

GENEVA
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Research Bulletin

Upcoming events, latest publications and other research activities

19 January 2026 (no. 1, 2026)

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Kari de Pryck & Niklas Wagner | Participation in the UNFCCC's First Global Stocktake: Innovation and Continuity in Climate Governance
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Gateway to Publications by Themes

						
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Gateway to Other Relevant Information

				
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Publications by Themes



Diplomacy & Global Governance



ARTICLE

Rethinking UN Peace and Security Engagements in a Changing World

World politics is changing. The post-Cold War unipolar system is being replaced by a multipolar world order that is characterised by increased geopolitical competition and contestation of the liberal international order. Authored by a combination of international relations and peace

scholars, policymakers, and practitioners, among whom **Sara Hellmüller, Margaux Pinaud**, Postdoctoral Researcher at the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP), **Bilal Salaymeh**, Postdoctoral Researcher at the CCDP, and **Xinyu Yuan**, Research Associate at the CCDP, this policy paper identifies four main processes through which this shifting context influences UN peace operations: a diversification of security and peace actors; a challenge to the authority of UN operations from domestic interlocutors; a weakening of the norm of political settlements; and a move in terms of objectives from conflict resolution to conflict management (in *International Affairs*, vol. 102, no. 1, January 2026). The paper proposes four broad roles that the UN can bolster through its peace operations by building on its unique asset of universality, its wealth of capacities, and its unmatched ability to link global legitimacy with a concrete impact in conflict contexts: providing good offices; maintaining and promoting universal norms; offering expertise for capacity-building; and performing as the “conductor of the orchestra” of different peace and security actors. The paper concludes that the UN’s role remains unparalleled, but adaptations are required so that peace operations continue to benefit the people they are

mandated to serve.

Repository (public access).

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Cities, Space, Mobilities & Migrations



EDITED BOOK CHAPTER

Tree in the Forest? The Hungarian Refugee Crisis in a Global Context

The 1956 Hungarian refugee crisis illustrates the complex interplay between individual displacement, political instrumentalisation, and the evolution of international humanitarian institutions during the Cold War. Following the failed revolution, roughly 200,000 Hungarians fled

to Austria and neighbouring countries, making it the largest European refugee flow of the Cold War era. While small compared to global displacements in Asia, Africa, or post-World War II Europe, the Hungarian exodus was quickly politicised by Western powers as evidence of resistance to Soviet communism. Most refugees were rapidly resettled across 37 countries, highlighting the favourable geopolitical context and the role of international cooperation in shaping humanitarian outcomes. Beyond its immediate human impact, the crisis catalysed significant developments for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The rapid establishment of camps, resettlement programmes, and coordination with states provided a model for future operations, expanding UNHCR's global mandate. At the same time, the Hungarian case revealed persistent structural challenges, including dependence on donor states, racial and political biases, and difficulties maintaining neutrality in conflict zones. **Jussi Hanhimäki** concludes that the crisis underscores the enduring tension between humanitarian imperatives and political realities, offering lessons for both the history and ongoing practice of global refugee protection (in *A Handbook on Post-1956 Hungarian Refugee Relief: From Local Crisis to Global Impact*, G. D. Kecskés and T. Scheibner, eds., De Gruyter Oldenbourg, January 2026).

DOI.

Image: ETH Library Zurich, CC BY-SA 4.0.

ARTICLE

The Role of Collective Hypervisibility in Everyday Lives of Refugees: The Syrian Refugee Hubs in Metropolitan Areas of Turkey

This paper examines refugee hubs that attract heightened scrutiny and opportunities for integration (in *Journal of Refugee Studies*, online January 2026). Focusing on Turkey, **Z. Ezgi Haliloglu Kahraman**, Senior Fellow and Research Fellow at the Global Migration Centre and the Centre for Trade and Economic Integration, and Ezgi Irgil argue these hubs offer a sense of protection and expose refugees to increased control by authorities. Thus, they introduce the concept of collective hypervisibility to analyse how Syrian refugees in two Turkish hubs articulate and perceive their lived experiences through both positive and negative perspectives as a group. Refugees often view these neighbourhoods as shields from typical integration challenges faced by newcomers. However, living in such spaces also renders them targets, as all refugees are perceived as a homogeneous group, ignoring individual differences. By exploring refugee perceptions, the authors reveal shared dynamics across refugee hubs and offer insights relevant to similar contexts globally.

DOI.



Global Health



MONOGRAPH

International Drug Control Law: Trends and Reform Challenges

The international drug control regime bans non-medical drug production and use while ensuring access for medical purposes. Despite near-universal ratification and political commitments focusing on demand and supply reduction as well as judicial cooperation, the illegal drug market has

expanded significantly, exposing the regime's inability to fulfil its objectives, alongside escalating challenges like drug-related violence, overdose crises, and human rights abuses. **Khalid Tinasti**, Research Associate at the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP) and Visiting Lecturer at the Geneva Graduate Institute, critically examines the international drug control framework, analysing its legal instruments, historical context, and implementation mechanisms (Anthem Press, January 2026). He explores emerging tensions, such as the limited access to pain medicines, the tensions with international human rights law, and synthetic drug crises affecting public health and law enforcement. By addressing these issues, he sheds light on how countries navigate the conflicts between their international obligations and pressing domestic challenges, particularly in adapting to new trafficking modes. Building on these analyses, he discusses whether the current regime is fit for purpose or requires reform.

[Publisher's page.](#)



Trade, Finance, Economies & Work



ARTICLE

"This Is Not International Law": International Tax Law and the Disciplinary Boundaries of International Law

International tax law, as an academic field, is traditionally viewed as lying outside the broader discipline of international law. This makes international tax law an interesting case for

exploring the disciplinary boundaries of international law and their manifestations. **Alice Pirlot** argues that the apparent separation between international tax law and international law can be linked to a series of choices made by international law scholars and international tax law scholars in the 20th century that contributed to the compartmentalisation of the two scholarly communities (in *European Journal of International Law*, online December 2025). By shedding light on such a compartmentalisation, she hopes to encourage more dialogue between today's international law and international tax law scholars. If social dynamics indeed play a key role in the emergence of

subfields of international law, then such a dialogue could lead to a rethinking of the disciplinary boundaries of international law.

[Repository \(public access\).](#)

ARTICLE

Missing Markets: Microstructure and Liquidity on the London Stock Exchange

Rui Esteves and Gabriel Geisler Mesevage study the behaviour of specialist dealers operating in the London Stock Exchange in the 1870s (in *Explorations in Economic History*, vol. 99, January 2026). The LSE was a free-entry exclusive dealers market, where dealers were free to choose which securities to deal in. The authors show that dealers concentrated their market making in the most liquid securities. A combination of adverse selection and inventory costs prevented the development of liquid markets in most securities, with dealers opting instead to provide matchmaking services. The results call for a reappreciation of the liquidity of the London market and offer a new interpretation of stylised facts about the Victorian investor behaviour.

[Repository \(public access\).](#)

ARTICLE

Public Investment Quality and Its Implications for Sovereign Risk and Debt Sustainability

Amat Adarov and **Ugo Panizza** introduce a new index measuring the quality of public investment covering 120 economies over the period 2000–2021 (in *Journal of International Money and Finance*, vol. 161, February 2026, online December 2025). It shows that scaling up public investment reduces sovereign risk in countries with high-quality public investment but increases sovereign risk when public investment quality is low. The authors find that this relationship is especially pronounced in sub-investment grade countries and that the results are not driven by the possible correlation between public investment quality and overall institutional quality. They also show that scaling up public investment when its quality is high does not undermine debt sustainability.

[DOI.](#)

This article was previously published as an [International Economics Department Working Paper](#) and as a [World Bank Policy Research Working Paper](#).

ARTICLE

The Aftermath of Sovereign Debt Crises: A Narrative Approach

Rui Esteves, Seán Kenny and Jason Lennard investigate the causal effects of sovereign debt crises in a sample of 50 defaulting economies between 1870 and 2010 (in *The Journal of Economic History*, online January 2026). As default is potentially endogenous, they use the narrative approach to identify plausibly exogenous episodes. They find economically and statistically significant costs of up to 3.2 percent of GDP before recovering to the pre-crisis level after five years. The average aftermath, however, conceals a large heterogeneity by default cause. Defaults originating from negative supply shocks, political crises, or adverse terms of trade are associated with higher costs. Demand shocks, in contrast, have a moderate effect that is quickly reversed.

[Repository \(public access\).](#)

ARTICLE

Tightening or Loosening? The Effects of Uncertainty on the Design of Preferential Trade Agreements

To mitigate uncertainty, it is often assumed that governments negotiate ample flexibility provisions when entering new international treaties. Yet, the case of preferential trade agreements (PTAs) suggests that governments prioritise the more stringent commitments when faced with uncertainty. **Leopoldo Biffi** and **Christian Winkler**, PhD Researchers in International Relations/Political Science at the time of writing, investigate the effects of uncertainty spikes occurring during negotiations on the design of 251 bilateral PTAs (in *World Trade Review*, online

January 2026). Their theory proposes that sharp increases in uncertainty make governments more prone to signing deeper PTAs to emphasise their commitment to liberalisation. In doing so, governments cater to firms' demands for institutions protecting investment, upholding intellectual property rights, and promoting regulatory harmonisation. The authors find robust evidence that PTAs are deeper when the contracting parties are faced with uncertainty spikes during negotiations. However, they do not find equally consistent evidence that countries also make PTAs more flexible. While much of the rational-design literature has focused on flexibility as a tool to cope with uncertainty, these findings suggest that countries rather tend to tighten their international commitments in turbulent times.

[DOI \(open access\)](#).

This article is substantially based on a co-authored essay in Leopoldo Biffi's and Christian Winkler's respective PhD theses. It has been awarded the 2025 L. Alan Winters Prize of the World Trade Review, which honours outstanding contributions by young and upcoming scholars.

ARTICLE

Decolonisation, Unstable Sovereignties and Development: The Indian Sterling Balance Negotiations of 1947

Indo-British financial negotiations in 1947, a crucial year in the compressed timing of imperial retreat, impacted the shape of decolonisation and also the US-led post-War global financial system. Of the vast debts Britain had accumulated during the Second World War, one-third of the total £3.5 billion was owed to British India. Inextricably linked to Indian hopes of industrialisation and development, a resolution to the outstanding "sterling balances" was a priority for both leading Indian anti-colonial political parties, and was also a priority for the US Treasury. The six-month Indo-British financial agreement was signed on 14 August 1947, while Whitehall was facing a global run on sterling. Negotiations were conducted separately from the transfer of power negotiations underway on the sub-continent, allowing Whitehall to leverage informational asymmetries while Indian sovereignties were in flux. As shown by **Atiya Hussain**, alumna (PhD in International History and Politics), crucial sections of the interim agreement that clashed with Britain's commitments under the US-led Bretton Woods financial system were not communicated to Washington, even as Britain continued to draw on the Anglo-American loan that had been negotiated in December 1945 (in *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, online December 2025).

[Repository \(public access\)](#).

This article is based on the author's PhD thesis (2023).

WORKING PAPER

Two Decades of Chinese Industry Subsidies

Shuhui Xiang and **Xinran Yin**, PhD Researchers in International Economics, and **Yuan Zi** construct a new database based on China's WTO subsidy notifications (2001–2022) and provide the first systematic overview of China's industrial subsidies over the past two decades (International Economics Department Working Paper no. 18-2025, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, September 2025). Five findings emerge. First, subsidies expanded rapidly, but direct fiscal support stabilised around 0.8 percent of GDP after 2008. Second, China has employed more subsidies than its income level would suggest, with striking policy persistence. Third, subsidies and tax incentives for FDI have declined, while those targeting specific industries and promoting innovation have grown. Fourth, wealthier and more trade-oriented provinces provide more local subsidies. Finally, subsidies are concentrated in a few sectors, and measures based on counts versus values reveal different patterns. These patterns reveal how China's subsidy strategy has evolved, offering insights to state-led development in the 21st century.

[Repository \(public access\)](#).

Three Essays on International-Cooperation Problems and Institutional-Design Solutions

This dissertation by **Leopoldo Biffi** investigates how international institutions have coped with economic globalisation having been under increased strain over the past three decades. Economic crises, global pandemics, and the increased domestic politicisation of international trade and investment have rendered economic agreements increasingly difficult to conclude and tricky to design. This work asks how designers of preferential trade agreements (PTAs) and bilateral investment treaties (BITs) have adapted these institutions in response to similar challenges. It argues that the design solutions adopted have hardly undermined the coordinating function of PTAs and BITs and have even made these institutions more stringent and effective in some instances. The first essay, “**Tightening or Loosening? The Effects of Uncertainty on the Design of Preferential Trade Agreements**” (co-authored with alumnus **Christian Winkler**), finds that PTAs negotiated at times of heightened uncertainty tend to be deeper than average, acting as credible commitment devices for contracting governments. The second essay, “**When ISDS Goes Too Far: What Kinds of Claims Do States React To?**” (co-authored with **Thomas Schultz** and **Umut Yüksel**), finds that states are not simply willing to retrench their BIT commitments to protect foreign investors in the aftermath of investor-state arbitral claims (ISDS). Rather, governments do so punctually, based on the nature of the incurred ISDS claim, to preserve the role of arbitration and BITs as efficient credible-commitment mechanisms. The third paper, “**Deferred Contracting in International Agreements: Structuring Trade Cooperation for Regulatory Convergence**”, argues and empirically finds that governments facing incomplete-contracting problems in their PTA liberalisation commitments, due to domestic political salience, advance such commitments ex-post, following ratification, to bypass domestic opposition. **Repository** (access to the PhD thesis restricted to members of the Institute community; other interested persons can [contact Dr Biffi](#)).



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Peace, War, Conflicts & Security



EDITED BOOK CHAPTER

“Peaceful”, “Just”, and “Inclusive”? The Pitfalls and Promise of Measuring SDG-16

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) built on and expanded a rich body of experience with targets and indicators associated with their predecessors, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Yet in several respects, and in particular

in Goal 16, the SDGs moved into uncharted territory, where agreement on the goal itself, and on the relevant targets and indicators, was difficult to achieve, and where the data itself was either very weak or non-existent. Goal 16 promised to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. While a laudable ambition, it is extremely difficult to imagine what this means in practice, and how it could be measured either comparatively or longitudinally, as a guide to policy and programming. **Keith Krause** explores the broader challenge of monitoring and measuring the SDGs through the lens of SDG 16, beginning with a quick overview of the genesis of the goal itself, the selection of targets and indicators, and some of the debates around particular indicators (in *Transitioning to Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions*, R. Baikady, ed., Transitioning to Sustainability Series 16, MDPI, December 2025). He highlights the

exclusions and occlusions in the data, and what can (and cannot) be reliably measured, or even taken as a proxy for the goal. Finally, he reflects more broadly on the politics of measuring such things as the quality of governance, the level of violence, and abstract notions such as inclusivity or access to justice.

[URL \(open access\)](#)

ARTICLE

From Non-settlement to Political Settlement: The Types of Urban Conflict Agreement

Urban conflict agreements are agreements between ordering actors addressing specifically urban areas affected by armed conflict. Drawing on and contributing to the literature on the urbanisation of conflict, **Emilian Berutti**, PhD Researcher in International Relations/Political Science, makes two contributions, first offering a new conceptualisation of urban conflict agreements, and second offering a theorisation of them through developing a typology (in *Urban Studies*, online January 2026). He argues that urban conflict agreements which incorporate a greater number of participants in their processes and contain more comprehensive governance provisions are expected to demonstrate greater durability in their order-making processes than those agreements which do not incorporate all relevant actors in their processes, or which do not include comprehensive governance provisions. He builds on a deductive and inductive methodology to identify four types of urban conflict agreements — non-settlements, political un settlements, partial settlements and political settlements — and offers illustrative cases to indicate their unique characteristics.

[Repository \(public access\)](#).

ARTICLE

(De)constructing Meanings and Pathways of Water and Peace

Water as an entry point for peace is increasingly highlighted in global policy discourse; however, the scientific evidence supporting this connection has not been systematically established or explored, in contrast to the extensive literature on water and conflict. Christian Bréthaut, **Laura Turley**, Senior Science-Policy Manager at the Geneva Water Hub, Sumit Vij, **Quentin Parent**, Project Manager at the Geneva Water Hub, Aline Wambüi Stüdeli and Irene Fiammetta Muscas conduct a systematic review of the literature on the relationship between water and peace from 2015 to 2022, utilising the ROSES methodology for systematic reviews (in *Environmental Science and Policy*, vol. 174, December 2025). Their findings indicate that while conceptual advances and empirical evidence demonstrate that water can serve as a vector for broader peace, this knowledge is dispersed across various epistemic communities, hindering the systematic accumulation of insights. To address this fragmentation, they unpack the different meanings of and linkages between water and peace and identify seven water-to-peace “pathways” from an inductive analysis of the literature. They propose that the pathways can provide structure and shared language for future research on water and peace, aimed at fostering interdisciplinary collaboration and enhancing understanding of this critical relationship.

[DOI](#).

REPORT

Weapons Compass: Proliferation and Control of Arms and Ammunition in Wartime Ukraine

Since the Russian Federation’s full-scale invasion in February 2022, vast quantities of small arms, light weapons, and ammunition have been deployed to the front lines, some of which have been lost or abandoned by combatants and subsequently found and stockpiled by civilians over the course of the war. These weapons include military-grade firearms, grenades, and recent-generation portable missiles and rockets — weapons that pose immediate safety threats to the Ukrainian population, and risk affecting national and regional security should they be diverted or trafficked to criminal organisations or violent extremists. This report by **Matt Schroeder, Gergely Hideg, Aline Shaban and Nicolas Florquin**, Researchers at the Small Arms Survey, and others

provides timely and in-depth analysis on illicit proliferation of arms and ammunition and identifies actionable policy recommendations for the short-, medium-, and long-term future of Ukraine (Small Arms Survey and Center for Security Studies [CENSS], December 2025).

[PDF \(open access\).](#)

The report is also available in Ukrainian.

REPORT

Chinese Conceptions of Peace: Historical Foundations and Implications for Contemporary Conflict Agency

Over the past 25 years, as it has risen to the status of a great world power, China has become deeply enmeshed in attempts to manage global conflicts. However, China's approach to peacemaking and conflict management differs significantly from that pursued by Western states. China advocates a "developmental peace" approach that prioritises economic development and capacity-building, arguing that development leads to peace by becoming a cause on which deeply torn societies can find common ground. This is positioned as an alternative to Western-sponsored programmes in which "liberal peace" is based on political inclusion. **Xinyu Yuan**, Research Associate at the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding (CCDP), and Pascal Abb explore the development of China's approach to peace across traditional Chinese philosophy and modern political doctrines, showing how this intellectual history has shaped contemporary Chinese peace agency (Working Group on Research and Development [FriEnt], November 2025). They find that the "developmental peace" concept is mainly influenced by two factors: China's own experience of creating domestic stability through economic growth, and the lingering influence of Marxist thought on economic determinism.

[Repository \(public access\).](#)

REPORT

Pathway to Policy: Firearms Trafficking and Public Health in the Caribbean

The Caribbean region continues to suffer from high levels of firearm-related violence, with worrying developments that include the recruitment of children and adolescents into armed gangs, shootings in hospitals, and a surge in gang violence. Most of the weapons seized from perpetrators of these and other crimes are handguns, but recent data reveals a rise in trafficking of AR- and AK-pattern rifles and large-capacity magazines to some Caribbean countries. The impacts of gun violence on national health systems are substantial, diverting already scarce resources from violence prevention, education, and development. **Anne-Séverine Fabre**, **Matt Schroeder** and **Nicolas Florquin**, Researchers at the Small Arms Survey, and others update and expand on the data collected for the previous Caribbean Firearms Study and sets out policy observations to address firearms trafficking and violence as a public health issue (CARICOM IMPACS, CARPHA, GA-CDRC at The UWI, and Small Arms Survey, December 2025).

[PDF \(open access\) available here.](#)



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Development & Cooperation

ARTICLE

From Empire to Aid: Analyzing Persistence of Colonial Legacies in Foreign Aid to Africa

For decades now, Western development agencies and donors have been castigated for their colonial biases in providing aid to Africa. It is well established that donors provide considerably more foreign aid to their former colonies relative to other countries. However, what happens over



time to the influence of the former coloniser-turned-donor within the aid recipient countries? Does their influence become stronger over time, or does it decline with the emergence of other contemporary donors? Additionally, do these colonial legacies evolve differently depending on who the former colonial power was? Using a statistical analysis of the OECD Creditor Reporting System database, **Swetha**

Ramachandran, PhD Researcher in International Relations/Political Sciences at the time of writing, shows that the persistence of colonial legacies in aid, measured through donor concentration, is declining over time across all aid recipient countries (in *Journal of International Development*, online December 2025). However, the pace of decline varies: former French African colonies, although more concentrated at any given time, see this concentration decrease faster compared with former British African colonies. These trends are likely influenced by the growing number of donors, France's morphing Françafrique policy and the ongoing influence of former colonisers through military and trade avenues. By drawing on interdisciplinary approaches, this research attempts to empirically measure the persistence of colonial legacies across Africa and help inform policy strategies for reforming aid practices by understanding the broader trends.

[Repository \(public access\)](#).

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Human Rights, Humanitarianism, Justice & Inclusion



WEBZINE

Genocide and International Law

“Genocide”, “crimes against humanity”, “war crimes” — semantic battles rage over how to name mass violence unfolding in today’s conflicts. At the centre of these disputes lies one word: genocide. Why does it provoke such contention? The term has become a flashpoint in public debate, dividing media commentators, governments, international organisations and scholars alike. These quarrels reflect deep political stakes and entrenched ideological positions. Are international courts free to establish the unfolding of genocides in today’s conflicts simply based on established precedents and doctrines? Can social sciences use the term in a neutral and principled way when our shared understanding of “genocide”, its core meaning and its legal applications, remains contested? And beyond the current state of affairs, a broader question looms: is the concept of genocide still useful for grasping, let alone preventing, mass violence that continues to mark our world?

Contributors to this 18th issue of *Global Challenges* include **Paola Gaeta, Fuad Zarbiyev, Cyrus Schayegh, Vincent Chetail, Ravi Bhavnani, Mara Tignino, Grégoire Mallard, Dominic Eggel, Marc Galvin and Laurent Neury**.

[Start reading.](#)

Global Challenges is a series of dossiers designed to share with a broader, non-specialist audience the ideas, knowledge, opinions and debates produced at the Geneva Graduate Institute.
Image: © Chappatte in Le Temps, Geneva.

ARTICLE

The Many Worlds of Advisory Opinions – About Recent Practice, Compliance and False Dichotomies

While advisory opinions are legally not binding by virtue of the Statute of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), a closer look at practice reveals that most advisory opinions prompt states and international organisations to conform their acts to them. This is particularly evident in situations of serious *ius cogens* violations, where advisory opinions can trigger legal effects *erga omnes*. For instance, the recent advisory opinion on *Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem*, found serious *ius cogens* violations and has induced “third” states and international organisations to the underlying conflict to comply with their obligations under customary international law. Hence, the distinction between binding judgments and non-binding advisory opinions is a false dichotomy, argues **Haris Huremagić**, PhD Researcher in International Law (in *Austrian Review of European and International Law*, vol. 28, no. 1, online October 2025). Depending on the circumstances, advisory opinions can be either binding or non-binding, occasionally both at the same time, and in most instances, advisory opinions are neither binding nor non-binding.

[DOI](#).

ARTICLE

Water and Survival in War: Upholding IHL’s Protective Purpose and Documenting the Hidden Toll

Water is essential to life, dignity and recovery in armed conflict. Increasingly targeted, manipulated or incidentally damaged, it has become both a casualty and a weapon of war, with impacts that are often undocumented or unattributed. While there are multiple protections for water under international humanitarian law (IHL), legal indeterminacies, operational constraints and weak implementation undermine their effectiveness. **Caroline Pellaton**, Operations Director for the Geneva Water Hub, **Tadesse Kebebew**, Project Manager at the Geneva Water Hub, and David Kaelin examine patterns, drivers and types of harm relating to water in armed conflict, including reverberating effects and cumulative impacts, alongside the relevant legal frameworks (in *International Review of the Red Cross*, online January 2026). They advocate a protective interpretation of IHL and propose measures including the establishment of a collaborative inter-agency mechanism to link field realities with the law, strengthening civilian protection where survival is at stake.

[DOI \(open access\)](#).

ARTICLE

From Alienation to Disposability: Marx’s Relevance in the Struggle for Human Dignity

Delal Aydin, Visiting Scholar in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, revisits Karl Marx’s writings through the lens of human suffering and dehumanisation, exploring their contemporary relevance for struggles centred on human dignity (in *Philosophy and Global Affairs*, online December 2025). By critically engaging with Marx’s early works on alienation and his later analyses of the commodity form and machinery in Capital, she highlights how capitalist social relations reduce human life to abstract labour, ultimately rendering it disposable. She proposes a selective, emancipatory interpretation of Marx that acknowledges long-standing critiques, especially from decolonial and critical race theorists, while maintaining that Marx’s methodological focus on emancipation is a potent instrument for examining structural violence. Inspired by the Kurdish slogan *Berxwedan jîyan e* (“Resistance is Life”), which emerged during periods of severe state violence that sought to strip life of its dignity and meaning, she illustrates how Marx’s concepts illuminate the ontological dimensions of resistance to dehumanisation. She argues that reclaiming Marx through the question of life provides a vocabulary to confront contemporary forms of disposability and affirm human worth.

[Repository \(public access\)](#).

The Human Right to Water and Its Relevance in Transboundary Contexts

In the last two decades, there has been significant progress in crystallising an autonomous human right to water (HR2W) based on the existing international rules and practices of policymakers and stakeholders. The recognition of the HR2W is vital to secure other human rights, such as the right to life, health and well-being. After briefly introducing the human rights discourse on water, **Mara Tignino**, Senior International Law Specialist at the Geneva Water Hub, **Tadesse Kebebew**, Project Manager at the Geneva Water Hub, and Christian Bréthaut explore the emergence of the HR2W and its legal basis and examines the scope and nature of the right (in *Routledge Handbook of Water Diplomacy*, S. Islam, K. Smith, M. Klimes and A. Salzberg, eds., Routledge, October 2025). They also probe the implications of recognising the HR2W, including the context of transboundary watercourses and the potential challenges to realising the right. They further underscore the need for careful application of the HR2W to accommodate the concerns of different actors in negotiations on the use and management of water resources.

[DOI \(open access\)](#).

PHD THESIS IN INTERNATIONAL LAW, 2025

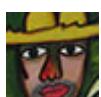
Beyond the Ruling: A Reflexive Enquiry into the Authority of Precedents in International Law

It is a well-known dogma that there is no rule of precedent in international law; judicial decisions bind only the parties to a case. It is also said that precedents end debates. Yet in practice, international lawyers, especially before international courts, rely heavily on precedents, which often ignite new struggles. **Karem Luisa Cárdenas Ynfanzón** examines the authority that precedents exert over international lawyers and, more broadly, in international law, from a socio-legal and critical perspective. Conceiving international law as an adversarial field where lawyers compete to make their arguments prevail, she defines precedents not merely as past decisions but as ideas of the past materialised in valid legal form: judicial decisions. She argues that the authority of precedents is a relative and relational mechanism of social and cognitive control. Lawyers give precedence to prior decisions when they perceive in them — consciously or not — authoritative attributes. The more resources lawyers mobilise, the more attributes a precedent accumulates, thereby increasing its authority, its constraining power. While resistance is always possible, whether tactical or overt, it is itself shaped by the authority it seeks to challenge. International lawyers, regardless of their role, both constrain and are constrained by precedents. In two case studies — one on the making of LaGrand at the ICJ and another on US resistance to WTO Appellate Body rulings — the author shows how authority and resistance to precedents function. Ultimately, she argues that precedents function as placeholders of struggle and meaning, as standards of performance, and more broadly as stabilisers of domination in international law.

[Repository](#) (access to the PhD thesis restricted to members of the Institute community; other interested persons can [contact Dr Cárdenas Ynfanzón](#)).



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Arts, Culture & Religion

ARTICLE

On Laughter, the Grotesque, and the Ability to Pretend: Reframing Uncertainty in Goma, Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo

Silke Oldenburg, Senior Researcher in the Global Governance Centre, examines the role of laughter, the grotesque, and pretense in everyday life in Goma, a city in the war-affected Eastern



Democratic Republic of Congo (in *Cahiers de littérature orale*, no. 98, online December 2025). Based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork since 2008, it explores how residents navigate chronic uncertainty, violence, and social precarity through humour and performative practices. In a context where crisis has become ordinary, laughter is not merely spontaneous but a deliberate social practice and form of agency. Through verbal

humour, embodied laughter, and playful faire semblant (pretending), people reframe precarious realities, sustain dignity, and create spaces for critique and resilience. Here, reframing is not used in the sense of cognitive or discursive frame analysis, but rather to describe how humour and laughter enable people to shift the affective and moral register of experience. Drawing on political anthropology, phenomenology, and humour studies, the article situates Goma as a grotesque urban environment where fact and fiction, fear and irony, are constantly intertwined. Ultimately, it shows how laughter functions as a vital mode of sense-making that sustains social bonds, critiques power, and transforms suffering into a shared, bearable experience.

[DOI \(open access\).](#)



Top



Gender, Diversity, Race & Intersectionality



ARTICLE

The Queer international: LGBTI+ Advocacy at the United Nations beyond "Western Imposition"

In this article, **Rafael Carrano Lelis**, who completed his PhD at the Institute last autumn (see below), examines the debates at the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) surrounding the renewal of the Independent Expert on sexual

orientation and gender identity (IE SOGI) (in *Sexualities*, online December 2025). Based on ethnographic fieldwork, he analyses the interplay between colonial legacies, cultural narratives, and queer transnational advocacy. The research addresses three central questions: How do discussions of colonialism intersect with debates on gender and sexuality at the HRC? What impact does this intersection have on the strategies of queer transnational activists? How do the distinct positions of states and civil society actors influence these debates? The author argues that state representatives often perpetuate colonial binaries, invoking "culture" to delegitimise sexual and gender diversity as "Western" or "unnatural." Conversely, LGBTI+ activists engage in decolonial advocacy, challenging these cultural monopolies and asserting their truth about the intersection that marks their identities. Such contrast underscores a key distinction: While states reinforce static hierarchies, civil society actors mobilise transnational solidarity to construct a "queer subject of rights" in international human rights law. In doing so, the author introduces a more nuanced analysis of Joseph Massad's notion of the "Gay International," which portrays international queer advocacy as a form of Western imposition.

[Repository \(public access\).](#)

Queer International Activism: Subject-Making in International Human Rights Law

How do certain individuals, or groups of individuals with shared characteristics, move from a position of erasure and exclusion to being recognised as legitimate subjects and rights-bearers under international human rights law (IHRL) and within the broader social discourse on human rights? This is the central question addressed by **Rafael Carrano Lelis** in his thesis, which focuses specifically on how this process has unfolded, and continues to unfold, for lesbians, gays, bisexuals, trans, intersex, and others who occupy the large spectrum of sexual and gender diversity (LGBTI+). The thesis offers an ethnographically informed account of how the multiple signifiers associated with the queer community since the 1970s were gradually inserted into the intelligibility of human rights discourse through the actions of transnational civil society actors and international activism. Framing it as a process of subject-making through IHRL, the thesis's overarching argument demonstrates how sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) were discursively established as a human rights issue through strategic actions of international activism and how creative forms of activism enables queer civil society to temporarily overcome the pervasive state-centrism in defining the boundaries of IHRL. Based on archival research and ethnographic fieldwork, the thesis explores five distinct strategic dimensions of this subjectivation process, bringing together historical and contemporary elements of this struggle: the ambivalent relationship between queer and universality; the becoming of queer decolonial subjects; the appropriation of the legal form for the active inscription of new subjects of IHRL; civil society's execution of state-reserved acts in global governance fora when advocating for a broader understanding of the subjects of human rights; and the leveraging of elements of individuals' personal and social life in overcoming the state's totalising presence.

[Find out more about Dr Carrano Lelis's thesis in this interview.](#)

[Repository](#) (as the thesis is embargoed until October 2028, please [contact the author](#) for access).

PHD THESIS IN INTERNATIONAL LAW, 2025

Reconciling Faith and Feminism: Western Feminism, the ECtHR, and Muslim Women in Europe

This thesis examines the intersection of Western feminist discourse, secular legal frameworks, and the marginalisation of Muslim women who wear the hijab in Europe. It explores how dominant feminist narratives, often rooted in secular ideals, have shaped legal and social policies that restrict Muslim women's religious expression under the guise of gender equality and emancipation. By analysing key legal cases from the European Court of Human Rights, **Merna Abouelezz** highlights judicial patterns that prioritise secularism over religious freedom and individual agency. Employing an interdisciplinary approach that integrates critical discourse analysis, intersectional feminism, and legal critique, she challenges the assumption that the hijab is inherently oppressive. Instead, she argues that anti-veil laws and public discourse surrounding veiled Muslim women contribute to systemic discrimination, limiting access to education, employment, and public life. She also examines the broader implications of these policies, showing how they reinforce gendered, Islamophobic, and racialised narratives that exclude Muslim women from the feminist movement and European society. Ultimately, she advocates for a more inclusive feminist approach that respects minority rights and cultural and religious diversity while upholding autonomy.

[Find out more about Dr Abouelezz's PhD thesis in this interview.](#)

[Repository](#) (access to the PhD thesis restricted to members of the Institute community; other interested persons can [contact Dr Abouelezz](#)).

PHD THESIS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS/POLITICAL SCIENCE, 2025

Weaving a Patchwork Political Project: Transnational Feminist Mobilization and the Struggles of Peasant and Rural Women in Brazil

Carolina Fontes dos Santos examines transnational feminist mobilisation within the field of global food governance, focusing on the experiences and political practices of peasant and rural women's movements in Brazil. Through an analysis of their engagement on the ground and

transnationally, she illustrates how these movements articulate a counter-hegemonic political project that challenges the dominant global food system. She argues that this alternative project is woven through multiple articulations among grassroots, social, and transnational movements, and she proposes a patchwork-weaving framework, grounded in a decolonial perspective, to understand the construction of solidarities and of this political project within transnational feminist mobilisation. The act of weaving this political project, bound together through threads of affection and an ethics of care, honors the plurality of struggles that collectively envision systemic transformation. This metaphor foregrounds the knowledge, resistance, and practices of rural women and Indigenous Peoples across Brazil and Latin America.

[Find out more about Dr Fontes dos Santos's PhD thesis in this interview.](#)
[Repository \(public access\).](#)



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Democracy & Civil Society



ARTICLE

“More” or “Better” Institutionalization? Lessons From Latin American Institutions of Citizen Participation

The longstanding debate around the trade-offs of formalising institutions of citizen participation (ICPs) within legal frameworks is currently facing a revival with the spread of citizens' assemblies.

Among arguments in favour of “more” institutionalisation, the expectation that it will protect ICPs from eventual political changes stands out. Among arguments against institutionalisation, the fear of crystallising certain “recipes” translates concerns that overly routinised institutions can be more easily manipulated. But what exactly does institutionalisation entail? Benjamin Goldfrank, Melisa Ross and **Yanina Welp**, Research Fellow at the Albert Hirschman Centre on Democracy, offer three contributions to this conversation (in *Politics and Governance*, online December 2025). First, they define institutionalisation, identifying four constitutive dimensions: formalisation, political embedding, professionalisation, and social engagement. It is rare for any ICP to achieve high degrees of all four dimensions. Second, they propose four connected arguments: (a) the debate is not whether to institutionalise or not but about contextual configurations, (b) formalisation alone does not guarantee the persistence or success of ICPs, (c) the extent and form of institutionalisation will and should vary across ICPs and over time, and (d) if any single dimension of institutionalisation stands out as crucial, it is political embedding. Third, they explore these ideas by analysing three Latin American ICPs: popular initiatives (direct decision-making), participatory budgeting (deliberative decision-making), and sortition-based citizens' assemblies (consultative deliberation).

[Repository \(public access\).](#)

Image: Hugo Londoño, CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

ARTICLE

Who Gets to Shape Climate Futures? Voice, Representation, and Urban Experimentation at the Paris Climate Academy

Laura Bullon-Cassis, Postdoctoral Researcher at the Albert Hirschman Centre on Democracy, examines the Paris Climate Academy as a site of urban democratic experimentation, foregrounding how recognition, representation, and affective politics intersect in participatory

climate governance (in *Global Perspectives*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2025). As cities increasingly emerge as laboratories for democratic innovation amid planetary crises, the Academy offers a rich case of hybrid institutional design that combines education, activism, and municipal governance. Drawing on 18 months of fieldwork, including interviews, observations, and document analysis, the author analyses how aspirations for co-governance and horizontal participation confront persistent inequalities of class, race, and geography. She highlights the infrapolitical labour required to sustain shared governance, revealing the micronegotiations and organisational asymmetries that shape institutional dynamics behind formal procedures. The Academy also functions as an affective, offline space for younger people, offering refuge from eco-anxiety while struggling to accommodate more confrontational emotional registers central to climate activism. These tensions underscore the limits of recognition in participatory innovations that seek inclusivity while remaining embedded in unequal urban contexts. Situating the case within emerging debates on planetary governance, the author argues that urban experiments like the Academy serve as grounded laboratories for reimagining democratic institutions under ecological crisis, while exposing the fragility of inclusive participation when deeper structures of recognition remain unresolved.

[Repository \(public access\).](#)

ARTICLE

Countercurrents to the Green Energy Transition: Contested Development, Procedural Injustice, and Sovereignty Struggles in Tunisia's Green Hydrogen Contention

In the race toward net-zero, Green Hydrogen (GH2) has emerged as a pillar of the Green Energy Transition. Northern industrial countries, with the European Union at the forefront, pursue decarbonization through “win-win” partnerships with Southern counterparts, whose renewable energy potential and industrial ambitions make them eager participants. Beneath this rhetoric of mutual benefit, however, lie local tensions that these green futures have yet to address. Against this backdrop, **Dhouha Djerbi**, PhD Researcher in International Relations/Political Science, examines grassroots contention against Tunisia's national GH2 strategy, with a focus on Gabes, a region historically shaped by industrialisation and environmental degradation (in *Journal of Labor and Society*, online November 2025). She traces the collision of top-down, state- and donor-led “green” development trajectories with bottom-up counter-currents emerging from local communities, civil society organisations, and environmental activists. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork in Gabes and analysis of protest materials, she identifies three counter-currents to the GH2 ascent: contested development pathways, procedural injustice, and sovereignty struggles. These counter-currents mobilise historical memory, oppositional knowledge practices, and collective action to contest GH2's framing, governance, and environmental implications. Situating Gabes within broader debates within environmental political theory and green growth, the author foregrounds the “local” in the socio-political dynamics of the global green energy transition, in showing how resistance from below shapes and constrains global “win-win” visions of the green energy transition.

[DOI.](#)

RESEARCH BRIEF

The Role of Social Movements and Civil Society Organisations in the Promotion and Monitoring of UNDROP

In many countries, social movements and civil society organisations play a key role in the promotion and monitoring of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas (UNDROP). **Christophe Golay**, Senior Research Fellow at the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, presents examples of good practices in the promotion and monitoring of UNDROP by social movements and in Southern Africa, Kenya, Burkina Faso and Nepal (Geneva Academy, December 2025). These examples, which are key achievements of the [RAISE project](#) between 2022 and 2025, should be

replicated in many other countries and regions to support UNDROP's implementation.

[Available \(open access\) in English, French and Spanish.](#)

RESEARCH BRIEF

Le droit à l'alimentation dans le canton de Vaud: pour une transition juste vers des systèmes alimentaires durables

In 2024, four years after the onset of the Covid-19 crisis and inspired by the example of the inclusion of the right to food in the Geneva Constitution in 2023, the parliament of the Canton of Vaud (Grand Conseil) proposed enshrining the right to food in the Cantonal Constitution.

Christophe Golay, Senior Research Fellow at the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, and Emilia Richard present the definition of the right to food and the obligations to respect, protect, and fulfil this right, without discrimination, as enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ratified by Switzerland (Geneva Academy, December 2025). To achieve this, they have drawn on international law definitions developed over the past 20 years. They also highlight laws, strategies, and policies at federal, cantonal, and municipal levels that either promote or hinder the right to food's implementation. Civil society initiatives advocating the right to food are also showcased. Finally, the authors put forward recommendations to ensure that the Canton and municipalities of Vaud respect, protect, and fulfill the right to food without discrimination, and promote a just transition toward sustainable food systems.

[Available \(open access\) in French.](#)

PHD THESIS IN INTERNATIONAL HISTORY AND POLITICS, 2025

From Food Security to Brand Boycotts: The Global Campaigns of the International Union of Food Workers, 1950–1990

Alexa Rae Burk examines the history and functioning of the International Union of Food Workers and affiliated associations (IUF), based in Geneva, from 1950 to 1990. The IUF is a formative case study that challenges assumptions about union activity, as during this period its membership grew, it expanded into countries in the Global South, and it conducted massive campaigns to help its affiliates gain bargaining rights. Taking the IUF as a starting point, this research aims to understand the transformations of IUF-affiliated workers in the era of transnational corporate expansion. The author highlights the organisational changes, historical trajectory, and institutional history of the IUF during this formative period by analysing its evolution toward lobbying for food aid policy, campaigns against multinational corporations, and social movement unionism. In addition, she reveals how the IUF used vast networks of allies across different programmes and objectives to advance its interests. From a methodological perspective, throughout the many changes in labour history, global unions have been largely ignored. Recent work, including this study, seeks to fill this gap. While scholars debate the extent to which unionism ushered in a new era of social movement unionism, this study argues that global unions have been instrumental in shaping the labour movement's response to globalisation.

[Repository](#) (as the thesis is embargoed until January 2029, please [contact the author](#) for access).



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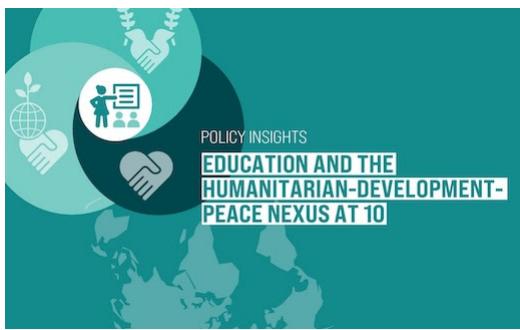


Education, Information & Media

COLLECTION

Education and the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus at 10

This collection, edited and introduced by **Alison Joyner**, Education in Emergencies specialist at NORRAG, and **Moira V. Faul**, NORRAG's Executive Director, examines how the Humanitarian-



Development-Peace (HDP) Nexus can inform — and has informed — education programming in diverse geographies, offering rich perspectives on successes and challenges in implementing a nexus approach (Policy Insights no. 6, NORRAG, December 2025). Bringing together over 40 contributions from more than 100 authors from diverse geographies, half of whom are from the Global South, the publication offers rich

perspectives on successes and challenges in making a reality of a nexus approach. It takes account of the impact of dramatic funding cuts in international aid during 2025, and aligns with new strategic directions set by the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) which supports quality, safe, and relevant education for all persons affected by emergencies.

[Available \(open access\) here.](#)



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Sustainability, Environment, the Anthropocene & SDGs



ARTICLE

Promoting the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits from Fish in Areas beyond National Jurisdiction

In June 2023, the Agreement on Biological Diversity beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) was adopted in New York after nearly two decades of negotiations, establishing a regulatory framework for activities related to

marine genetic resources in areas beyond national jurisdiction. The new regime under Part II of the BBNJ Agreement creates significant theoretical, normative, and institutional “ruptures” in how international law and the law of the sea promote the governance of fish as a marine living resource. The BBNJ Agreement adopts a conceptual and normative separation between fish caught in fishing activities and fish valued for their genetic properties. While the former is included under Part II only if regulated as “utilisation” under the BBNJ Agreement, the latter serves as a core component of the objectives to promote equity and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits in areas beyond national jurisdiction. **Laisa Branco de Almeida**, PhD Researcher in International Law, argues that the BBNJ framework recognises the essential role of fish within marine biological diversity in fulfilling the primary objectives of the BBNJ Agreement (in *Max Planck Yearbook of United Nations Law Online*, October 2025). Furthermore, it establishes independent obligations for fish valued for their genetic attributes, prioritising the principles of equity and fairness in the allocation and distribution of shared resources.

[DOI.](#)

ARTICLE

Fixing the Ecological Crisis: The Promises and Pitfalls of Green Accounting Infrastructures

Accounting was designed to facilitate economic growth and, as such, tends to reinforce dynamics that are harmful to the environment. Promoted today as a corrective, green accounting is often portrayed as a pioneering intervention. Yet, green accounting is not new. **Sylvain Maechler**, Postdoctoral Researcher at the Global Governance Centre (GGC), and **Valérie Boisvert** situate it

within a genealogy of initiatives developed since the 1980s and assess their potential to establish an infrastructure capable of supporting a post-growth transition or redirecting capital toward nature conservation (in *Economy and Society*, vol. 54, no. 4, online December 2025). They argue that, across its various iterations, green accounting has consistently struggled to materialise as a genuine infrastructure for either purpose. Nevertheless, the promises it carries help pre-empt capitalism's crisis of legitimacy in the face of mounting socio-ecological crises.

[Repository \(public access\)](#).



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Other Relevant Information



Multimedia



VIDEO | GLOBAL CHALLENGES | RESEARCH OFFICE

Grand Entretien: Genocide, with Paola Gaeta

The 1948 Genocide Convention codified for the first time the crime of systematically seeking to destroy an entire people. In this interview featured in [issue 18 of Global Challenges](#), **Grégoire Mallard**, Director of Research at the Geneva Graduate Institute, discusses with International Law Professor **Paola Gaeta** the historical impact of this groundbreaking treaty and its increasing use in recent years to prosecute individuals and states that have committed acts of mass murder.

[Watch here.](#)



VIDEO | EVENT HIGHLIGHTS | NORRAG

Education and the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus at 10

On 9 December 2025, NORRAG co-hosted with the Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), the online launch of its [sixth NORRAG Policy Insights, Education and the Humanitarian-Development-Peace \(HDP\) Nexus at 10](#). This publication has brought together over 40 contributions from more than 100 authors from diverse geographies, half of whom are from the Global South.

[Watch the launch.](#)



VIDÉO | ENTRETIENS DE LA CHAIRE YVES OLTRAMARE

Ramon Sarró | Imaginaires, prophétismes et transformations sociales en Afrique

En octobre dernier, la chaire Yves Oltramare a accueilli **Ramon Sarró**. Dans un entretien mené par **Andylath Djima**, étudiante en master d'études internationales et du développement à l'IHEID, l'anthropologue est revenu sur ses itinéraires de recherche et ses enquêtes de terrain en Afrique.

[Regardez la vidéo.](#)



VIDÉO | CONFÉRENCE DE LA CHAIRE YVES OLTRAMARE
Caterina Bandini | Religion et militantisme pour la paix en Israël-Palestine

Un aspect demeure peu abordé dans le débat public à propos du Proche-Orient: les mobilisations religieuses en faveur de la paix en Israël-Palestine. Elles sont au cœur du [dernier ouvrage](#) de **Caterina Bandini**, docteure en sociologie de l'EHESS (Paris) et enseignante-rechercheuse à l'Université de Lille et au CERAPS, invitée par la Chaire Yves Oltramare le 8 décembre dernier.

[Regardez la vidéo.](#)



PODCAST | CCDP SPOTLIGHT S2:E6 | CENTRE ON CONFLICT, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACEBUILDING (CCDP)
Tracing the Flow of Firearms Part Two: Brazil's Firearms Landscape: Regulation, Seizures, and Criminal Markets
CCDP's **Jennifer Thornquest** speaks with **Natália Pollachi**, Project Director at Instituto Sou da Paz, about the rise of military-style firearms in Brazil.

Listen on [Spotify](#) or [Simplecast](#).



PODCAST | CCDP SPOTLIGHT S2:E7 | CENTRE ON CONFLICT, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACEBUILDING (CCDP)
UN Peace Missions in a Changing World
CCDP's **Margaux Pinaud** speaks with **Sara Hellmüller, Fanny Badache** and **Bilal Salayme**, team members of the five-year research project [Communicating about Peace: United Nations Peace Missions and Their Mandates](#), about how shifts in global politics are reshaping UN peace missions and their mandates. The episode also highlights how this research has been translated into real-world tools, including the [UN Peace Missions Mandates](#) (UNPMM) dataset and app, and looks ahead to new research directions at the CCDP.

Listen on [Spotify](#) or [Simplecast](#).



PODCAST | PRACTICING MULTILATERALISM E1 | GLOBAL GOVERNANCE CENTRE (GGC)
Louise Agersnap | Reimagining Multilateralism in the Metacrisis: Innovation in Global Health

In this first episode hosted by **Adam Talsma**, PhD Researcher in International Relations/Political Science, **Louise Agersnap**, Head of WHO's Innovation Hub, reveals how WHO is redefining its role beyond traditional standard-setting amid growing constraints on multilateralism. [Read more and listen here.](#)

Practicing Multilateralism is a new podcast aiming to go beyond policy discussions of specific thematic issues to explore the daily realities of those working within multilateral organisations through in-depth conversations.



PODCAST | WAR WATCH E2 | GENEVA ACADEMY OF IHL AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Mozambique: A War of Neglect and Impunity

Host **Juliette Graf** meets **Joshua Niyo** from the [IHL Centre](#), who has just returned from Cabo Delgado, to discuss what the Norwegian Refugee Council calls one of the world's most neglected displacement crises. They are joined by **Stuart Casey-Maslen**, Special Adviser to the

Geneva Academy's IHL in Focus project, who will help unpack the law and its limits in every episode.

[Listen here.](#)



PODCAST | WAR WATCH E3 | GENEVA ACADEMY OF IHL AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Syria: The Search for Accountability after Assad

Host **Juliette Graf** meets **Mohammad Al Abdallah**, Executive Director of the Syria Justice and Accountability Centre (SJAC), who discusses Syria's dual accountability crisis one year after Assad's fall. They are joined by **Stuart Casey-Maslen**, Special Adviser to the Geneva Academy's IHL in Focus project, who explains Syria's legal obligations under IHL and what tools exist to achieve accountability.

[Listen here.](#)



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Awarded Grants



SNSF AMBIZIONE | 01.01.2026–31.12.2029 | CHF 864,470 | CENTRE ON CONFLICT, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACEBUILDING (CCDP)

Governing the Revolution: Rebel Territories as a Laboratory for Foreign Aid

For decades, OECD states have relied on foreign aid to stabilise central governments in conflict-affected contexts. The situation in Myanmar since the 2021 coup presents a sharp departure from

this pattern. Western governments now find their political interests more aligned with a wide network of armed groups that form the Spring Revolution. These groups are fighting to restore democracy, and they control significant territory across the country. As a result, aid actors are cautiously exploring how to support revolutionary groups as they attempt to provide democratic and responsible governance. In effect, they are seeking to support forms of rebel governance.

This project, awarded to Research Associate **Shona Loong**, will examine this shift through three core questions: How is foreign aid being used in the Spring Revolution? How do aid flows shape relations between Western governments and Burmese revolutionaries? And how does this support influence the trajectory of the revolution itself? The project will draw on qualitative fieldwork in two border areas of Myanmar, as well as policy research in Geneva, Washington, and other centres of aid decision making. It will contribute to debates in human geography, development studies, and international relations. The outputs will include several journal articles and a monograph, with insights for policymakers navigating the role of foreign aid in an evolving geopolitical landscape.

[Read more.](#)

SNSF SPARK | 01.02.2026–31.01.2027 | CHF 96,490 | GLOBAL GOVERNANCE CENTRE

Digital Transformation of Government: Strengthening or Disintermediating Democracy?



Digital Transformation of Government: Strengthening or Disintermediating Democracy? Governments worldwide are rapidly digitising public services, assuming this will increase efficiency and public trust. But does it? **Emrys Schoemaker**, Postdoctoral Researcher, challenges that assumption by investigating whether digital systems inadvertently erode trust by eliminating the human interactions with local

officials that have traditionally connected citizens to the state. Focusing on the Philippine digital identity system (PhilSys), his study employs 40 qualitative interviews across three regions with varying digital adoption levels, alongside a nationally representative survey (N=1,000). The research examines how factors such as accessibility, security, and perceived fairness mediate the relationship between digitalisation and trust. By examining a lower-middle-income democracy rather than predominantly Western contexts, the project offers fresh perspectives on digital governance theory. The findings will inform policymakers and international organisations on designing digital services that enhance efficiency without undermining democratic accountability and local governance structures.

[Read more.](#)

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Visitors

⌚ 01.01.–31.12.2026

📍 IL Dep.

Leo TIBERGHien

Coming from Université de Fribourg, Junior Visiting Fellow Leo Tiberghien is doing research on “The Public/Private Distinction and International Organizations’ Law”.

⌚ 01.01.–31.12.2026

📍 CCDP

Arturo DE NIEVES GUTIÉRREZ DE RUBALCAVA

Coming from UNHCR, Senior Fellow in Residence Arturo De Nieves Gutiérrez De Rubalcava is working on “From Emergency to Architecture: Crisis Governance, Responsibility-Sharing and Rights under Europe’s Temporary Protection (2022–2026)”.

⌚ 02.01.–31.05.2026

📍 IHP Dep.

Carmen ROLLINS

Coming from Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Junior Visiting Fellow Carmen Rollis is researching “Reputation Risk in International Financial Institutions: Text Analysis Approaches”.

⌚ 05.01.–10.07.2026

📍 CTEI

Antoine COMONT

Coming from University of Bordeaux, Junior Visiting Fellow Antoine Comont is researching “The Legitimacy of Plurilateralism at the World Trade Organization”.

⌚ 19.01.–01.06.2026

📍 CCDP

Katherine MILLAR

Coming from the London School of Economics, Visiting Fellow Katherine Millar is doing research on “Law and Domestic Order: Challenging the Carceral Logics within Conventional Disarmament”.

⌚ 20.01.–20.04.2026
📍 IL Dep.

Tim LINDGREN

Coming from the European University Institute, Visiting Fellow Tim Lindgren will be working on “International Law and Place”.

⌚ 02.02.–01.05.2026
📍 IL Dep.

Thibaud JOURDAN

Coming from ULiège and ULB, Junior Visiting Fellow Thibaud Jourdan will be researching “The Scope and Limits of the Protection Owed to Medical Units and Personnel during Armed Conflicts”.

⌚ 09.02.–31.07.2026
📍 IRPS Dep.

Vitoria MOREIRA KAVANAMI

Coming from PUC-Rio, Junior Visiting Fellow Vitoria Moreira Kavanami will be working on “Disaster, Design, and the Politics of Shelter: Exploring Improvisation and Provisionality through Rio Grande do Sul”.

⌚ 14.02.–28.09.2026
📍 GGC

Sho AKAHOSHI

Coming from Kobe University, Sho Akahoshi will be doing research on “Dynamism of the Ecosystem of Humanitarian Governance”.

⌚ 16.02.–29.05.2026
📍 IL Dep.

Charlotte MAGNUS

Coming from Humboldt University Berlin, Junior Visiting Fellow Charlotte Magnus will be working on “Humanitarian Access to Civilians in Armed Conflict: Balancing Humanitarian Concerns and State Sovereignty”.



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Calls for Papers

WORKSHOP | GENEVA GRADUATE INSTITUTE & PIERRE DU BOIS FOUNDATION

Across the Bamboo Curtain: Economic, Political, and Technological Exchanges Between East and West During the Cold War, 1950s–1970s

The Sixth Annual Pierre du Bois Doctoral Workshop will take place on 28–29 May 2026 in Geneva. Organisers welcome papers that examine the multifaceted interactions between the Western bloc and the Asian socialist states during the Cold War.

- Abstract submission: **15 February 2026**

Read the full call [in English](#) or [in Chinese](#).



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Upcoming PhD Defences

⌚ 27 janvier 2026
⌚ 14:30–16:30
📍 Pétale 2, salle S9

HISTOIRE INTERNATIONALE

Familles publiques ou familles privées: les politiques familiales sous le regard de la presse brésilienne

(1930-1945)

Par **Maria Clara Magalhaes Silveira**. Membres du jury: Nicole Bourbonnais, professeure adjointe, directrice de thèse; Graziella Moraes Dias Da Silva, professeure adjointe, présidente du jury et membre interne; Courtney J. Campbell, Associate Professor, Department of History, Université de Birmingham, Royaume-Uni.

[En savoir plus.](#)



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