

Annual Report 2026 of the ESIL Interest Group on Human Rights Law

In the last year, the IG organized a series of different activities for its members, notably the kicking off of the ‘Breakfast Work-in-progress sessions’ and the pre-annual conference workshop in Malaga.

Below is a summary of the past activities and plans for the new year:

1) The Role of Conflict in the Making and Shaping of International Human Rights Law

The Pre-Conference Workshop of the Interest Group on International Human Rights Law with the topic “The Role of Conflict in the Making and Shaping of International Human Rights Law” was part of the ESIL Annual Conference on “International Law and Conflict: An Enduring Tension?”, hosted by the School of Law of the Universidad De Malaga from 3rd to 5th September 2026.

The workshop was held on the 3rd of September 2026. Various speakers explored the different aspects related to conflict and international human rights law in six different papers, discussing different types of conflicts (armed conflict, normative conflict, political conflict) and spanning across different jurisdictions and issues. The workshop included perspectives of established academics as well as early career researchers.

The first panel, moderated by Ezgi Özlü, dealt with the role of political and normative conflicts and featured presentations on ‘non-decisions decisions’ as a tool for conflict avoidance by the European Court of Human Rights (Vandita Khanna), rights prioritization by INGOs in transitional contexts (Melek Saral) and the normative conflict between migrant rights and state sovereignty before the European Court of Human Rights (Nurbanu Hayir).

The second panel, moderated by Sotirios Lekkas focused on the role of armed conflicts in the making and shaping of International Human Rights Law and included presentations on the interactions between the ECHR, Law of Occupation and Jus Cogens effects in the cases concerning Ukraine (Júlia Miklasová), the human rights to Peace between Global South and Global North perspectives (Elena Pribyktova) and the issues of political conflicts and selective application of human rights obligations in the EU transitional justice practice in Ukraine (Natasha Stamenkovik).

The co-conveners thank all presenters and the audience for a very lively and thought-provoking discussion.

2) Breakfast Work-in-Progress Sessions

The IG has started a new series of informal sessions, aimed at supporting its members in sharing their work-in-progress ideas and receiving constructing feedback. They take place every month,

last Wednesday at 8am CET and each session lasts one hour. Everyone is welcome but we especially invite early-career researchers to present their unfinished work and gather insights from the broader IG community.

We started in April, and had regular sessions since, featuring:

- Roos Fransen (University of Vienna): 'Remedies for Wartime Harm: the Case of the Ukraine Claims Commission [29 April 2026]
- Işıl Kurnaz (Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna- Pisa): 'Right-Wing Strategic Litigation in Times of Culture Wars Before the ECtHR' [27 May 2026]
- Alessia Nicastro (Graduate Institute Geneva): 'Conceptualising violence against women: a feminist inquiry into international human rights law' [24 June 2026]
- Sally Thin (Radboud University Nijmegen): 'The Five-Year Rule and its Discontents: Delay as an Abuse of the Right of Submission before the UN Human Rights Committee' [29 July]
- Aruni Jayakody (RMIT University Melbourne): 'Truth v Justice: Duty to Coordinate the Search and Criminal Investigation into missing and disappeared persons' [24 September 2026] –event organised in partnership with the Australian and New Zealand Society of International Law

We plan to continue organising monthly sessions, either by ourselves or in partnership with ANZSIL. If anyone is interested in presenting, please get in touch with us.

3) Edited book on 'Mapping the Evolution of Reparations across the Transforming Human Rights Regime'

The book 'Mapping the Evolution of Reparations across the Transforming Human Rights Regime' edited by the IG IHRL conveners Otto Spijkers, Iakovos Iakovidis, Pierre Thielborger and Elena Abrusci has been published in early 2026. The book is the result of the pre-conference workshop the IG organized at the ESIL Annual Conference in 2023 in Aix-en-Provence

4) Special Issue forthcoming in International Journal of Human Rights

The Special Issue on 'Technology, Vulnerability and Human Rights' that resulted from the 2024 IG's workshop is still in preparation. Most of the individual articles have already been published but the Special Issue should be completed by early 2027 in the International Journal of Human Rights.