierre Krähenbühl

Class of 1991

Pierre Krähenbühl, a highly respected leader in the humanitarian field, has dedicated over 30 years to protecting vulnerable populations in conflict zones, primarily in prominent roles at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Serving as ICRC Director of Operations and later Director-General, Pierre Krähenbühl has been responsible for steering the organisation's global humanitarian activities and its 18,000 staff in more than 100 countries. His leadership at the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) further demonstrated his deep commitment to human rights and humanitarian principles. Renowned for navigating complex crises and high-risk environments, he remains a steadfast advocate for dignity and protection in the face of conflict and displacement.

© ICRC/Rolan Sidler

As Director of Operations, Pierre Krähenbühl visited numerous conflict zones around the world. He is pictured above with civilians in Chechnya, June 2003. As part of its mission and commitment to protect civilians, the ICRC endured significant losses, including a deadly attack on one of its hospitals in Novye Atagi.

© ICRC/Alan Meier

From 2002 to 2014, Pierre Krähenbühl directed the ICRC's operations, where he navigated the organisation's complex humanitarian role at a time of global upheaval and numerous crises. He returned to the ICRC in 2021 and was appointed Director-General in 2024.

© ICRC

From 2014 to 2019, Pierre Krähenbühl headed the UNRWA, focused on the delivery of education, health and social services to Palestine refugees in the Near East. His tenure was marked by efforts to maintain vital humanitarian programmes amid ongoing regional instability and funding challenges.

Learn more

Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee

Class of 1993

Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee is a highly respected diplomat and advocate for peace, gender equality, and sustainable development. With a distinguished career in diplomacy, she has played a pivotal role in shaping international peace and security efforts. From serving as Ghana's first female Permanent Representative to the United Nations to her role as Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations for Africa in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations (DPPA-DPO), Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee has been instrumental in advancing global governance and conflict resolution, and has pioneered inclusive diplomacy for African women and beyond.

© UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee presented her credentials to United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in July 2015. At the time, she was the newly elected Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations, a post she held until 2020.

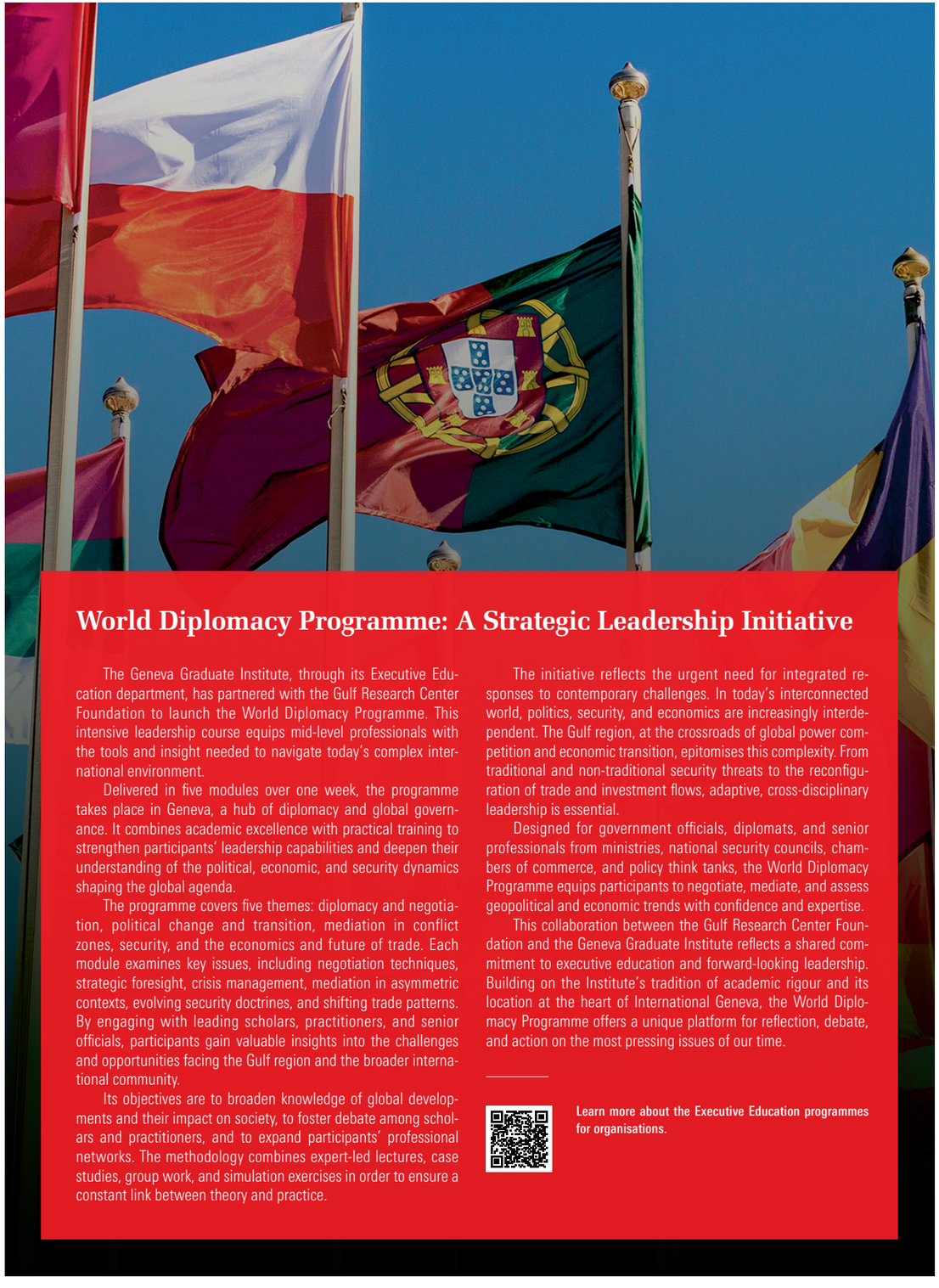
© UN Photo/Cia Pak

As Permanent Representative, Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee served as Acting President of the General Assembly, chairing numerous high-level meetings such as the one above in 2017, appraising the progress achieved in the implementation of the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

© ATMIS Photo/Steven Candia

As Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee has been honoured for her work in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. During a reception in her honour in Mogadishu in 2023, she was presented with a gift by the Head of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS).

Learn more



World Diplomacy Programme: A Strategic Leadership Initiative

The Geneva Graduate Institute, through its Executive Education department, has partnered with the Gulf Research Center Foundation to launch the World Diplomacy Programme. This intensive leadership course equips mid-level professionals with the tools and insight needed to navigate today's complex international environment.

Delivered in five modules over one week, the programme takes place in Geneva, a hub of diplomacy and global governance. It combines academic excellence with practical training to strengthen participants' leadership capabilities and deepen their understanding of the political, economic, and security dynamics shaping the global agenda.

The programme covers five themes: diplomacy and negotiation, political change and transition, mediation in conflict zones, security, and the economics and future of trade. Each module examines key issues, including negotiation techniques, strategic foresight, crisis management, mediation in asymmetric contexts, evolving security doctrines, and shifting trade patterns. By engaging with leading scholars, practitioners, and senior officials, participants gain valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities facing the Gulf region and the broader international community.

Its objectives are to broaden knowledge of global developments and their impact on society, to foster debate among scholars and practitioners, and to expand participants' professional networks. The methodology combines expert-led lectures, case studies, group work, and simulation exercises in order to ensure a constant link between theory and practice.

The initiative reflects the urgent need for integrated responses to contemporary challenges. In today's interconnected world, politics, security, and economics are increasingly interdependent. The Gulf region, at the crossroads of global power competition and economic transition, epitomises this complexity. From traditional and non-traditional security threats to the reconfiguration of trade and investment flows, adaptive, cross-disciplinary leadership is essential.

Designed for government officials, diplomats, and senior professionals from ministries, national security councils, chambers of commerce, and policy think tanks, the World Diplomacy Programme equips participants to negotiate, mediate, and assess geopolitical and economic trends with confidence and expertise.

This collaboration between the Gulf Research Center Foundation and the Geneva Graduate Institute reflects a shared commitment to executive education and forward-looking leadership. Building on the Institute's tradition of academic rigour and its location at the heart of International Geneva, the World Diplomacy Programme offers a unique platform for reflection, debate, and action on the most pressing issues of our time.

Learn more about the Executive Education programmes for organisations.

LA FORMATION CONTINUE

Imagining Diplomacy in a Digital-First Era

Interview with
Martin **Wählisch**
Associate Professor of Transformative Technologies, Innovation, and Global Affairs, University of Birmingham

Dr Martin Wählisch is the inaugural Associate Professor of Transformative Technology, Innovation, and Global Affairs at the University of Birmingham, with a joint appointment at the School of Government and the School of Computer Science. He previously served for more than a decade as a political adviser at the United Nations, where he led the Innovation Cell in the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. His research focuses on the intersection of emerging technologies and global policy, exploring how artificial intelligence, GovTech, and digital tools are shaping diplomacy, peacebuilding, and governance. In December, Dr Waehlisch will contribute to the executive course "Diplomacy in a New International Order" with a session on GovTech and digital diplomacy, inviting participants to reflect on the opportunities and challenges of digital transformation in international affairs.

Drawing on your experience at the United Nations and in academia, how are emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence reshaping the practice of diplomacy and international cooperation?

Martin WÄHLISCH/
Office for Dreams

Artificial intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies are fundamentally transforming how diplomacy is conducted and how international cooperation unfolds. On the one hand, they open up entirely new possibilities for data-driven decision-making, predictive analysis, and interactive engagement across borders. Though they once sounded like science fiction, AI tools supporting conflict analysis or digital platforms enabling real-time policy coordination are now becoming a reality.

At the same time, the complexity of these technologies is often underestimated. Some problems that might appear straightforward, such as making algorithms transparent or ensuring equitable data access, are in fact extremely difficult to solve. Conversely, capabilities that once seemed far-fetched, like using machine learning to detect disinformation at scale, are now within reach. For diplomacy, this duality means that practitioners must sharpen their mindset: to remain open to aspirational futures while being realistic about technical challenges and political sensitivities.

Ultimately, AI is not simply a technical add-on to diplomacy. It is reshaping the very fabric of how international actors interact, negotiate, and cooperate, demanding a rethinking of skills, values, and institutions.

In your upcoming session on GovTech and digital diplomacy, what key perspectives or skills do you hope participants will take away?

I am very excited about this session because it is not only about knowledge transfer, but about building a mindset and capacity for interactive work. I hope participants will come away with three main insights, the first of which is the importance of data literacy. In today's world, diplomats cannot afford to treat technology as a "black box". They need to understand how digital infrastructures and AI systems shape governance, security, and communication. Second comes the value of AI capacity building. We must equip practitioners not only to use existing tools, but also to critically assess their implications, adapt them to local contexts, and anticipate second-order effects. The third insight relates to the practice of interactive, future-oriented thinking. Much of what we will discuss is aspirational, imagining how diplomacy could evolve in a digital-first era. By engaging in interactive exercises, participants can explore scenarios where digital technologies both enable and complicate cooperation. This process helps sharpen the mindset needed for navigating uncertainty.

Looking ahead, what opportunities and challenges should policymakers prioritise to ensure that technology contributes constructively to peacebuilding and global governance?

The opportunities are enormous. Technology can expand participation in global affairs, make governance more transparent, and provide new tools for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. From digital platforms that connect communities across divides to AI systems that help analyse early-warning signals, the potential is transformative.

Yet challenges are equally significant. Policymakers must grapple with issues of digital inequality, governance of AI systems, and the risks of misuse, whether through disinformation, surveillance, or militarisation of emerging technologies. What complicates the picture further is that some of the most pressing issues, like algorithmic fairness or ensuring interoperability across platforms, are not easily solved.

Therefore, the priority should be mindset-building: cultivating the capacity to approach these technologies critically, with humility about what is difficult, and with imagination about what is possible. Policymakers should foster inclusive dialogues, strengthen digital institutions, and support innovation that is aligned with democratic values and peacebuilding goals.

In short, technology will not automatically contribute to peace and governance; it must be shaped to do so. That requires literacy, capacity, and above all, interactive collaboration across sectors and borders.

Discover our executive course "Diplomacy in a New International Order".

New Centre to Promote Information Justice and Knowledge Equity

Interview with
Sean **Flynn**
Director of the Geneva Centre on Knowledge Governance

Can you tell us about your academic career and more specifically at the Washington College of Law of the American University?

For the last 19 years, I have been on the faculty of American University's Washington College of Law teaching courses on the intersection of intellectual property, trade law, and human rights. I also directed the Program on Information Justice and Intellectual Property (PIJIP), where I designed and managed a wide variety of research and advocacy projects to promote the public interest in intellectual property and information law, and I coordinated the law school's intellectual property academic programme. The projects I launched and managed included the Global Expert Network on Copyright User Rights, an academic network of over 100 copyright professors from over 80 countries around the world, and the Global Congress on Intellectual Property and the Public Interest, a member organisation of over 1,000 public interest minded academics and professionals. I continue to serve as the editor-in-chief of Infojustice.org, a leading public interest law and policy blog, as a visiting scholar at the University of Amsterdam's Institute for Information Law, and as a senior research associate at the University of Cape Town's Intellectual Property Unit.

You are coordinating a major project on knowledge governance. Can you tell us more about this project?

For the last four years, I have been funded by the Arcadia Foundation to help build the capacity of public interest stakeholders and developing country governments to engage in international policy forums at the intersection of copyright law and the rights of researchers and educators to access and use digital materials in their work. The project began before the rise of so-called artificial intelligence (AI), which has drawn increased attention to this important area. AI companies and researchers use the same tools. As governments consider regulating the uses of digital materials by large technology companies in AI, they need to be critically attuned to the impact of those regulations on academic, research and education institutions and practices. Our project produces research, sponsors teaching programmes, and provides technical assistance to governments and public interest stakeholders in forums such as the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) where international policy on these issues are being shaped.

Why did you decide to bring this project to the Institute?

When we decided to build a Geneva-based office for our work, the Graduate Institute was our first choice for a local partner. The history of the Institute as a pioneering provider of research and training for diplomats and development officials provides a firm foundation for the support of our goals in these areas. The Institute is well known among our stakeholders and the governments we work with. Its location in the heart of the Geneva policymaking institutions, including being a block from WIPO's offices, is ideal for the integration of our work into the policy community. And we are pleased to help grow the Institute's capacity in intellectual property law. Several of the Institute's alumnae-i, including Kamil Idris, the former Director General of WIPO, are leaders in intellectual property law and policy. Other centres at the Institute, including the Global Health Centre, work on issues at the intersection of intellectual property and the public interest. But this is the first centre at the Institute to be focused more particularly on the full dimensions of the topic.

Learn more about the Centre on Knowledge Governance.

Emotions and International Law

Interview with
Anne **Saab**
Associate Professor of International Law
and Director of the LLM in International Law

You are leading a project entitled "Emotions and International Law". Could you explain the intellectual motivations that led you to explore this theme, as well as the context in which this project emerged?

While I was writing my PhD on food insecurity and climate change at the LSE (London School of Economics and Political Science), I became intrigued by the fearful discourses around climate change. For instance, phrases like "time is running out" and "we are heading for climate catastrophe". Intuitively I felt like this kind of language must have an influence on, and be influenced by, climate change law. This curiosity eventually became an article, "Discourses of Fear on Climate Change in International Human Rights Law".

As I immersed myself in discourses of fear around climate change, I found the wondrous world of emotions research. There has been a recent surge in interest in emotions research across disciplines, spurred by insights in neuroscience that challenge the long-held idea that reason and emotion are separate. I submitted my grant application to the SNSF (Swiss National Science Foundation) three times before being successful, and the generous feedback from reviewers put me in a confident position to start the research project in 2023.

What role do emotions play in contemporary international law, and how do they influence the way the law responds to current crises?

My starting position is that international law remains grounded in the idea that the legal process can effectively eliminate emotions. I draw on emotions research from other disciplines to challenge this rationalist assumption. My overarching objective in this research project is to illustrate that emotions are an inextricable part of reasonable decision-making and to open space for engaging with the role of emotions in international law.

The role that emotions play in contemporary international law must be explored in particular contexts, through particular lenses, with particular methods. Each of the members of the research team explores a specific case study. I cannot speak about the role of emotions in international law in general, except to say that emotions play a role in all areas of international law.

Do you think emotions have a place in the International Court of Justice? If so, in what form and with what implications?

The ICJ is saturated in emotions. It suffices to listen to the impassioned presentations by legal counsel on questions around the impacts of climate change and genocide. The World Court deals in questions of international law, but ultimately these are questions about humanity and therefore highly emotional. Some relevant and thought-provoking scholarship is emerging on the role of emotions in international courts, but there remains little attention for this.

I am preparing an interview series to canvass the multiple places of emotions in the work of the ICJ. My plan is to prepare another grant proposal focusing on emotions at the ICJ. There are so many aspects to explore, for instance textual analysis of emotive language used in ICJ pleadings and decisions, interviews and observations of ICJ actors, and the study of historical archives.

Nouvelles publications

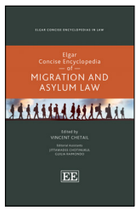
Graduate Institute eBooks no. 8. Graduate Institute Publications. 2025. 697 p. Available in open access.

De/Colonising Palestine
Contemporary Debates

Edited by Riccardo **Bocco** and Ibrahim **Saïd**

This volume seeks to contribute to the broader project of decolonisation by bringing together diverse perspectives for a critical examination of the Palestine Question. It aims to challenge dominant narratives, highlight the resilience and agency of Palestinians, and explore new pathways toward justice and liberation amid ongoing occupation and colonialism.

Topics covered include the question of refugees, the diaspora, the predicament of the Palestinian Authority, hydropolitics, and the settler colonial modes of Israeli control. Additionally, the book delves into Palestinian cultural resistance and the evolution of international coalitions, highlighting a shift in solidarity — from performative to transformative — towards decolonisation and liberation and the associated challenges.



Edward Elgar Publishing. 2025. 656 p.

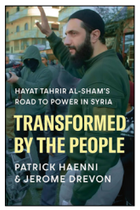
Elgar Concise Encyclopedia of Migration and Asylum Law

Edited by Vincent **Chetail**

Editorial Assistants: Jittawadee **Chotinukul** and Giulia **Raimondo**

This concise encyclopedia provides a comprehensive overview of the rapidly developing field of migration and asylum law. It brings clarity on key terms and critical notions, while challenging misconceptions in this highly politicised sphere.

Bringing together a diverse array of leading and emerging scholars and practitioners from across six continents, this encyclopedia examines a broad range of topics and perspectives, such as diasporas, border control, racism and the human rights of migrants. Each entry offers a clear and concise summary of existing and contemporary knowledge, identifies important gaps in the field and outlines new directions for cutting-edge research. Carefully curated, the encyclopedia scrutinises well-known terms of art, including naturalisation, non-refoulement, remittances and resettlement, as well as addressing intersecting topics like civil society, climate change, migration governance and digital technology.



Hurst. 2025. 320 p.

Transformed by the People
Hayat Tahrir al-Sham's Road to Power in Syria

Patrick **Haenni** and Jérôme **Drevon**

In December 2024, to global astonishment, former al-Qaeda affiliate Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) led a coalition to overthrow the Syrian regime. This fascinating account unravels HTS's dramatic transformation since 2019, from a besieged insurgent enclave to a conservative Islamist government.

Drawing on interviews with HTS leaders — including Ahmad al-Sharaa himself — as well as diplomats, dissidents and opponents, the authors reveal the group's pragmatic evolution while ruling Idlib province, in the face of global and local constraints. They uncover how HTS approached religious minorities, redefined its understanding of sharia, and embraced a non-radical conservative society. HTS reshaped its identity not only in northwest Syria, but on the world stage, aligning with NATO member and secular republic Turkey, confronting both al-Qaeda and Islamic State, and marginalising die-hards in its own ranks, in favour of a popular, mosque-based Islam.

DCAF – Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance. 2025. 292 p.

Human Security Provisions in Ceasefire and Peace Agreements

Keith **Krause**, Grazvydas **Jasutis**, Kristina **Vezon** and Rebecca **Mikova**

This publication explores how human security (HS) provisions are integrated into ceasefire and peace agreements across Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. It responds to a growing recognition that sustainable peace requires more than just stopping violence — it must also address the everyday needs of civilians affected by conflict.

It introduces the Human Security Index (HSI), a tool that evaluates the inclusion of seven HS dimensions: economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political security. By applying this index across nine case studies, the report assesses the degree to which peace and ceasefire agreements reflect a human-centred approach, finding that while some agreements include provisions for personal, political, and community security, others neglect vital areas like food, health, and environmental security.

The report distinguishes between short-term ceasefires and long-term peace agreements, highlighting the importance of sequencing and context.

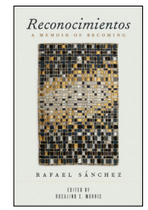
CEPR Press. 2025.

The Economic Consequences of the Second Trump Administration
A Preliminary Assessment

Edited by Ugo **Panizza**, Beatrice **Weder di Mauro**, Gary **Gensler** and Simon **Johnson**

This book delivers a timely, expert analysis of the economic shifts unfolding following President Trump's return to office. Amid sweeping tariffs, sharp breaks in global alliances, assertions of presidential supremacy, government downsizing, deregulation, and risks to the rule of law, this volume offers thoughtful, evidence-based insights into how these policies may affect growth, trade, investment, inflation, stability, and the role of the dollar.

Edited by four leading voices in economics and public policy, the book draws on contributions from global experts assessing domestic and international consequences. Their preliminary assessments are clear: heightened uncertainty, lower economic growth, and risks in the long run to US economic leadership and the multilateral order are reshaping the economic trajectory of the United States and the rest of the world.



Fordham University Press. 2025. 160 p.

Reconocimientos
A Memoir of Becoming

Rafael **Sánchez**

What is the relationship between a writer's life, milieu, and thought? In this daring and intellectually expansive text, part memoir and part political philosophy, Rafael Sánchez, former Senior Lecturer in Anthropology and Sociology, explores the forces and events that shaped him and the nations through which he moved.

Reconocimientos is a book of both personal and political reckoning, from the thrillingly emancipatory possibilities of Venezuela's plazas to the political promise and disappointments of revolution. Written in the final year of his life, *Reconocimientos* moves from scenes of Sánchez's youth in Cuba to fieldwork on the cult of Maria Lionza in Venezuela to confront the terrifying and alluring forces of patriarchal privilege at the base of monumentalist authoritarianism.

Sánchez's intimate prose speaks with the urgency both of his own mortality and of the political crises of our moment.

Classiques Garnier.
2025. 919 p.

L'institution monétaire de l'humanité

Jean-Michel **Servet**

Dans une approche interdisciplinaire, Jean-Michel Servet, professeur honoraire d'études du développement, interroge les confins des multiples dimensions de la monnaie. Celle-ci est appréhendée comme une institution fondamentale pour l'interdépendance des humains. Sont interrogés tant ses fondements archaïques et universaux parmi les communautés de chasseurs-collecteurs que notre « modernité » où dominent l'hyper-liquidité, la création monétaire par le crédit des banques commerciales et des projets libertariens tel le Bitcoin.

L'ouvrage contribue aux débats actuels en abordant le potentiel d'une monnaie libérée de la dette et le foisonnement actuel d'alternatives solidaires. Ces redécouvertes du partage et des communs sont nécessaires pour une survie de l'Humanité.

Springer Nature/
Palgrave Macmillan.
2025. Open access.

Time in Education Policy Transfer

The Seven Temporalities of Global School Reform

Gita **Steiner-Khamsi**

This open access book investigates a topic underexplored in policy transfer: time. Drawing on well-known theories from comparative education, public policy studies, political science, and sociology, Gita Steiner-Khamsi discusses seven temporalities of policy transfer: historical period, future, sequence, timing, lifespan, age, and tempo. The temporal dimension helps explain how the school-autonomy-with-accountability reform developed into a global script and was selectively adopted and translated into local contexts around the globe. The author also explains why select features of the reform were eventually institutionalised.

Internationally renowned for her seminal work on policy borrowing, Gita Steiner-Khamsi systematically applies a comparative, transnational, and global perspective to capture the role of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank in advancing and accelerating the reform's worldwide diffusion.

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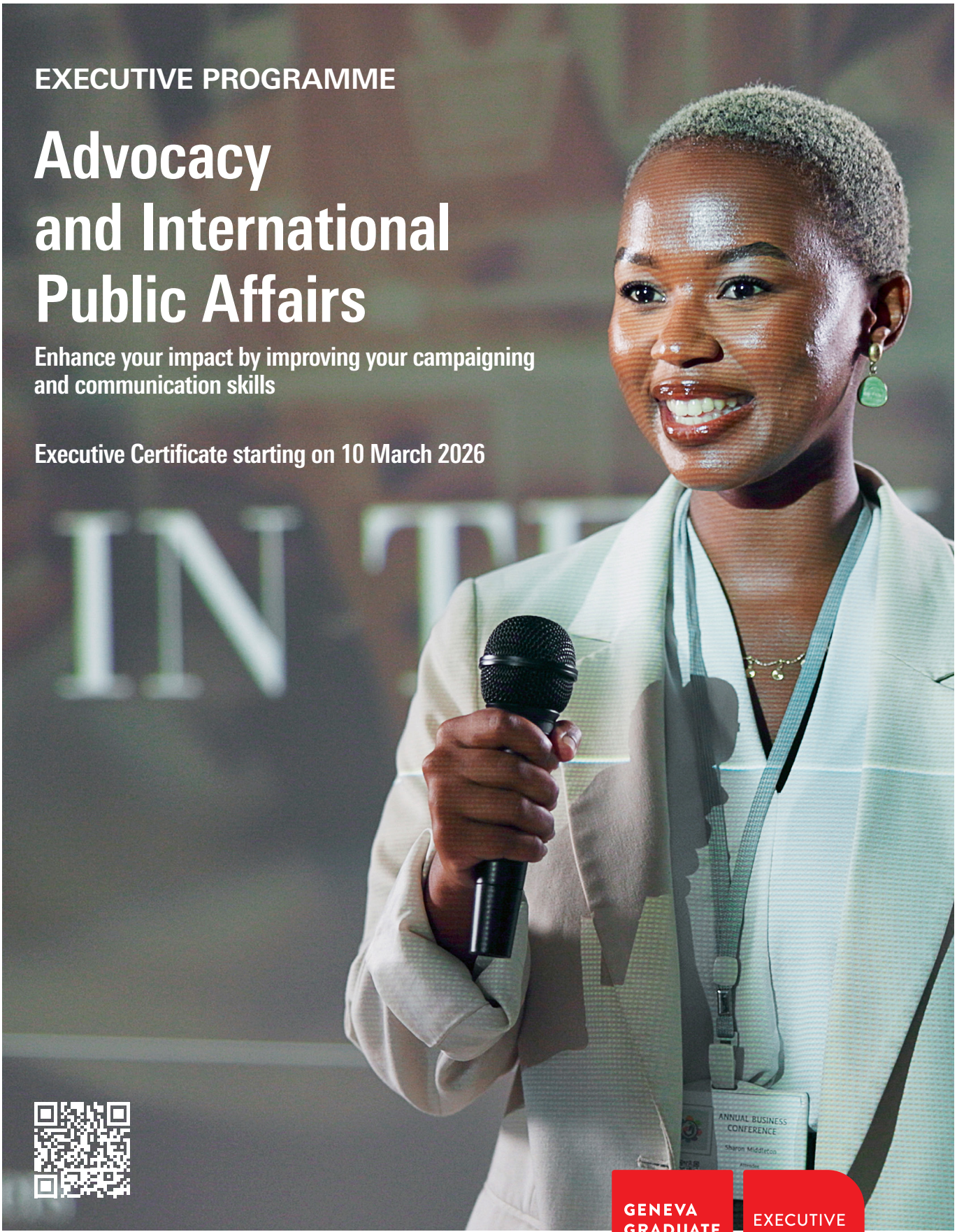

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