



## **Call for Papers**

Online Workshop of the ESIL IG on International Business and Human Rights  
9<sup>th</sup> September 2020

# **Business and Human Rights during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

## **Impacts, Responses and Future Implications**

The spread of COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on the world economy. Borders have been sealed, airports closed, businesses shut down, supply chains are broken and tens of millions of workers face an uncertain future. Businesses across the economic sector are also dealing with unprecedented challenges, their own survival in the balance. Bearing in mind that governments have the primary obligation to respect, protect and fulfil human rights, several questions arise concerning the responsibilities of businesses to respect human rights in light of the COVID-19 pandemic:

- To what extent do businesses continue to have human rights responsibilities during pandemics?
- How are the human rights responsibilities of business changed in situations of emergency, such as a pandemic?
- Do businesses only have a limited responsibility to respect the human rights of their own workers, or do those responsibilities extend to other participants in the supply chain or to surrounding communities?
- Does the nature of human rights due diligence change in situations of emergency?
- How have businesses responded to the challenges posed by COVID-19? What role do companies' own policies and codes of conduct have to play in this area? Are there any examples of best practice?
- How have businesses responded to the measures taken by governments?
- How should specific business sectors (e.g. technology, pharmaceuticals, etc.) respond to the new human rights challenges created during a pandemic?
- What lessons can we learn from history and how have businesses responded in the past in similar circumstances?

**Proposals are welcome on any of the above-indicated issues.**

### **Time and location**

**Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020 **Time:** TBC

### **Guidelines**

How to submit:

- CV and abstract (max 300 words) in PDF
- Submission deadline: 10 June 2020
- Decision announced to successful applicants: 25 June 2020
- Please email CV and abstract to [mihaela.barnes@graduateinstitute.ch](mailto:mihaela.barnes@graduateinstitute.ch)

### ***Your conveners:***

Prof. Belen Olmos Giupponi, Kingston University, London; Dr. Mara Tignino, University of Geneva; Prof. Angelica Bonfanti, University of Milan and Dr. Mihaela Barnes, Visiting Fellow, Lauterpacht Centre for International Law