



Call for Papers

The role of conflict in the making and shaping of International Human Rights Law

IG on International Human Rights Law Annual Workshop

21st ESIL Annual Conference

3-5 September 2026 Malaga, Spain

This workshop examines the role of conflict in the making and shaping of international human rights law. Conflict is understood in a broad and non-exhaustive sense, extending beyond armed conflict to encompass normative, institutional, and political contestation. The “making and shaping” of international human rights law refers to both formal lawmaking processes, such as treaty drafting and amendment, and interpretive lawmaking through the practice of international and regional human rights courts and treaty bodies. Attention may also be paid to the behaviour of relevant actors, including states, civil society organisations, and human rights adjudicatory bodies. It proposes to examine conflict along three analytical axes.

First, armed conflicts have historically functioned as critical moments for the development and reinterpretation of international human rights law. They have influenced the scope and content of existing rights and raised questions concerning the limits of human rights protection. Armed conflict also shapes processes of judicialisation, legal mobilisation, and strategic litigation, including the role of states and civil society actors before international human rights bodies. Of

particular interest is how conflicts are translated into human rights claims by these actors, and how courts receive, reframe, and transform such claims in their reasoning.

Second, conflict is understood as diplomatic or political confrontation between states, or between states and other international actors, including international adjudicatory bodies. Diplomatic conflicts influence international human rights law through treaty negotiations, reservations, interpretive declarations, and selective engagement with monitoring and adjudicatory mechanisms. Such forms of contestation affect the prioritisation of rights, the framing of obligations, and the operation of enforcement mechanisms. They may also shape the behaviour of courts and other institutions, as well as the strategies of actors engaged in legal mobilisation and strategic litigation.

Third, conflict may arise within international law itself, through normative tensions and overlaps. A central example concerns the relationship between international human rights law and international humanitarian law. Conflicts between norms, interpretive approaches, and institutional mandates have played a significant role in shaping jurisprudence and doctrine, particularly in situations of armed conflict. Similar tensions may exist between human rights law and other areas of international law, such as international criminal law, international trade and/or investment law. How human rights institutions address, manage, or resolve these normative conflicts is a further focus.

Against this background, the workshop welcomes contributions addressing one or more of the following questions: how do international law actors shape the development of international human rights law in contexts of armed conflict? How do diplomatic and political conflicts affect treaty-making and judicial lawmaking processes? How do normative tensions within international law influence the interpretation and evolution of international human rights law? We invite interdisciplinary perspectives from law, social science and international relations.

Date/time and location

Date: 3 September 9:00- 12:00

Location: Malaga

Selection

The aim of the Workshop is to foster an interdisciplinary exchange with leading experts from diverse disciplines and communities of practice.

ESIL selection criteria:

- Originality
- Methodology

- Relevance to the theme
- Geographical, gender and expertise balance

We aim to ensure balance between more senior scholars and early career researchers.

The IG co-conveners will decide and inform submitters about the results by 10th May 2026.

How to Submit

Submission deadline: 20 April 2026

Please, email your CV and abstract in pdf (max 400 words) to: [<esilighumanrightslaw@gmail.com>](mailto:esilighumanrightslaw@gmail.com) indicating in the object of your email “Annual Conference Call for Papers”.

Programme

We aim to organize the presentation and discussion of the selected papers into different thematic blocks. A detailed programme of the workshop will be circulated and published by the end of May 2026.

Publication plans

We plan to publish a peer-reviewed Special Issue with selected papers from the workshop. More information will be provided closer to the date. Full drafts before the workshop are encouraged but not required.

Early-Career Scholar Prize

Early career scholars may apply for the Early-Career Scholar Prize. The prize is awarded by the ESIL Board. Young scholars who may wish to apply for this prize should indicate this in their abstract submission, if they meet the [eligibility conditions](#) as stated on the ESIL website.

The ESIL secretariat must be informed of all selected speakers who wish to be considered for the Prize before 30th April 2026.

Important Information

The Interest Group is unable to provide funding for travel and accommodation. Selected speakers will be expected to bear the costs of their own travel and accommodation. Some [ESIL travel grants](#) and [ESIL carers' grants](#) will be available to offer partial financial support to speakers 4 who have exhausted other potential sources of funding.

Please see the [ESIL website](#) for all relevant information about the conference.

All participants at ESIL Interest Group workshops are required to register for the Annual Conference.

There will be an option to register just for one day to attend the workshop; however, all participants are warmly invited to attend the entire event.

We look forward to meeting you at our annual workshop!

For any questions, please email us at esilighumanrightslaw@gmail.com

Your conveners:

Elena Abrusci, Annalisa Ciampi, Sotirios Lekkas, Ezgi Özlü