



CALL FOR PAPERS

The role of human rights mechanisms in implementing international humanitarian law (Geneva Conventions)

University of Geneva, 14 and 15 November 2019

Apart from the International Committee of the Red Cross, international humanitarian law (IHL) contains no treaty mechanism functioning in practice to ensure its implementation and States recently could not find a consensus on the initiative by Switzerland and the ICRC to create one. One must therefore look for mechanisms existing elsewhere in international law. Human rights mechanisms (both treaty-based and Charter-based) are good candidates, as most IHL obligations and violations can be framed as human rights obligations or violations and as some of the mechanisms even have an explicit IHL mandate. Furthermore, some human rights mechanisms give the individual an opportunity to lodge a complaint, a possibility unknown in IHL. Nevertheless, human rights mechanisms may misapply IHL, weaken its credibility by unrealistic requirements, antagonise important stakeholders such as armed forces or weaken the more demanding human rights standards if they genuinely apply IHL. Some are accused of applying double standards resulting from politicised debates and decisions, which would again weaken the credibility of IHL in the eyes of belligerents and public opinion. Finally, many human rights mechanisms have no mandate to address armed non-State actors that are equally addressees of IHL of non-international armed conflicts.

Organised under the auspices of the Global Studies Institute (University of Geneva), the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Canton of Geneva, this conference brings together graduate and postgraduate researchers (selected on the basis of their proposals) with experienced academics and practitioners from the UN, the ICRC and elsewhere (by invitation).

We invite proposals that focus on how human rights mechanisms could increase their impact on the respect of IHL and how the risks described above can be reduced or avoided. Proposals may deal with one human rights mechanism, with a transversal issue affecting all human rights mechanisms or with deconflicting activities of human rights mechanisms and of IHL mechanisms.

Eligibility: Graduate and postgraduate Law researchers having obtained their PhD within the past 10 years.

Deadlines for proposals and papers:

- Applicants are invited to submit proposals of up to 500 words, in English, plus a short biographical note of 100 words, and 5 keywords to Alice Breathe (alice.breathe@unige.ch) by **Wednesday 15 May 2019**.
- Applicants whose proposals have been selected will be informed by **Monday 1 July 2019**.
- Final papers, of about 8,000 words in English, to be submitted by selected applicants will be due by **Monday 30 September 2019**.

An academic publication will follow the conference.

Funding: Researchers whose proposals have been selected are eligible for assistance with travel and accommodation costs upon request.