



2020 ANNUAL REPORT

THE GENEVA ACADEMY A JOINT CENTER OF

FOREWORD

2020 has been marked by tectonic changes at the global level: the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath have disrupted our lives, restricted our freedoms, deepened inequalities and added a layer of complexity to humanitarian crises. As always, the most vulnerable have been the first to suffer. In the midst of this turmoil, the Geneva Academy stood firm and demonstrated its resilience and ability to adapt. We continued to fulfil our mission: generating and disseminating knowledge with a view to providing legal protection to the most vulnerable, especially during armed conflicts, other situations of violence and transitional phases.

Thanks to our agile way of working, we maintained – and even expanded – our activities during these difficult times and mastered their online transition. Our students pursued their learning journey without interruption. We also continued to influence key human rights and humanitarian discussions and processes in Geneva and beyond. Our academic and policy-oriented research and events inform and are a reference for academics, practitioners and policy makers who take crucial decisions that affect people's daily lives. We also provided innumerable vast expertise and trained relevant actors in the field of international humanitarian law (IHL), human rights and transitional justice.

Since its creation more than 10 years ago, the Geneva Academy has continuously evolved thanks to the efforts of outstanding and passionate directors and professors: Marco Sassòli, Robert Roth, Paola Gaeta, Andrew Clapham and Louise Doswald-Beck. It is thus with a great sense of responsibility and humility that I have taken up the torch to advance the development of this institution, which has enormously contributed to my professional and personal growth.

The mission of the Geneva Academy is more important than ever. Our world in crisis needs highly educated women and men ready to take the lead in trying to find solutions to protect persons in need. The health crisis that we are experiencing is a great challenge, but by no means the only one. Situations of violence – including armed conflicts – are on the rise. Armed non-state actors proliferate, and cycles of violence are difficult to interrupt. With conflicts spanning decades, the transition from war to peace is even more difficult to achieve. Entire societies need to be rebuilt from scratch. Holding states and individuals accountable for atrocity crimes remains the exception rather than the rule. More broadly, there is an implementation deficit in both IHL and human rights law, albeit for different reasons. Poverty and inequalities are growing and fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals increasingly looks like wishful thinking. Technological advancements, while in essence positive, may also become threat multipliers in armed conflicts and may negatively impact our human rights, such as the right to privacy.

Current challenges are huge, but they are not unsurmountable. The power of education to address them cannot be underestimated. Training today's and future decision makers and practitioners in IHL, human rights law and transitional justice – as we do – means providing tools that can be used to protect and empower persons in need. It also means converging around common, universal values which transcend national, cultural or religious barriers. In an international community that struggles so much to find a consensus, the common language offered by international law is vital for bringing some humanity to war and upholding human life and dignity in all circumstances. The eagerness of new generations of students and of seasoned professionals to deepen their knowledge in this common language offered by the various complementary branches of international law we are specialized in, as well as their genuine intention to make our world a better place, is refreshing and gives us reasons to hope for a brighter future.

New ideas are also a potent agent of change. Henry Dunant initiated the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement with a rather simple and modest suggestion in his book *A Memory of Solferino*: ‘Would it not be desirable ... to formulate some international principle, sanctioned by a Convention inviolable in character, which once agreed upon and ratified, might constitute the basis for societies for the relief of the wounded ...?’ And who would have thought that the aspirational non-binding Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was drafted under the lead of Eleanor Roosevelt, would have attained customary status and, indeed, universal recognition? Academic research is nothing but an incubator of ideas. This is why we attach so much importance to our unique ability to conduct in-house independent legal research and policy studies that can be of immediate use to diplomats, policy makers, humanitarians and other practitioners.

Finding solutions to the current challenges in the domain of IHL, human rights and transitional justice also requires bringing people together. The Geneva Academy, located in the highly symbolic and charming Villa Moynier in the heart of international Geneva, has a unique convening power. For its second year, the Geneva Human Rights Platform has provided a safe space where key stakeholders in the field – experts, practitioners, diplomats and civil society – can connect, debate and find solutions with a view to advancing human rights.

These activities have an impact. They initiate virtuous circles. It is with great pride that we see our alumni holding key positions in governments, international organizations, NGOs and academia, and contributing to upholding IHL and human rights. It is also with great satisfaction that we see the results of our research being used by states and international organizations, and referenced by international courts and tribunals, human rights bodies and scholars.

All of this, however, would be impossible without the contributions of many. I would like to thank wholeheartedly the Geneva Academy staff: the incredibly effective Executive Committee, our brilliant Chairs, our highly specialized researchers, our dedicated teaching assistants and our professional administrative staff. Despite the work-from-home policy, their commitment remained strong and the results are visible. All my gratitude also goes to our two parent institutions – the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies and the University of Geneva – without whom the Geneva Academy would not be the successful institution that we know. I also thank our board for its constant support and guidance. A special thank you goes to our faculty made up of exceptional and renowned professors from our parent institutions and top-notch academics and experts from abroad. They all invested great efforts in adapting their curricula and teaching methodologies to the online environment in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic; our students also remained highly motivated and studied intensively despite the difficult circumstances. I am also grateful to our numerous partners, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, numerous NGOs as well as individual experts in our networks with whom we can join forces to try and make a difference. Finally yet importantly, I would like to thank sincerely the states, especially Switzerland through its Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, as well as other institutions and private donors that generously fund our research and networking activities or provide scholarships that allow students with limited means to take part in our master’s programmes.

Thanks to all of you, the Geneva Academy contributes to locating respect for international humanitarian law and human rights law at the centre of the international community’s preoccupations and enhancing the legal protection of the most vulnerable in all circumstances.



Gloria Gaggioli
Associate Professor, University of Geneva
Director of the Geneva Academy

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HIGHLIGHTS

INSTITUTION

OUR NEW DIRECTOR: PROFESSOR GLORIA GAGGIOLI

Professor Gloria Gaggioli, a renowned scholar in international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights, became the Director of the Geneva Academy in August 2020, replacing Professor Marco Sassòli who led the institution during two intense and productive years.

In this role, Professor Gaggioli will provide vision and guidance to anchor the Geneva Academy as a centre for academic excellence that provides high-quality education, training and research in branches of international law that relate to situations of armed conflict, protracted violence and protection of human rights.

BROADENING OUR AUDIENCE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

From teleworking to online teaching, COVID-19 presented our institution with several challenges while also instigating innovation and new opportunities.

Moving most of our events online not only increased our audience and visibility beyond Geneva, but also positioned us as a model in this endeavour, managing complex online conferences with simultaneous translation, sign language and working groups.

Throughout this uncertain and difficult period, we have also been at the forefront of facilitating key discussions and providing expert advice on human rights and humanitarian impacts of the pandemic, notably via the new multi-partner online event series Right On.

NEW SWISS IHL CHAIR

Professor Robin Geiß became the Swiss IHL Chair in January 2020. In this position, he has carried out research on disruptive military technologies, with a particular focus on the legal and ethical challenges raised by cyberwarfare and AI-supported decision-making in military affairs.



MASTERS

STUDYING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have ensured the continuation of high-quality and interactive teaching for our three master's programmes via different teaching options and methods adaptable to the health situation: fully on campus, fully online or hybrid with on-site and online teaching.

Our students – most of them away from their country and loved ones – have shown a great capacity to adapt to this difficult context, study seriously, evolve as a group and succeed in their exams. Their inputs and feedback have been key in ensuring the constant adaptation and improvement of our teaching in a difficult and rapidly evolving context.

DISTANCE LEARNING FOR OUR EXECUTIVE MASTER IN INTERNATIONAL LAW IN ARMED CONFLICT

Our Executive Master in International Law in Armed Conflict and its short courses are now also open to practitioners in the field interested in following this part-time programme online.

For the 2020–2021 academic year, 26 professionals based in Australia, Azerbaijan, Benin, Cambodia, Canada, Colombia, Georgia, India, Kenya, Palestine, Peru, Syria, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States chose this option. Journalists, humanitarians, field delegates or legal advisers, they work for the Danish Refugee Council, the ICRC, MINUSCA, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in Ukraine, the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism and the UN in Syria.

NEW COURSES FOR OUR LL.M. AND MASTER OF ADVANCED STUDIES IN TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

New courses on topical and contemporary issues have been added to the palette of optional classes offered in the two programmes. Students can therefore now also acquire a solid knowledge of the law of weaponry, arms control and new military technologies, international disaster law, displacement and transitional justice as well as sexuality and gender identity in IHL and human rights.

These complete an already very rich offering that includes – besides all the core courses – classes on issues like the Islamic law of armed conflict, enforced disappearances in international law and armed non-state actors.



RESEARCH

NOVEL PRIORITY AREAS FOR OUR RESEARCH

Our research examines issues that are under-explored, need clarification or are unconventional, experimental or challenging. For the coming years, it will focus on four priority areas, which all raise crucial legal, policy and protection questions: digitalization and new technologies, non-state actors, implementation and accountability and sustainable development.

THE DIGITALIZATION OF ARMED CONFLICT

Via a multi-disciplinary approach that takes into consideration the interrelated technical, military, ethical, policy, legal and humanitarian aspects, this new research – carried out jointly with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) – assesses the continued relevance of international law, especially IHL, in light of the humanitarian consequences and protection needs caused by the digitalization of armed conflicts.

ARMED NON-STATE ACTORS' INTERPRETATION OF CORE IHL NORMS

According to the ICRC, 60 to 80 million people live under the direct state-like governance of armed non-state actors (ANSAs). As a leading research institution for this issue, our new research – funded by UK Research and Innovation and carried out in collaboration with Geneva Call, the American University in Cairo and the Norwegian Refugee Council – examines ANSAs' practice and interpretation of core IHL norms.

ANCHORING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN HUMAN RIGHTS

Time is running out to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and leave no one behind. Practitioners and experts recognize the key role that human rights play in furthering the implementation of the SDGs and creating a much-needed accountability framework. Our dedicated training course and our new practical manual on this issue outline the key role of United Nations (UN) human rights mechanisms and the guidance they provide in monitoring the implementation of the SDGs that seek to realize economic, social and cultural rights, such as the rights to food, water, health, education and housing.

PROMOTING AND PROTECTING FREEDOM OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION AND CIVIC SPACE WORLDWIDE

This new project provides substantive support to the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Clément Voule, a mandate that plays a crucial role in promoting and protecting these rights worldwide.

By hosting Clément Voule as a researcher at our institution, the project will notably address emerging issues affecting civic space and develop tools and materials that allow various stakeholders – states, civil society organizations, lawyers and human rights defenders – to promote and defend it.

DISSECTING THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

The new book *The UN Human Rights Council: A Practical Anatomy* – published by Elgar and authored by Eric Tistoune, Chief of the Human Rights Council Branch at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights – dissects every aspect of this major human rights body. The outcome of a six-month research fellowship carried out by the author at the Geneva Academy, the book provides a practitioner's unique insights into the complex decision-making processes of the Council, its functions and different procedures, as well as its main stakeholders.





GENEVA HUMAN RIGHTS PLATFORM

INPUTTING INTO THE FINAL STAGE OF THE UN TREATY BODY REVIEW

Since 2015, we have been one of the key actors in this process, providing both substantial inputs to improve the work of UN treaty bodies (TBs) as well as a platform for discussion among academics, civil society, states, UN staff and TB experts.

In the final stages of this review, our Geneva Human Rights Platform (GHRP) submitted a number of concrete and easily implementable proposals and continued to provide a neutral space for discussion – a key role recognized and appreciated by all the stakeholders involved.

FLYING THE FLAGS OF THE GENEVA HUMAN RIGHTS PLATFORM ON THE MONT-BLANC BRIDGE

During one week at the beginning of June, the GHRP flags flew on the Mont-Blanc Bridge to raise awareness of the work of the platform and its annual conference. Postponed until October 2020 due to COVID-19, the conference brought together more than 400 registered participants both online and in Geneva to address the connectivity of human rights mechanisms.

2020 IN FIGURES

30 staff

32 professors and lecturers

2 Chairs

3 master's programmes

30 scholarships

25 training and short courses

More than 120 students from 50 countries

82 events, seminars, conferences and expert meetings – 58 fully online

19 research projects

12 publications

6 initiatives of the Geneva Human Rights Platform

More than 80 partnerships around events, research projects and training courses



MASTER'S PROGRAMMES

2020 was a challenging year for our students, professors and Student Office. Despite periods of lockdown, travel restrictions and quarantine, however, we ensured the continuity of all our master's programmes with both a successful end to the 2019–2020 academic year and a smooth start to that of 2020–2021.

The system of hybrid teaching in place since March 2020 – where courses are given simultaneously in class and online – allowed us to accommodate different situations in a rapidly changing environment while ensuring both the well-being and safety of our community and the quality of our teaching.

Regular consultations with our students, surveys, identification of best practices, as well as training for our staff and exchanges with our professors allowed us to constantly improve our teaching and learning techniques. The Faculty has demonstrated an impressive capacity to adapt the pedagogy of the various courses taught at the Geneva Academy in a creative manner to ensure an effective and enjoyable learning experience. Lessons learned and innovative approaches developed during this period will definitely influence the future of our programmes and teaching.

While our students went through difficult and challenging times – studying online, experiencing lockdown in a foreign country, preparing for and taking exams online – they showed resilience, motivation and creativity in making the best of their time at the Geneva Academy.

This period was also the perfect moment to launch the distance-learning module of our Executive Master in International Law in Armed Conflict, which allows practitioners in the field to follow the programme online.

'The whole world has suffered from the COVID-19 pandemic and from governmental measures taken to fight it. So have our students. Nevertheless, my experience as a teacher in the last months of hybrid and online teaching has been that students were able to study seriously, plead interactively, become a real class and not simply a number of individuals on computer screens and be more successful in very serious exams than they had been on average previously. We changed the teaching and learning methods considerably to make them even more interactive and I will keep many of these changes even when we are able to come back, as we all hope, as soon as possible to face-to-face teaching.'

Marco Sassòli, Professor of International Law, University of Geneva



LLM IN INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Our LLM is one of the most innovative and intellectually challenging programmes in international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights offered worldwide today. It focuses primarily on all rules applicable to armed conflicts, and their interaction, and promotes both academic excellence and independent critical thinking.

'The programme has allowed me to start a career in IHL. It has provided me with the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to work in a professional context dealing with IHL, such as the ICRC and the German Red Cross. It has also contributed significantly to my academic development and has allowed me to pursue a doctorate in IHL.'

Katja Schöberl, Alumna and IHL Legal Adviser for the German Red Cross

2020-2021 CLASS

The 2020–2021 LLM student body represents a broad diversity of profiles – both in terms of professional and disciplinary backgrounds as well as countries of origin – which tremendously enriches discussions and exchanges in class.

France, Georgia, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Israel, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Palestine, Serbia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the United States, Ukraine and Zimbabwe.

'The diversity of students is amazing; my classmates come from different countries with diverse academic backgrounds and professional experiences. I learn a lot from them every day.'

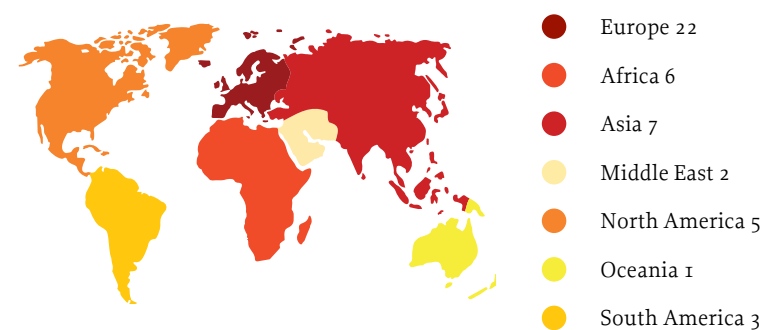
Tamara Aburamadan, 2020–2021 LLM Student

The 46 students enrolled come from 28 countries – Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Czech Republic, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Finland,

Gender representation



Geographical representation



2019-2020 CLASS

34 students successfully completed the programme and graduated in October 2020.

Internships: Acquiring First-Hand Professional Experience

Thirty-one students carried out a research internship during the second semester with leading human rights and humanitarian actors including Geneva Call, the International Commission of Jurists, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Small Arms Survey. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most internships took place online.

'During my internship at the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), I contributed to ICJ monitoring and advocacy at the UN Human Rights Council, conducting legal research and analysis and reporting on a wide range of human rights issues. This experience allowed me to gain invaluable insights into the work of UN Human Rights mechanisms and the essential role that NGOs and civil society play in upholding human rights.'

Viviana Grande, 2019–2020 LLM Student

Jean-Pictet Competition: Reaching the Finals

Berta Fernández Rosón, Melina Fidelis Tzourou and Yulia Mogutova represented the Geneva Academy at the 34th Jean-Pictet Competition that took place in Denpasar, Indonesia. They reached the finals of the competition after an intense week marked by real-life situations – negotiating access to an enclave with an armed group and delivering humanitarian aid – where the team acted alternately as ICRC delegates, members of an armed group and representatives of the Ministry of Defense or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

'Participating in Jean-Pictet on behalf of the Geneva Academy was one of the most enriching, all-encompassing experiences I have ever had as a student. The competition challenged me not only as an academic exercise but also on a personal level and profoundly influenced the way I conceptualize international humanitarian law by offering me a glimpse into how this field of law works in practice.'

Melina Fidelis Tzourou, 2019–2020 LLM Student

Study Trip: Grappling with Current Humanitarian and Human Rights Challenges

Students travelled to Belgrade, Sarajevo and Budapest where they met experts and institutions working in IHL, international human rights law (IHRL) and

international criminal law, including the Humanitarian Law Centre in Serbia, the Mission to Serbia of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the ICRC delegation in Bosnia. They learned about their activities and daily challenges and discussed issues like the dynamics of war-crime trials before the domestic courts in Serbia, war-crime trial monitoring, missing persons and documenting human rights violations during the wars in the former Yugoslavia. This study trip was organized by the LLM students with the support of the Geneva Academy.

The visit to Srebrenica transformed a piece of history into reality. Walking on those grounds, you are seized by a coldness that you cannot shake off, as though every tree and every particle of the land remembers. To have local people discuss the war and the contemporary situation of Bosnia was both a privilege and a sobering experience.'

Juliette Blouin, 2019–2020 LLM Student

'LLM Papers and Awards

Students dedicated their 2020 summer to the writing of their LLM papers – a key output of the programme. In around 20 pages, they addressed a wide range of topical issues like the obligations of armed groups under IHL and IHRL – notably in relation to enforced disappearances, cyber-operations, terrorism, foreign interventions, the protection of the environment, sexual violence in armed conflict or the responsibilities of businesses in armed conflict under IHL and IHRL.

Yulia Mogutova received the 2020 Henry Dunant Research Prize – awarded by the Geneva Academy and Fondation Prix Henry Dunant – for her LLM paper 'The Right to Life of States' own Military Personnel in the Conduct of Hostilities'.

Berta Fernández-Rosón received the 2020 Best LLM Paper Prize for her paper 'The Sexual Nature of Violence: An Obstacle or an Opportunity to Enhance the Visibility of Male Victimhood at the International Criminal Court?'

MASTER OF ADVANCED STUDIES IN TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE, HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE RULE OF LAW

Our Master of Advanced Studies in Transitional Justice, Human Rights and the Rule of Law (MTJ) is a one-year full-time postgraduate degree designed for highly qualified and open-minded candidates interested in acquiring high-level academic education and practice in the field of transitional justice, human rights and the rule of law. One of the very few programmes on this subject worldwide, its cross-disciplinary approach combines legal, political, historical, anthropological, philosophical and field perspectives and promotes both academic excellence and independent critical thinking.

'The programme provided me with an opportunity to step back, consolidate and reflect on my past experiences in a way that I was not able to do while actively working. The result was a greater appreciation of how different disciplines and tactical approaches can be utilized to advance justice. I emerged from the programme a strong advocate for transformative transitional justice.'

Andrew Songa, Alumnus and Delegate to the African Union for the International Federation for Human Rights

2020-2021 CLASS

The diversity of profiles, backgrounds and countries of origin is one of the key features of the 2020-2021 MTJ student body.

Germany, India, Iran, Italy, Kosovo, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mexico, Philippines, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Tunisia, the United States and Ukraine.

The 30 students enrolled in the programme come from 23 countries: Afghanistan, Argentina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Colombia, Ethiopia, Finland, France,

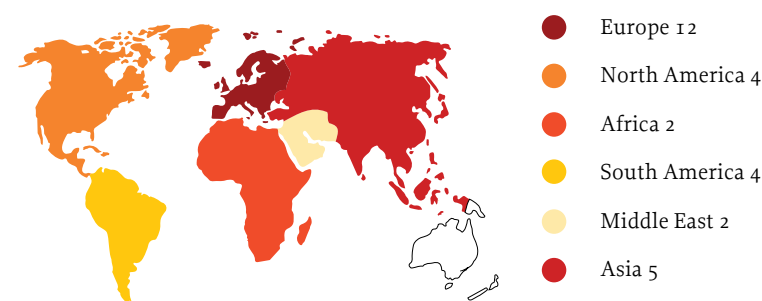
'I enjoy the fact that I am surrounded by extremely talented people who come from different countries, and who have become very special friends. The diversity of the MTJ and the multiplicity of professional backgrounds are what makes the classes more enriching.'

Ely Cossio, 2020-2021 MTJ Student

Gender representation



Geographical representation



2019-2020 CLASS

24 students successfully completed the programme and graduated in October 2020.

Research Internships: First-Hand Professional Experience in Transitional Justice

Eight students carried out a research internship during the second semester with leading human rights and transitional justice actors, including the International Center for Transitional Justice, Justice Rapid Response, swisspeace, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, the International Organization for Migration and the International Federation for Human Rights. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most internships took place online, as well as the seminars that provided peer-to-peer support and the exchange of ideas around this activity.

The Mandela Moot Court: An Immersive Experience in Human Rights Litigation

As part of the clinical work track, Charlotte Volet and Sonali Wanigabaduge participated in the 12th Nelson Mandela Moot Court Competition. They qualified for the oral rounds that took place online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The memorial they wrote to qualify reached 7th place out of 39 memorials submitted by English-language teams. It presented in detail two sides – the applicant and the respondent government – of a fictitious human rights litigation.

'It was such an enriching experience to be a part of the prestigious Nelson Mandela Moot Court competition, representing the Geneva Academy. Arguing upon the nuances of a deeply complex human rights case study rooted in contemporary socio-political issues experienced across the world, through invoking international human rights treaties and case law that has transformed the modern world, was indeed a remarkable snapshot of the wondrous world of international human rights law. It was a beautiful learning experience and I had such a great time working with an amazing team!'

Sonali Wanigabaduge, 2019-2020 MTJ Student

Academic Track

The academic track provides students with an interactive platform for academic research and critical debate. Each student elaborates and presents a research project dedicated to a topic related to transitional justice. Themes presented included:

reparations for violations of socio-economic rights within the Inter-American Human Rights System; the relation between secular feminists and Islamist women in post-revolution Tunisia; gender justice and reparations in Colombia and indigenous land claims in Brazil.

Study Trip: Practical Insights into a Transitional Justice Process

Students spent four days in Kosovo where they met with a wide range of experts and institutions involved in post-conflict reconstruction and the rule of law, including parliamentarians, the Ministry of Justice, the Kosovo Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims and the Humanitarian Law Center. This study trip was organized by the MTJ students with the support of the Geneva Academy.

'This study trip to Kosovo has been an eye-opener. We had the privilege of meeting representatives of the government and civil society. We met with the Speaker of the parliament, Ms Vjosa R. Osmani as well as the Minister of Justice, Ms Albulena Haxhiu, during their first days of office. We also heard personal stories of war survivors and their experiences in the aftermath of the conflict in particular with international justice. It was a unique opportunity to put into perspective what we learned in class.'

Jessica Guez, 2019-2020 MTJ Student

MTJ Papers and Award

Students dedicated their 2020 summer to the writing of their MTJ papers – a key output of the programme. In around 20 pages, they addressed transitional justice issues in specific countries, as well as larger topics like victims' participation in transitional justice processes; reparative justice for violations of economic, social and cultural rights; gender-specific dimensions of transitional justice in post-conflict contexts and restitution of art and cultural assets looted or stolen during conflict or the colonial period.

Camila Ruiz Segovia received the 2020 Best MTJ Paper Prize for her paper 'SIN LAS FAMILIAS NO: Victim Participation and the Fight Against Impunity in the Search for Missing Persons in Mexico'.

EXECUTIVE MASTER IN INTERNATIONAL LAW IN ARMED CONFLICT

The Executive Master in International Law in Armed Conflict is one of the few part-time, innovative and intellectually challenging programmes in the law of armed conflict offered today.

Designed for professionals with demanding jobs and responsibilities, it provides strong theoretical and practical knowledge and responds to the growing need for specialists to address complex humanitarian and human rights issues and challenging processes such as criminal proceedings, international negotiations and humanitarian interventions.

'The programme gave me the legal theoretical knowledge that allowed me to perform better as a diplomat at different multilateral fora dealing with human rights and international humanitarian law. It opened up the possibility of reaching positions in the future that require strong legal specialization.'

Diego Ruiz Gayol, diplomat in charge of human rights issues, Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations in Geneva

DISTANCE LEARNING

Since October 2020, the entire programme and its short courses can be followed fully online – a great opportunity for practitioners working in the field.

An easy and interactive platform allows them to interact directly with professors and other participants during classes and access all the course materials and reading. If participants are unable to follow a specific class, they can watch the recordings afterwards. Participants can either take exams online or, alternatively, come and take them in Geneva.

For the 2020–2021 academic year, 26 professionals based in Australia, Azerbaijan, Benin, Cambodia, Canada, Colombia, Georgia, India, Kenya, Palestine, Peru, Syria, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States chose this option. Journalists, humanitarians, field delegates or legal advisers, they work for the ICRC, MINUSCA, the OSCE in Ukraine, the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism and the UN in Syria.

'At first, I thought distance learning was going to be an overwhelming challenge, but over time I have come to realize that it is almost the same as attending the classes in person as it was very interactive. It was particularly convenient in the situation of a global pandemic and time-saving for a person who is maintaining a full-time job as well.'

Chantal Touma, Legal Adviser, ICRC Legal Department in Damascus

TWO NEW COURSES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF IHL AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Two new courses have enriched the catalogue of course offerings since October 2020, focusing on the implementation of IHL and IHRL and taught, respectively, by Dr Lindsey Cameron, Head of the ICRC Unit of Thematic Legal Advisers in the Legal Division, and Professor Olivier de Frouville from the Paris 2 Panthéon-Assas University who is also a member of the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances.

These new courses will allow participants to better understand how institutions, which are often Geneva-based, can contribute to enforcing the rules they study, and learn more about avenues to ensure the implementation of IHL and IHRL.

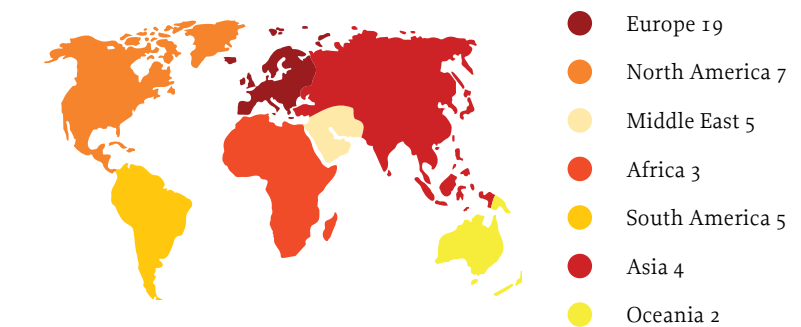
2020–2022 EXECUTIVE MASTER CLASS

The 2020–2022 Executive Master class has 45 participants from 29 countries. Nineteen follow the programme in Geneva and 26 do so online. They work for the ICRC, the International Organization for Migration, MINUSCA, the OSCE in Ukraine, the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism, UN Women, the UN in Syria, the World Organization against Torture and for several permanent missions in Geneva.

Gender representation



Geographical representation



Professional Background



In Geneva and Online



2019–2021 EXECUTIVE MASTER CLASS

The 19 participants are currently working on their thesis and will graduate in October 2021.

2018–2020 EXECUTIVE MASTER CLASS

Eleven participants successfully completed the programme and graduated in October 2020 alongside nine participants from the 2017–2019 cohort.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Partial and full scholarships allow talented young people who otherwise could not afford it to follow our programmes and subsequently pursue a career in the human rights, humanitarian and justice sectors. Partial scholarships cover the programme's tuition fee and full scholarships cover the tuition fee as well as living expenses in Geneva for 10 months.

'The scholarship has given me a unique opportunity to follow my dreams of pursuing justice for all. I am benefitting from high-quality advanced training in a cordial sphere, which makes me confident for the near future, when hopefully I will be playing my part in making the world a better place for everybody.'

Samaneh Shabani, 2020–2021 MTJ Student

For the 2020–2021 academic year, we allocated 26 full scholarships and 4 partial scholarships across our three master's programmes, thanks to the generous support of a Geneva-based foundation, Fondation Ernst et Lucie Schmidheiny, Jenö Staehelin, Rabaa Al-Juma and the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute.

'As a student coming from the Global South, studying at the Geneva Academy has truly changed my professional life. The scholarship offered by the Geneva Academy has allowed me to receive word-class training in IHL and human rights, which I would have never have found in my home country.'

Julio Veiga-Bezerra, 2020–2021 LLM Student

We select scholarship recipients through a highly competitive process based on academic merit, extra-curricular achievements and the candidate's financial needs.

Following graduation, students who received a scholarship generally go back to their country or regions where they work in the judiciary, NGOs, international organizations and governmental agencies, addressing human rights, IHL, transitional justice and rule of law issues. Scholarship alumni, once engaged in professional life, also become key ambassadors for international Geneva and its humanitarian, human rights and peace values.

'The scholarship I received allowed me to come and study at the Geneva Academy: as it lifted the weight of tuition fees, I could afford the living costs in Geneva. This has further meant that, throughout the year, I have been able to focus solely on my academic work and internship, making me feel more prepared to enter the professional world after my studies.'

Tereza Milosova, 2020–2021 LLM Student

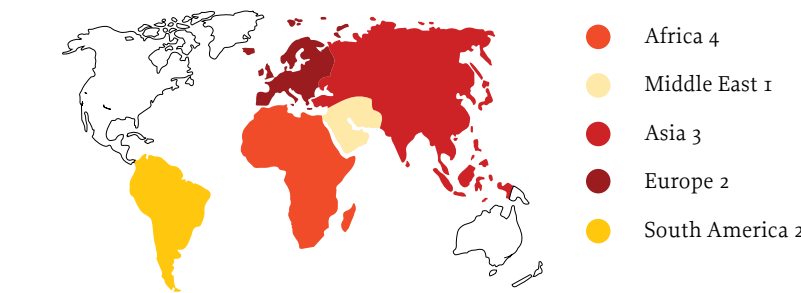
'The scholarship I received to study at the Geneva Academy and live in Geneva gave me the opportunity to meet an incredible, diverse and talented group of classmates and professors. I feel lucky and grateful to be able to learn from them while benefitting from Geneva's enriching opportunities. I could not have done this without the scholarship that I received.'

Juliana Laguna Trujillo, 2020–2021 MTJ Student

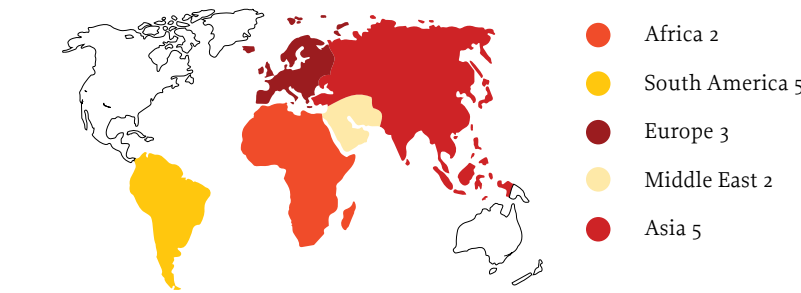
Partial and Full Scholarships



LLM in International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights: 12 Scholarships



Master of Advanced Studies in Transitional Justice, Human Rights and the Rule of Law: 17 Scholarships



Executive Master in International Law in Armed Conflict: 1 Scholarship





Our Executive Education provides professionals, academics and postgraduate students with the necessary tools to address complex contemporary challenges in international humanitarian law (IHL), international human rights law (IHRL), international criminal law and transitional justice.

We offer intensive training courses on cutting-edge human rights issues; short courses on international law in armed conflict and transitional justice; courses on IHL in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), customized training courses, and an Executive Master in International Law in Armed Conflict (see the section on Master's Programmes for more information about this).

Courses are highly interactive and participants are encouraged to share their own experiences and perspectives. They include lectures and discussions with leading academics, experts and practitioners, as well as practical examples, case studies and exercises. Sessions are designed to develop critical thinking and to enhance knowledge exchange with peers and facilitators.

Courses in 2020: 25

Intensive training courses on cutting-edge human rights issues: 5



Short courses on international law in armed conflict: 17



Customized training courses: 3



Attendance: 210

Intensive training courses on cutting-edge human rights issues: 76



Short courses on international law in armed conflict: 49



Customized training courses: 85



INTENSIVE TRAINING COURSES ON CUTTING-EDGE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES

Our intensive training courses address contemporary human rights issues and provide participants – staff of NGOs, United Nations bodies and other international organizations, representatives of national human rights institutions (NHRIs) and governments, as well as members of academia – with the practical skills to address these issues and integrate them in their work.

Their interactive nature encourages participants to share their own experiences and perspectives. Lectures alternate with discussions with leading academics, experts and practitioners, practical examples, case studies and exercises.

While most of our training usually takes place at our headquarters, Villa Moynier, it was delivered online in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with 76 participants in total across the following courses.

THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

In 2020, this training course dedicated special attention to water and pollution and scarcity. The 29 participants took part in a week-long exercise on this issue, gaining a deep understanding of the international legal framework for the protection of human rights and the environment as well as in-depth knowledge of how to promote environmental protection through existing human rights mechanisms.

ONLINE COURSE IN FRENCH ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

This online course in French, co-organized with Human Dignity and Synergies Coopération and attended by 10 participants, focused on the substantive content of ESCR, the protection mechanisms at international, regional and domestic levels and the complementarity between ESCR and the SDGs.

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

This training course allowed the 13 participants who work in government, international organizations, NHRIs, NGOs and academia to gain expertise on the complementarity between economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They discussed accountability and implementation challenges at national and international levels with key human rights experts, including the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation and the UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights.

'For me, the training course on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the SDGs served as a reminder of the value of integrating human rights and SDGs in the work of national civil society organizations as they navigate the economic, financial and health crisis in Lebanon. The course provided a range of information regarding ESCR and the SDGs, and how they both relate to development – a relevant approach to my work as a behavioural analyst. Additionally, what made this course unique was the presence of a multitude of experts working with the UN and other organizations who shared their experience and knowledge surrounding human rights and the challenges faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic.'

Rewa El Masry, Behavioural Economics Consultant

THE UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

This training course, co-organized with UPR Info, allowed the 15 participants from around the world – diplomats, civil society representatives, representatives of international organizations and members of NHRIs – to discuss the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) and the implementation of recommendations at the national level.

A combination of illustrated lectures and group exercises focused on implementation strategies, the collaborative role of various national-level actors (national governments, NHRIs, civil society, UN agencies, academic bodies, national parliaments, diplomats and the media), as well as sophisticated tools (matrices) developed by various actors at the national level to monitor progress with regard to UPR recommendations.

THE UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF PEASANTS

This training course provided the nine participants who work in peasant organizations, social movements and NGOs with practical tools to integrate the UN Declaration on the rights of peasants (UNDROP) in their work and use it as a tool to implement peasants' rights on the ground. Themes covered included the role of UN human rights mechanisms in monitoring the UNDROP's implementation, as well as the rights of rural women to food and food sovereignty, land and other natural resources and seeds and biological diversity. Participants also discussed challenges to the UNDROP's implementation based on three examples of national implementation in Colombia, India and Switzerland.

'The training course on the UN Declaration on the rights of peasants was delivered in a very informative manner by experienced researchers and experts. The lessons and experience sharing will greatly help those of us working in the Global South – in our campaigns and work – to implement and defend the rights of peasants, small-scale farmers and rural workers.'

Lenin Tinashe Chisaira, Environmental Lawyer and Director, Advocates4Earth

SHORT COURSES ON INTERNATIONAL LAW IN ARMED CONFLICT: NEW ONLINE OFFERING

Our short courses – five sessions of two hours each – allow participants to deepen their legal knowledge and expertise regarding a specific issue or branch of international law relevant to armed conflicts. Addressed to diplomats, humanitarians, human rights advocates, lawyers, NGO staff, professionals working in emergency and post-conflict situations, UN staff and staff from other international organizations, we also offered them online, for the first time in 2020, to audiences in the field.

'Many professionals working in a situation of armed conflict face, in their daily tasks, challenges whose resolution requires some legal tools and knowledge of the legal framework and the protection afforded by international human rights law (IHL) or international humanitarian law. Our aim in opening these short courses to audiences outside Geneva is precisely to bring this legal knowledge to the field.'

Professor Gloria Gaggioli, Director of the Geneva Academy

Covering the full span of legal issues pertaining to armed conflicts, they range from introductory courses on IHL, IHRL and international criminal law to addressing more specific issues and topics like international refugee law, the responsibility to

protect, preventing and combating terrorism and accountability for atrocity crimes.

In addition, two new courses address the implementation of IHL and IHRL, looking at the other side of the coin: how the law applies in practice, the mechanisms for its implementation and the challenges one can face.

Participants can either choose one specific course or follow several, starting with the introductory courses and then moving to those that are more





specific. As we offer these courses every year, this can be spread over several years.

In 2020, 49 practitioners – from Geneva and the field – participated in one or more of our 17 short

courses and acquired the necessary skills to address the multiple legal questions and challenges they face in their daily work.

CUSTOMIZED TRAINING COURSES

We organize customized training courses for international organizations, NGOs, governments, NHRIs, judges and lawyers and the media on issues related to IHL, IHRL, transitional justice and the work of UN human rights mechanisms.

Provided by our experts, we tailor these courses to the needs of our partners. They can run from one day to a full week and take place at our headquarters, Villa Moynier, at the partner's location or online.

ANNUAL SEMINAR ON IHL FOR DIPLOMATS ACCREDITED TO THE UN IN GENEVA

This annual seminar for Geneva-based diplomats, co-organized with the ICRC, addressed the main concepts and contemporary challenges of IHL and notably focused on new means and methods of warfare, terrorism and counterterrorism and the prosecution of war crimes.

TRAINING WORKSHOP ON UN HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

This online course – organized for the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights – trained 20 academics from Southeast Asia on the work of Charter-based UN Human Rights mechanisms. Participants learned about the functioning of the UN Human Rights Council, the elaboration of resolutions and the links with implementation at the national level, notably via UN special procedures. They also discussed the functioning of the UPR, including the roles of all stakeholders and the potential use of this mechanism by national actors like NHRIs.

TRAINING COURSE ON HUMAN RIGHTS FOR THE INTER-MINISTERIAL DELEGATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO

This online training course – co-organized with the Danish Institute for Human Rights and the Inter-Ministerial Delegation on Human Rights of the

Kingdom of Morocco (DIDH) – trained 20 DIDH staff in key human rights concepts and issues. Via a series of sessions from December 2020 to March 2021, it notably introduced basic concepts and notions of IHRL and went on to address specific treaties that protect specific groups or rights. The training course also discussed very practical ways of engaging with Geneva-based human rights mechanisms and focused on the national implementation of IHRL obligations and the role that national mechanisms – like the DIDH – can play in reporting and follow-up.

RESEARCH

Our research examines issues that are under-explored, need clarification or are unconventional, experimental or challenging. It thus advances understanding and stimulates debate in the academic community and in policy-making institutions, government and the private sector.

OUR CLUSTERS

We currently focus on four priority areas – digitalization and new technologies, non-state actors, implementation and accountability and sustainable development – which all raise crucial legal, policy and protection questions.

DIGITALIZATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES

New technologies, digitalization and big data are reshaping our societies and the way they organize. While technological advancements present tremendous opportunities and promises, rapid developments in AI, automation or robotics raise a series of questions about their impact in times of peace and war.

Our research in this domain explores whether these new developments are compatible with existing rules and whether international human rights law (IHRL) and international humanitarian law (IHL) continue to provide the level of protection they are meant to ensure.

DIGITALIZATION OF CONFLICT JOINT INITIATIVE: HUMANITARIAN IMPACT AND LEGAL PROTECTION

New (military) technologies have a profound impact on how wars are fought. Significant advances in the fields of cyberspace, AI, robotics or space technology are at the forefront of contemporary geopolitical power struggles and are already bringing major transformative shifts in military and humanitarian affairs.

While IHL is applicable to all technological developments in warfare, the speed, scale and transformative impact of today’s technological advances require a constant (re-)assessment of whether new means and methods of warfare are compatible with existing IHL rules.

This research project – carried out in partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) – explores the humanitarian consequences and protection needs caused by the digitalization of armed conflicts and the extent to which these are addressed in IHL.

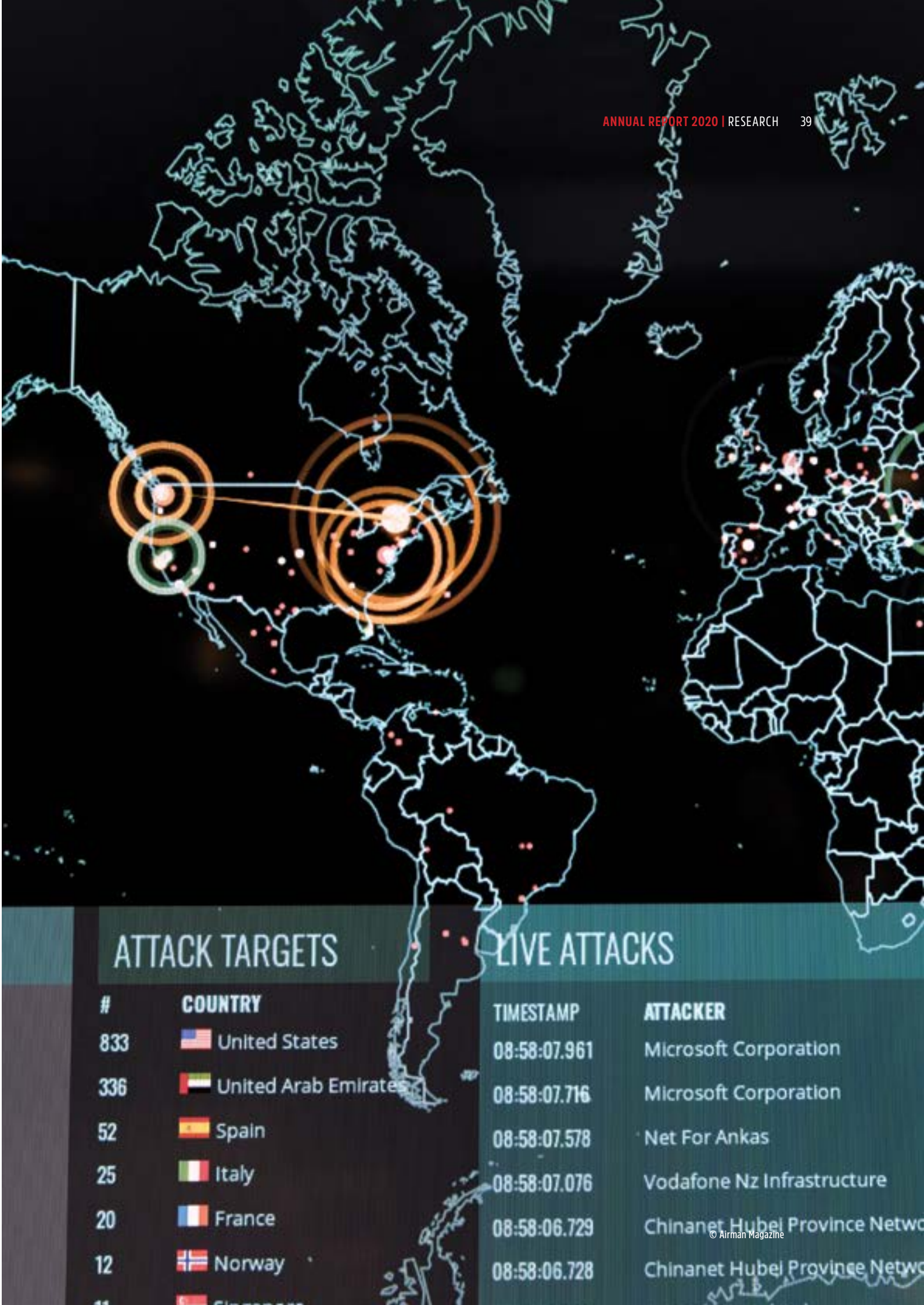
Following the official launch of the project in October 2020 at an online event that enabled a first

discussion on this issue, the Geneva Academy’s research team worked on three working papers – on the protection of the global information space in armed conflict; protection of society as a new dimension of protection in IHL; and data protection in times of armed conflict – which will be published in 2021.

DISRUPTIVE MILITARY TECHNOLOGIES

Via a new lecture series on disruptive military technologies, this project aims to stay abreast of the various military technology trends, promote legal and policy debate on new military technologies and further the understanding of the convergent effects of different technological trends shaping the digital battlefield of the future.

In the 2020 lecture, hosted as an ESIL Lecture, Robin Geiß, our Swiss IHL Chair, explored the disruptive potential of a range of new military technologies with a particular focus on those areas where these technologies could fall through the cracks of the international legal order.



DIGITALIZATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

AI and new technologies are bound to enable innovation in the decades to come. On the one hand, they may be used to improve societal well-being and help fight human rights abuses. On the other, they also present a variety of challenges that can profoundly affect the respect for and protection of human rights.

Our research on digitalization and human rights aims to place IHRL at the centre of discussions about the governance of AI and new technologies.

Our Research Brief *Human Rights and the Governance of Artificial Intelligence* discusses the opportunities and risks that AI represents for human rights, argues that IHRL should occupy a central place in the governance of AI and outlines two additional

avenues to regulation: public procurement and standardization. The paper also calls for a more coordinated approach – under United Nations leadership – that breaks down silos and goes beyond sectoral and specialized audiences.

Our research team also participated in the ongoing work of Essex University's Human Rights, Big Data and Technology Project by contributing to its publications on regulatory matters regarding the effective oversight of the larger tech companies that now dominate the development of AI and machine-learning capabilities. This research effort was especially opportune as both in the United States and Europe, concerns are increasingly being expressed about the dominance of the 'Big Tech' companies.

NON-STATE ACTORS

Non-state actors – whether armed groups or large multinational business companies – are important players in contemporary international relations. Most armed conflicts today are of a non-international character, involving numerous armed groups who can control a territory or a population, and thus raising issues about the suitability of the existing protection framework afforded by IHRL and IHL. Similar challenges arise in relation to the activities of businesses or transnational companies, notably when they operate in conflict zones or situations of armed violence.

Our research in this domain explores the extent to which these actors are bound by international law, asks whether the existing legal framework provides adequate protection and proposes concrete solutions to address these contemporary challenges.

HUMAN RIGHTS RESPONSIBILITIES AND ARMED NON-STATE ACTORS

Combined with the absence of mechanisms ensuring monitoring, accountability and reparations, the lack of a clear legal framework defining which human rights obligations are applicable to armed non-state actors (ANSAs) affects the effective implementation of and respect for the human rights of individuals living under their control.

Started in 2017, this research project aimed to support – through research, advice and broad consultations – interested independent UN human rights mandate holders (special rapporteurs and members of working groups) in drafting a joint

statement focusing on the human rights responsibilities of ANSAs.

Launched during a virtual side event at the 46th session of the Human Rights Council in March 2021, the joint statement ultimately gathered the support and signatures of over 40 UN independent human rights experts representing 28 UN special procedures. In addition to emphasizing that existing international legal protections should be effectively implemented to safeguard the human rights of individuals and groups, irrespective of the status or character of the perpetrator(s), the joint statement addresses important recommendations to states, ANSAs and other stakeholders.



FROM WORDS TO DEEDS: A STUDY OF ARMED NON-STATE ACTORS' PRACTICE AND INTERPRETATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN AND HUMAN RIGHTS NORMS

This research project, led by the Geneva Academy – in collaboration with Geneva Call, the American University in Cairo and the Norwegian Refugee Council – examines ANSAs' practice and interpretation of core IHL norms via field research and interviews with selected ANSAs – in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Philippines, Myanmar, Lebanon and Syria.

It also aims to conduct a global analysis of ANSAs' commitments and unilateral declarations relating to the protection of civilians from attacks; the use of landmines and other explosive devices; humanitarian access; the prohibition of using and recruiting children in hostilities; the prohibition of forced displacement; special protection of certain objects, such as cultural property and the environment; deprivation of liberty; the prohibition of sexual violence; the protection of health care, with a special focus on the protection of persons with disabilities; protection of education and fair trial and administration of justice .

By increasing our knowledge of how ANSAs perceive their international obligations, the project's policy objective is to provide tools to humanitarian organizations and other relevant actors for better engagement with ANSAs, as well as to inform future humanitarian protection strategies and international law-making processes.

In 2020, the research team completed the two first case studies on armed groups present in Mali (the MNLA) and Colombia (the FARC-EP). These were launched in March 2021, alongside the companion website of the project (words2deeds.org). The research team also presented the research and discussed its approach and methodology with key humanitarian actors, practitioners, states and academics to gather inputs and feedback.

The project also received, through our Senior Research Fellow Dr Annyssa Bellal, a major two-year research grant from UK Research and Innovation – a testimonial to the quality, novelty and relevance of this project.

BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS: TOWARDS A DECADE OF GLOBAL IMPLEMENTATION

June 2021 will mark the tenth anniversary of the adoption by the UN Human Rights Council of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), which are today a reference for efforts to address adverse human rights impacts arising in a business context.

This project is supporting – via dedicated research, stakeholder outreach and the organization of events and consultations – the one-year initiative of the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights aimed at taking stock of achievements to date, assessing gaps and challenges and developing a roadmap for implementing the UNGPs more widely.

The research team analysed how the UNGPs have been integrated in public- and private- sector policy frameworks, drafted targeted concept notes to support a series of online consultations and supported research that analysed the recommendations by UN Human Rights mechanisms relating to the private sector.

Additionally, the project engaged in joint efforts with other UN special procedures to develop a strategy to measure the effectiveness of their work, starting with the experiences of the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights.

IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Although different in substance and varying in terms of compliance mechanisms, all international law frameworks – IHL, IHRL, international criminal law and transitional justice – raise challenges in terms of implementation and accountability.

The proliferation of international, regional and domestic human rights standards has led to a multitude of actors and procedures dedicated to their implementation. In turn, this has crowded existing regulatory regimes. For IHL on the other hand, dedicated monitoring mechanisms are rare and many are either not used or otherwise ineffective. International criminal law courts and tribunals provide partial solutions as they focus on individual criminal responsibility. Our research in this domain aims to accompany existing mechanisms and their stakeholders, ongoing policy discussions, negotiations, reforms and new developments in order to ensure the ongoing relevance of the international legal framework for the most vulnerable, along with accountability and redress for victims.

IMPLEMENTING INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW THROUGH HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

Beyond the ICRC, IHL lacks mechanisms to effectively ensure compliance. This structural flaw in its system has prompted a general recourse to the better-equipped human rights machinery, even if the opportuneness of this tendency has long been, and is still, debated in both intergovernmental and scholarly forums.

The research project aims to examine how IHL could be more systematically, appropriately and correctly dealt with by the human rights mechanisms emanating from the UN Charter as well from universal and regional treaties. One of its 2019 findings highlighted the potential of furthering knowledge of IHL among members of universal treaty bodies and their secretariats.

Building on this finding, the project organized in 2020 an online workshop series – in collaboration with the ICRC's Legal Division and Advisory Service – focusing on the practice of UN treaty body mechanisms. The series primarily aimed to provide interested experts with the opportunity to discuss their respective approaches in dealing with the relationship between IHL and IHRL, and the articulation of specific rights in situations of armed conflict. It most notably allowed participants to share the relevant experiences and practices of their respective treaty body mechanisms.

IHL AND THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL

In light of the UN Security Council's (UNSC's) increased dealing with IHL, this research project aimed to critically assess the organ's practice and consistency – or lack thereof – in relation to this legal framework.

Released in October 2020, our publication *Room for Manoeuvre? Promoting International Humanitarian Law and Accountability While at the United Nations Security Council: A Reflection on the Role of Elected Members* provides an in-depth analysis of the UNSC's recent practice – notably in relation to the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, relevant thematic agenda items (Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, Children and Armed Conflict and Women, Peace and Security), counterterrorism measures and sanctions regimes.

Resulting from traditional legal research and informal interviews with about 30 experts – scholars, diplomats and representatives of the UN, NGOs and other relevant international organizations – it offers a set of guiding questions, framed in general terms, to ensure principled engagement with IHL in the formulation of policies and/or negotiation of outcomes at the UNSC.

In this context, the publication highlights that recent positive developments in IHL are often attributed to the initiative and engagement of elected members – the so-called 'E10' – who are notably bridging divides between permanent members, conducting



negotiations as inclusively as possible and consulting with other interested stakeholders.

Aimed at legal and humanitarian advisers of permanent missions to the UN in New York, as well as any stakeholder interested in the implementation of IHL, the publication was officially launched at the beginning of 2021 and discussed with a large audience both in New York and Geneva.

THE ROLE OF NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS SYSTEMS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The proliferation of UN and regional human rights mechanisms demands a systemic study of their interaction at the national level and of the implementation of their decisions and recommendations.

Today, several domestic actors have multiple roles to play in relation to the implementation of international human rights norms and recommendations.

This research project analyses the role of national human rights systems (NHRs) in implementing international human rights standards and recommendations. Based on collected evidence from three national contexts – Costa Rica, Mongolia and Morocco – it aims to provide a classification of national monitoring and implementation strategies. A series of online workshops and an international conference helped identify the best national practices that are most effective in the monitoring and implementation of international human rights recommendations.

In an expert seminar, more than 60 experts from Geneva-based human rights mechanisms and national human rights actors from Latin America, Northern Africa, Asia and the Pacific exchanged their latest strategies for human rights implementation and monitoring. The seminar highlighted a number of tangible common features of the most effective NHRs, providing best practice examples in a peer-to-peer learning process. More specifically, participants demonstrated an interest in exploring the possibility of developing a list of general principles related to the functioning of effective NHRs. These might include specific sections on broad character-

istics, such as national human rights institutional design, effective interactions among national human rights actors, meaningful participation of all relevant stakeholders, transparency and accountability in the decision-making process, availability of resources, accessibility and digitalization.

The outcome of this project – *National Human Rights Strategies: The Role of National Human Rights Systems in the Implementation of International Human Rights Standards*, launched in January 2021 – analyses institutional cooperation initiatives at the domestic level designed to strengthen human rights implementation.

PROMOTING AND PROTECTING THE RIGHTS TO FREEDOM OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION AND CIVIC SPACE WORLDWIDE

This new project provides substantive support to the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Clément Voule, a mandate that plays a crucial role in promoting and protecting these rights worldwide.

The project notably addresses emerging issues affecting civic space and develops tools and materials to allow various stakeholders – states, civil society organizations, lawyers and human rights defenders – to promote and defend it.

In 2020, we supported the celebration of the mandate's tenth anniversary via several consultations, events and conferences that addressed its realizations, the challenges it has tackled and priorities for the coming years. The result of this research fed into the June 2020 report presented by the UN Special Rapporteur to the UN Human Rights Council.

We also supported Clément Voule's focus on women in activism and civil society via a series of consultations that contributed to his report to the UN General Assembly, *Celebrating Women in Activism and Civil Society: The Enjoyment of the Rights to Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and of Association by Women and Girls*. The report explores the myriad ways in which women's organizations and movements have contributed to the advancement

of human rights and examines the gendered and intersectional restrictions these groups face in exercising the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association.

A PRACTITIONERS' GUIDE ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND COUNTERING CORRUPTION

Corruption is a major obstacle to the enjoyment of human rights. Moving from an economic and political perspective on corruption towards a human rights-based approach involves a shift in perception whereby one views corruption not only as a misappropriation of wealth and distortion of expenditure, but also as a potential violation of human rights.

Anti-corruption practitioners rarely make this link and resort to UN human rights mechanisms to address corruption and its human rights impact. Similarly, none of the UN human rights mechanisms has approached this issue in a systematic manner.

The *Practitioners' Guide on Human Rights and Countering Corruption* – published in 2019 with the Centre for Civil and Political Rights (CCPR Centre) and with input from the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights – has filled this gap by focusing on how to better use UN human rights mechanisms to report on corruption issues.

Outreach and awareness-raising activities – implemented throughout 2020 – enabled the dissemination of the guide and laid the ground for a joint statement of UN treaty bodies on corruption.

A dedicated training session for members of UN treaty bodies on corruption and human rights – carried out in collaboration with the CCPR Centre – addressed concrete cases and empowered treaty body members to address corruption cases more systematically in their work

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Human rights and sustainable development are intrinsically linked and mutually reinforcing. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – which aim to eradicate poverty, protect the environment and reduce all forms of violence – incorporate most of the core elements of civil and political, as well as economic, social and cultural rights. The degradation of the environment and environmental factors can also be at the origin of conflicts or human rights violations, which in turn cause severe setbacks for development.

Our research in this domain aims to explore the linkages between sustainable development, the protection of the environment, climate change and the branches of international law that protect the rights of the most vulnerable. It also focuses on those who are left behind – including peasants who represent 70 percent of people living in extreme poverty and 80 percent of the world's hungry – and their specific rights.

TWO RESEARCH PROJECTS ON THE RIGHT TO FOOD

The Geneva Academy coordinates the human rights component of two research projects on the right to food funded by the Swiss Programme for Research on Global Issues for Development (r4d programme), a joint initiative of the Swiss National Science Foundation and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.

The first project, Land Commercialization, Gendered Agrarian Transformation and the Right to Food (DEME-TER), examines the degree to which the right to food and gender equality play complementary roles in ensuring

food security in the context of land commercialization in Cambodia and Ghana. In 2020, the research team presented project findings related to women's human rights in food and agricultural systems at various academic conferences, in several policy briefs and peer-reviewed publications, including *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, as well as via dedicated training activities on gender equality, the right to food and the UN Declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas (UNDROP). The research team also convened a session on feminist right to food methodologies at the Fourth Global Food Security Conference in December 2020.

The second project, Towards Food Sustainability: Reshaping the Coexistence of Different Food Systems in South America and Africa has developed a framework (FoodSAF) for assessing the sustainability of food systems on the basis of five pillars: the realization of the right to food, food security, the reduction of poverty and inequality, environmental performance and socio-ecological resilience. During the first three years, the project worked in Bolivia and Kenya to carry out studies on six different food systems. In 2020, the project continued to test its FoodSAF framework on sustainable food systems via transformative pilot actions (TPAs) in Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ghana, Kenya and Zambia. The Geneva Academy research team was notably involved in two TPAs in Brazil, as well as one in Kenya and one in Bolivia. It also contributed to the project outputs, including by publishing a scientific report in *Nature* presenting a new understanding and evaluation of the sustainability of food systems in Kenya and Bolivia, and by releasing a study on the right to seeds in Bolivia.

ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Time is running out to implement the SDGs and leave no one behind. Practitioners and experts recognize the key role that human rights play in furthering the implementation of the SDGs and creating a much-needed accountability framework.

Our new practical manual on this issue outlines the key role of UN human rights mechanisms – UN Treaty Bodies, the UN Human Rights Council and UN special procedures – and the guidance they provide in monitoring the implementation of the SDGs that seek to realize economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR), such as the rights to food, safe drinking water, health, education and housing.

Through more than 20 examples of best practices and direct links to more than 100 UN documents, this practical manual shows how UN human rights mechanisms can monitor the SDGs that seek to realize ESCR. It also analyses the responses of UN human rights mechanisms to the COVID-19 crisis, and the way these mechanisms have linked SDGs and ESCR in these responses.

A shorter version for policy makers along with several online events, discussions and conferences have enabled wide dissemination to relevant stakeholders – practitioners, UN human rights mechanisms, civil servants, diplomats, National Human Rights Institutions, civil society organizations and actors involved in the implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda.

THE RIGHTS OF PEASANTS

Pursuing our work on promoting the implementation of the UNDROP, we focused in 2020 on the implementation of two specific rights enshrined in the Declaration: the right to land and the right to seeds.

As peasants represent 70 percent of people living in extreme poverty and 80 percent of the world's hungry, these two rights are central for them. Their implementation and recognition at national, regional and international levels are therefore key to rebalancing unequal power relations, protecting the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of peasants and preserving crop agrobiodiversity.

The Right to Land and the UNDROP – published with the International Land Coalition (ILC) and also available in French and Spanish – is a guide for all ILC members and the broader land community on how to use the UNDROP to protect the right to land and ensure that this right is mainstreamed into strategies aimed at achieving the SDGs and implementing the UN Decade of Family Farming.

The Right to Seeds and Intellectual Property Rights – also available in Spanish – discusses the protection of peasants' right to seeds and recalls that, as a human rights norm, it should have precedence over intellectual property rights and the promotion of commercial seed systems. Accordingly, states shall ensure that their laws and policies, as well as the international agreements to which they are a party, including on intellectual property, do not lead to violations, but to better protection of peasants' right to seeds.

The Right to Land and Other Natural Resources details the content of this right, states' obligations and



accountability mechanisms for its enforcement at national, regional and international levels. It also presents the case of Colombia where peasant organizations are using the Declaration to protect peasants' right to land. Aimed at supporting the land community in UNDROP's implementation, it is the first attempt to provide guidance on the implementation of the right to land and other natural resources enshrined in the UNDROP.

Looking at a specific national context, our publication *Switzerland's Foreign Policy and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants* lists actions that countries should take to ensure that their foreign policy is consistent with the UNDROP. While the analysis focuses on Swiss foreign policy, the recommendations set out in the publication are relevant to many countries.

These publications have been widely disseminated at both global and national levels to relevant stakeholders and discussed at online events and conferences.

THE RIGHT TO SEEDS IN EUROPE

This research project examines the protection of peasants' right to seeds in Europe. It aims to raise awareness among European seed networks and peasant organizations of the importance of using the UNDROP to promote changes in European laws, policies and trade agreements to ensure that they do not infringe, but rather facilitate, the realization of peasants' right to seeds.

A series of online workshops and webinars with partners in France, Austria, Romania, Spain and Brussels brought to the table members of seed networks and European peasants organizations to discuss the UNDROP's implementation in Europe. The discussions highlighted the need to revise European Union and EU Member States' laws and policies in accordance with UNDROP's Article 19 on the right to seeds, notably the future reform of seed marketing laws. These workshops and webinars also represented an important opportunity to exchange ideas about good practices in the protection of the right to seeds that could be replicated at EU and national levels.

THE RULE OF LAW IN ARMED CONFLICT ONLINE PORTAL

The Rule of Law in Armed Conflict (RULAC) online portal provides a comprehensive classification of all situations of armed violence that amount to an armed conflict under IHL.

For each conflict, this unique online resource details the factual and methodological basis for its classification, and identifies the parties and the applicable international law. The portal also includes sections on the definition and categories of armed conflict under IHL and the legal framework governing armed conflicts.

SEVEN NEW ARMED CONFLICTS

The research team added the following conflicts to the portal in 2020:

- The international armed conflict (IAC) between China and India over the Control of Arunachal Pradesh and Aksai China
- The non-international armed conflict (NIAC) between Cameroon and Boko Haram
- The NIAC between Burkina Faso and jihadist armed groups
- The NIAC between Nigeria and the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP)
- The NIAC between Mexico and the Sinaloa Cartel
- The NIAC between the Sinaloa Cartel and the Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generación
- The NIAC between Ethiopia and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF)

With these additions, the portal currently monitors more than 80 armed conflicts involving at least 55 states and more than 70 armed non-state actors.

UPDATES

Each conflict analysed on RULAC is regularly updated to incorporate recent developments including peace negotiations or agreements, clashes between the parties or criminal proceedings before national and international courts.

In 2020, all entries were updated, notably:

- The NIACs in Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, India, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Mexico, Myanmar, Nigeria, Sudan, Turkey and Ukraine
- The IACs between India and Pakistan, Iraq and Turkey, Syria and the US-led coalition and Ukraine and Russia
- The military occupation of Azerbaijan by Armenia, Cyprus by Turkey, Eritrea by Ethiopia, Georgia by Russia, Lebanon by Israel, Moldova by Russia, Palestine by Israel, Syria by Turkey, Syria by Israel, Ukraine by Russia and Western Sahara by Morocco

RESEARCH ON CLASSIFICATION CHALLENGES AND MONITORING OF ARMED VIOLENCE SITUATIONS

Because it is crucial that our interpretation of IHL continues to reflect realities on the ground, we conducted extensive research on legal challenges related to the classification of armed conflicts.

We also closely monitored other situations of armed violence to assess whether they could amount to an armed conflict according to IHL criteria. This notably concerned the following theatres:

- Armed violence in Jammu and Kashmir between a number of armed groups and the government
- Armed violence in the Northwest and Southwest Regions of Cameroon between Cameroon's armed forces and Anglophone separatist groups
- Armed violence in Burkina Faso involving self-defence groups
- Armed violence between Turkish armed forces and the TAK (a Kurdish youth organization and a splinter group of the PKK).
- Armed violence in Venezuela, especially between governmental forces and the National Liberation Army (ENL)
- Armed violence between El Salvador armed forces and criminal organizations
- Armed violence between Honduras armed forces and criminal organizations
- Armed violence between Mozambique armed forces and armed groups, notably Cabo Delgado
- Armed violence between Sudan and Ethiopia

LECTURES AND PRESENTATIONS

Our Research Fellow Dr Chiara Redaelli – in charge of RULAC – has been invited to give a number of lectures related to the RULAC project, including on the NIAC in Mexico at the Law Faculty of the Universidad de La Sabana (Colombia); classification challenges at the Law Faculty of the University of Geneva; and IHL implementation in Mexico at the Latin American IHL Moot Court.



THE GENEVA HUMAN RIGHTS PLATFORM

The Geneva Human Rights Platform (GHRP) provides a neutral and dynamic forum of interaction in Geneva for all stakeholders in the field of human rights – experts, practitioners, diplomats and civil society – to debate topical issues and challenges related to the functioning of the Geneva-based human rights system. Relying on academic research and findings, it works to enable various actors to be better connected, break down silos and, hence, advance human rights.

Despite the difficult context linked to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the GHRP team rapidly adapted to the situation. It proposed new formats, provided assistance to United Nations treaty bodies (TBs) and other actors, facilitated online meetings and ensured the continuation of work and conversations on key human rights issues during an unprecedented year of challenges and uncertainties.

During this third year of its existence, the GHRP also strengthened its role as the ‘Mechanisms Lab’ that engineers solutions to ensure the sustainable functioning of Geneva-based human rights mechanisms – via initiatives, targeted briefs on ongoing policy discussions, events, briefings for diplomats, expert roundtables and private meetings.

Recognized as a leading actor in supporting the work of UN TBs and their 2020 review, the GHRP built on this expertise and extended its scope to include UN special procedures, thus encompassing the whole family of UN human rights experts. Looking at the other side of the coin, the GHRP also developed work on the implementation of international human rights norms at the local level to propose solutions that can improve the uptake of recommendations and decisions taken by Geneva-based human rights bodies.

An advisory board – created in 2020 and composed of leading human rights experts and practitioners from different regions and backgrounds – provides guidance regarding the GHRP’s strategy, priorities and activities.

INITIATIVES

Our targeted initiatives provide support to Geneva-based human rights mechanisms and inform decisions related to their sustainable functioning.

INPUTTING INTO THE FINAL STAGES OF THE 2020 UN TREATY BODY REVIEW IN GENEVA AND NEW YORK

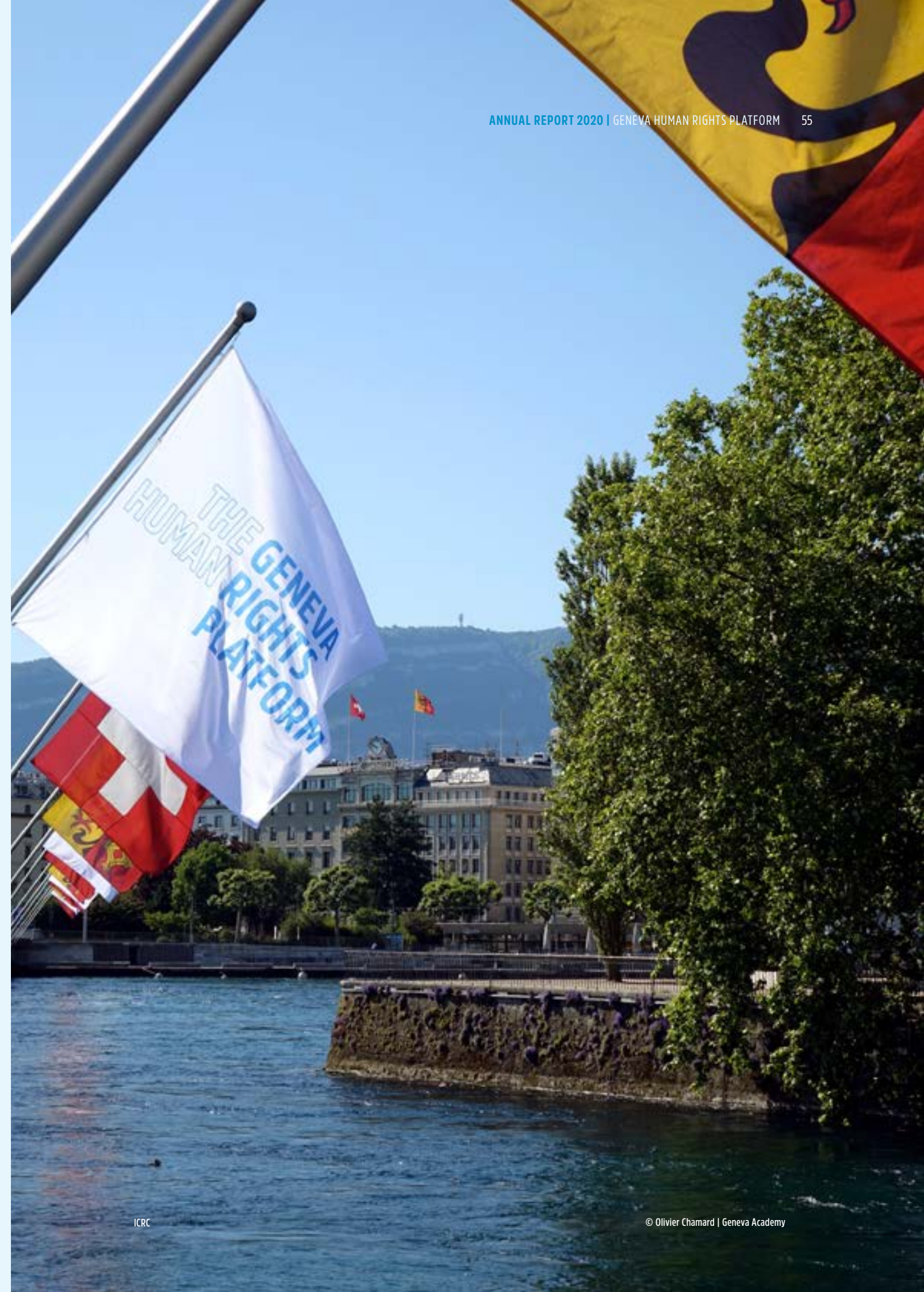
During this decisive year, the GHRP continued to contribute to the 2020 review of UN TBs and in fact positioned itself as a leading actor in this process.

We provided expert input, facilitated dialogue among various stakeholders on the review and the future of the TB system and accompanied discussions concerning the follow-up to Resolution 68/268 in New York and Geneva.

The GHRP notably supported the co-facilitation process – led by Switzerland and the Kingdom of Morocco – via a comparative document analysing

the 96 written submissions and 166 oral interventions by states and stakeholders along with the 116 oral interventions during the two informal consultations held in New York and Geneva.

The proposals developed by the platform – the outcome of a multi-year process of academic research and consultations, along with multi-stakeholder consultations – were presented in a written submission and included a series of proposals that can be implemented without reopening the treaties. They notably touch upon the introduction of a simplified reporting procedure; the introduction of a coordinated fixed reporting schedule; the alignment of TB rules of procedure and working methods; more



specific and precise concluding observations, with increased coordination with the Universal Periodic Review and UN special procedures; and an expanded institutionalized follow-up of recommendations at the national level.

Their implementation will allow UN TBs to work in a more efficient way and ensure better implementation of their recommendations at the national level, which, ultimately, will contribute to better protection and respect for human rights.

CONNECTING EXPERTS IN UN TREATY BODIES AND BEYOND

Via our Treaty Body Members Platform (TBMP), we connect TB members with each other as well as with Geneva-based practitioners, academics and diplomats, providing a unique space to share expertise, exchange views on topical questions and develop synergies and cooperation.

In 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most exchanges among experts and practitioners took place online. They addressed the impact of pesticides on the rights to health and life and ways to bring corruption cases to the various TBs' individual communication procedures. TB members also discussed the work of TBs during the pandemic and how TBs can coordinate their working methods while having to meet online.

In this context, we also organized, in record time and along with the Human Rights Institute at Columbia University Law School, one of the first online meetings of the system. This pioneering meeting brought together UN TB chairpersons and focal points for the 2020 review to discuss issues around the review, drawing on the commonalities between the positions of states, TB members, NGOs and academia regarding the future of the system.

THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE: TOWARDS GREATER CONNECTIVITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS MECHANISMS

The second annual conference discussed the connectivity of human rights mechanisms beyond Geneva, focusing on the links between regional and global human rights mechanisms.

More than 400 registered participants in Geneva and

online – experts, practitioners, diplomats, civil society representatives, members of global and regional human rights mechanisms and staff of international organizations – discussed in plenary panels and working groups the overall effectiveness of these interactions, including in a number of specific policy areas like climate change, the fight against corruption and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The discussions offered fascinating reflections and insights regarding the engagement between the different national, regional and global human rights mechanisms and identified areas needing further improvement, notably in relation to national implementation and jurisprudence.

Fourteen partners contributed to the conference's programme, including civil society organizations, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN-Habitat and academic institutions, contributing their knowledge, experts and networks around specific topics.

SUPPORTING UN SPECIAL PROCEDURES

The special procedures of the UN Human Rights Council are a unique mechanism of independent expert advice and monitoring in the UN human rights system.

Building on our expertise with UN TBs, we started offering to UN special procedures additional opportunities to engage with each other and with other parts of the UN system via an annual meeting on a topic of common concern, as well as through institutional discussions on thematic issues, working methods, impact assessment and other methodological issues.

At an online expert meeting, over 20 UN special rapporteurs and members of UN working groups, along with OHCHR staff, civil society representatives and human rights lawyers, discussed how the impact of UN special procedures' visits, recommendations and inquiries could be effectively measured and evaluated. Three mandate holders – the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights, the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Clément Voule, and the



UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, Nils Melzer – presented their work and provided insights on how they measure their impact, particularly with regard to country visits and the inquiries they receive. Civil society representatives and human rights lawyers who have been cooperating with UN special procedures also provided their perspectives. This discussion helped inform the research recommendations and conclusions provided in a working paper that will be published in 2021.

Throughout the year, the GHRP also supported the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Clément Voule, and the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights’ yearlong project to mark the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights by the UN Human Rights Council. The platform notably organized a series of outreach events and discussions focusing on the measures that states and business enterprises should take to implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights to prevent and address business-related human rights abuses in conflict and post-conflict contexts.

ADDRESSING UN TREATY BODIES’ INDIVIDUAL COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

TBs’ individual communication procedures (ICPs) are a major instrument for enforcing the rights enshrined in the corresponding human rights treaties and providing victims with an effective remedy before an international body. They also represent a key entry point for victims of human rights violations to the UN human rights system.

Building on our 2019 publication *Treaty Bodies’ Individual Communication Procedures: Providing Redress and Reparation to Victims of Human Rights Violations*, we pursued our collaboration with OHCHR to implement our key recommendations for improving the system, notably by creating a judicial-like registry to provide substantive legal support to TBs.

In this context, the GHRP contributed to a template for a new complaints form aimed at harmonizing inputs

and procedures among the various committees who receive individual complaints. It also made suggestions regarding an electronic portal that would provide an entirely new way to handle communications, easing the work of all stakeholders – complainants, states and OHCHR. In collaboration with the Centre for Civil and Political Rights, the GHRP also organized a visit for OHCHR staff and TB members at the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) Registry in Strasbourg to see how the European system deals with individual communications, particularly regarding the technical and procedural aspects. The visit was followed by a conference – co-organized with the Paris Human Rights Center – in which the various stakeholders involved in ICPs discussed the lessons learned and the potential for adapting the ECHR example.

Throughout the year, the GHRP also supported the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Clément Voule, and the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights’ yearlong project to mark the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights by the UN Human Rights Council. The platform notably organized a series of outreach events and discussions focusing on the measures that states and business enterprises should take to implement the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights to prevent and address business-related human rights abuses in conflict and post-conflict contexts.

LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION OF GLOBAL HUMAN RIGHTS

The GHRP initiated collaborations with a series of actors to reflect on the implementation of international human rights norms at the local level and propose solutions to improve the local uptake of recommendations and decisions taken by Geneva-based human rights bodies.

In partnership with UN-Habitat, OHCHR and the Geneva Cities Hub, the platform provided guidance to local governments, city-level practitioners and decision makers, as well as national governments interested in local governance, to translate international human rights standards at the city level. A series of expert meetings and their operational out-

come documents addressed specific human rights issues – gender, the inclusion of children and youth, older persons and persons with disabilities, as well as the inclusion of groups at risk of marginalization like refugees or indigenous peoples – to inform UN-Habitat’s 2020–2023 Strategic Plan and identi-

fy concrete actions to implement at the city level.

This initiative was supported by dedicated research on the national implementation of international human rights obligations and the role of national human rights systems (see section on Research above).

BEAKING DOWN SILOS

Throughout the year and via its different activities, the GHRP facilitated discussions and exchanges among key human rights actors based in Geneva and beyond, including state representatives, UN human rights mechanisms, academic institutions, experts, national stakeholders and civil society organizations. The move to online discussions due to the COVID-19 pandemic allowed us to reach out to a wider audience and discuss topical issues with key stakeholders beyond Geneva.

BUILDING CAPACITY

Via training courses, short policy papers on current human rights challenges or processes, briefings for diplomats and expert roundtables, the GHRP supports the international community to engage more effectively with the Geneva-based human rights mechanisms and bodies and address current human rights challenges.

In 2020, the platform provided written expert inputs via a dozen analytical papers related to technical or policy processes as well as intergovernmental debates – notably the 2020 TB review, the development of the OHCHR petitions system and TB working methods during the COVID-19 pandemic. These papers analysed political positions and suggested potential solutions for further institutional development.

SUPPORTING HUMAN RIGHTS ACTORS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Throughout this period, the GHRP has been at the forefront of ensuring that key human rights discussions continue during the pandemic.

Since April 2020, the GHRP supported several actors – including UN TBs, UN-Habitat, OHCHR and the World Blind Union – in the organization of complex online conferences with simultaneous translation, sign language, closed captioning and working groups. It also tested, during the 44th session of the UN Human Rights Council, a ‘Zoom negotiation room’ that hosted informal negotiations on the 2020 resolution on peaceful protest.

To address the impact of the pandemic on UN TBs’ work, the platform also supported discussions on how TBs can coordinate their working methods in a context of online meetings and challenges related to their dialogue with states, issuance of recommendations and the impossibility of carrying out country missions. The multi-partner Right On digital initiative launched in April 2020 has kept the human rights dialogue going during COVID-19 and has addressed the multiple human rights dimensions and impacts of the pandemic, including its gendered impact, challenges to privacy, consequences in conflict-related contexts and business responsibilities during such health crises.

PARTNERS

In fulfilling its mandate, the GHRP collaborated closely with more than 50 governments, NGOs, UN human rights bodies and academic institutions.

These include: Access Now; Centre for Civil and Political Rights; Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, New York University School of Law; Center for International Environmental Law; Center for Reproductive Rights; Centre for Human Rights, University of Pretoria; CIVICUS; Columbia University; Danish Institute for Human Rights; DiploFoundation; Earthjustice; FIAN International; Freedom House; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung; General Assembly of Partners; Geneva Cities Hub; Geneva Internet Platform; Global Campus for Human Rights; Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; Human Rights Centre, University of Essex; Inter-ministerial Delegation on Human Rights of the Kingdom of Morocco; International Center for Non-Profit Law; International Commission of Jurists; International Service for Human Rights; Mes-oamerican Initiative for Women Human Rights Defenders; Norwegian Centre for Human Rights; Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights;

Open Society Justice Initiative; Paris Human Rights Center, Paris 2 Panthéon-Assas University; Permanent Missions of Costa Rica, Denmark, Germany, Japan, Norway, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the United Kingdom to the UN in Geneva; Public Eye; Quaker United Nations Office; Republic and State of Geneva; Solidarity Center; Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs; TB-Net; UNCA Coalition; UN-Habitat; Universal Rights Group; University of Geneva; UN Special Rapporteurs on: the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, the right to food and extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions; UN Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery; UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights; UPR Info; Women's Major Group; Women's March Global; World Blind Union; World Enabled; World Movement for Democracy.

KEY FACTS AND FIGURES

39 Events

6 Initiatives

10 Targeted briefs on policy discussions

1 Annual conference

1 Advisory board

More than 50 partners

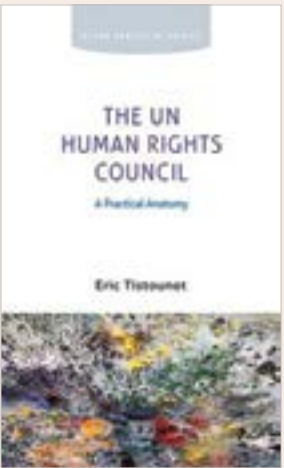
Our publications address current issues and challenges and stimulate debate in the academic community and in policy-making institutions and governments.

They mainly come under four distinct series:

- **Books** – published by major editors, these are the outcome of fundamental research carried out at the Geneva Academy.
- **Academy Briefings** – this flagship series elaborates policy advice with academic depth and rigor.
- **Research Briefs** – targeted policy advice in a short and accessible format on ongoing projects summarizing the main messages of longer academic publications.
- **Working Papers** – discussion pieces that can develop into peer-reviewed papers over the following two years, they contribute to the debate in their field.

BOOKS

1.



1. **The UN Human Rights Council: A Practical Anatomy**
Eric Tistounet / Edward Elgar Publishing, 2020

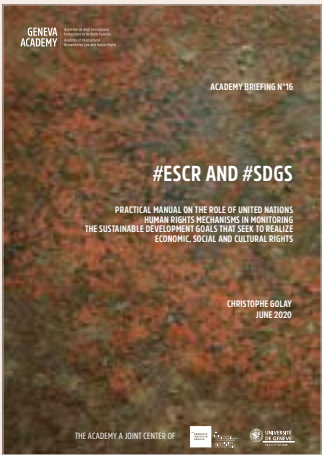
BRIEFINGS

1.



1. **Room for Manoeuvre? Promoting International Humanitarian Law and Accountability While at the United Nations Security Council: A Reflection on the Role of Elected Members**
Émilie Max / October 2020

2.



2. **#ESCR AND #SDGs: Practical Manual on the Role of UN Human Rights Mechanisms in Monitoring the SDGs that Seek to Realize Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**
Christophe Golay / July 2020

RESEARCH BRIEFS

1.



1. The Right to Land and Other Natural Resources
Christophe Golay / November 2020

2.



2. The Right to Seeds and Intellectual Property Rights
Christophe Golay / November 2020

3.



3. The Right to Seeds and Food Systems
Adriana Bessa and Katyussa Veiga / August 2020

7.



7. The Role of Human Rights Mechanisms in Monitoring the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants
Christophe Golay / February 2020

4.



4. Switzerland's Foreign Policy and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants
Caroline Dommen and Christophe Golay / August 2020

5.



5. Beyond the 2020 Treaty Body Review: The Role of National Human Rights Systems
Domenico Zipoli / June 2020

6.



6. Human Rights and the Governance of Artificial Intelligence
Ana Beduschi / March 2020

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

1.



1. The Right to Land and the UNDROPS
Christophe Golay / December 2020 / Geneva Academy and International Land Coalition

2.



2. La politique extérieure de la Suisse et la Déclaration de l'ONU sur les droits des paysans
Caroline Dommen and Christophe Golay / August 2020



Expert meetings, seminars, conferences and public events are a key part of our activities and provide a critical and scholarly forum for experts and practitioners to discuss and debate topical issues in international humanitarian law (IHL), human rights, transitional justice and international criminal law. Our series – IHL Talks, ATLAS, Military Briefings – have developed their own audiences and become key references in their respective fields.

This year, we ran more than 80 private and public events with more than 60 partners. Most of them (58) took place online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This move to online meetings allowed us to increase our audience and visibility beyond Geneva, and position the Geneva Academy as a model in this endeavour, managing complex online conferences with simultaneous translation, sign language and working groups.

Throughout this period, we have also been at the forefront of facilitating key discussions on the human rights and humanitarian impacts of the pandemic, notably via the new multi-partner online event series *Right On*.

Via the recording and publication of videos on our website and social media channels, interested audiences are also able to view important public debates and discussions.

Views on Facebook and YouTube of 2020 Events: 26,194

5 IHL Talks: 9,109



13 Right On events: 6,370



13 Public events: 9,787



Annual Conference of the Geneva Human Rights Platform: 928



OUR DEDICATED SERIES

IHL TALKS

The IHL Talks are a series of events on IHL and current humanitarian topics. Every two months, academic experts, practitioners, policy makers and sometimes journalists discuss burning humanitarian issues and their regulation under international law.

The six IHL Talks organized in 2020 addressed the contribution of human rights defenders to the documentation of violations of international law; the potential (il)legality under *jus ad bellum*, IHL and international human rights law of Soleimani; responses to COVID-19 in conflict zones; the protection of the environment during armed conflicts; the various ways of promoting respect for and the implementation of IHL; and the litigation of IHL before the European Court of Human Rights.

ATLAS NETWORK

Inspired by the ATLAS series of online profiles, these events, co-organized with the Geneva branch of ATLAS Network, feature prominent women who share their experience and advice regarding a career in international law.

The three events organized in 2020 enabled open discussions with eight women who have pursued a career in international law with different profiles – diplomat, legal adviser, lawyer, former prosecutor in an international tribunal and programme manager – career paths and at different moments in their careers.

RIGHT ON

This digital initiative launched in April 2020 aims to keep the human rights dialogue going during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This multi-partner endeavour is carried out with the Geneva Internet Platform, DiploFoundation, Universal Rights Group, Human Rights Centre at the University of Essex and the Permanent Missions of Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands to the UN in Geneva.

The 14 online events organized in 2020 featured leading experts and practitioners including the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, and discussed the multiple human rights dimensions and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including the gendered impact of the crisis, challenges to privacy, consequences in conflict-related contexts and business responsibilities during such health crises.

The series attracted particular interest among young people and allowed them to put their questions to prominent people like Michelle Bachelet.

MILITARY BRIEFINGS

This unique series of events relating to military institutions and the law aims to improve knowledge of military actors and operations and build bridges between the military and civilian worlds. Military guests – on active duty, retired or from the reserve – discuss military institutions and their missions as well as operational and legal challenges they face in their daily work.

DATE	EVENT	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PARTNER(S)
22 January In-person	Surviving Syria's Gulag: The Struggle of Sednaya's Former Detainees for Justice and Accountability	Panel Discussion	Panelists explored the role of justice and redress initiatives in providing redress to Sednaya's former detainees – notably in the contexts of universal jurisdiction and documentation of violations. They also discussed the prospects of accountability for international crimes committed in Syria from the perspective of victims and international actors.	Association of Detainees and the Missing in Sednaya Prison; Amnesty International; Impunity Watch
3–4 February In-person	Expert Meeting with the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights	Expert Meeting	Experts and staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' Petitions Unit discussed the efficient handling of individual complaints with staff of the European Court of Human Rights' Registry.	Centre for Civil and political Rights; Geneva Human Rights Platform; Open Society Justice Initiative
6 February In-person	Is it Time for Universal Recognition of the Right to a Safe, Clean, Healthy and Sustainable Environment?	Panel Discussion	In the context of discussions at the United Nations on the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, panelists considered the growing recognition of this right around the world; discussed its value for individual rights-holders and the environment; and debated whether it is time for its universal recognition at the UN level.	Permanent Missions of Costa Rica, Maldives, Morocco, Slovenia and Switzerland to the United Nations in Geneva; Universal Rights Group; United Nations Children's Fund; United Nations Environment Programme; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
14 February In-person	Seeking the Truth Amid the Fog of Warfare: The Contribution of Human Rights Defenders to Documenting Violations of International Law	IHL Talk	Panelists discussed the contribution that human rights defenders make to documenting serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law during armed conflicts.	Martin Ennals Foundation
26 February In-person	Disruptive Military Technologies	ESIL Lecture	Robin Geiß, Swiss Chair of International Humanitarian Law at the Geneva Academy, explored the disruptive potential of new military technologies with a focus on those areas where these technologies could fall through the cracks of the international legal order.	European Society of International Law
26 February In-person	Supporting Environmental Defenders: How can we Mobilize the International Community?	Panel Discussion	This event combined testimonies from environmental defenders with recent academic analysis and responses from high-level representatives from International Geneva and the Mayor of Geneva.	City of Geneva; EarthJustice; Fondation Ernest Boninchi; Environmental Governance and Territorial Development Hub/Institute; Geneva Environment Network; Geneva Science-Policy Interface; International Union for the Conservation of Nature; United Nations Environment Programme; United Nations special procedures; University of Geneva; University of Sussex

DATE	EVENT	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PARTNER(S)
28 February In-person	Reaction to the Third UN Secretary-General Report on the 2020 Treaty Body Review	Geneva Human Rights Platform	In this Geneva Academy Friday, diplomats, members of United Nations treaty bodies (TBs) and civil society representatives discussed the latest report of the UN Secretary-General on the status of the human rights TB system and the upcoming review of UN TBs by the UN General Assembly.	Geneva Human Rights Platform
5 March In-person	Impacts of Highly Hazardous Pesticides on Human Rights	Geneva Human Rights Platform	Members of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the UN Human Rights Committee and the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women discussed with the UN Special Rapporteur on toxics and human rights the impact of highly hazardous pesticides on human rights, as well as recent UN treaty bodies' jurisprudence on this issue.	Public Eye
6 March In-person	The Human Rights Lab of the University of Minnesota	Transitional Justice Café	Students of our Master of Advanced Studies in Transitional Justice, Human Rights and the Rule of Law conversed with members of the University of Minnesota's Human Rights Lab, which supports projects around the world led by faculty teams, graduate students and partner organizations.	Human Rights Programme, University of Minnesota
7 March In-person	Does International Humanitarian Law Legitimize Wars?	Film Screening and Panel Discussion	This Screening of <i>The Cave</i> – which tells the story of a hidden underground hospital in Syria and the unprecedented female-led team who risk their lives to provide medical care to the besieged local population – was followed by a debate on whether international humanitarian law legitimizes wars.	International Film Festival and Forum for Human Rights; Médecins sans Frontières
9 March In-person	The Killing of Qasem Soleimani: A Tentative Appraisal Under International Law	IHL Talk	Panelists discussed the potential (il)legality under jus ad bellum of the United States' drone strike which resulted in the killing of seven people, including General Qasem Soleimani (the commander of the Iranian Quds force).	
9 March In-person	The Yearbook of International Disaster Law	Book Launch	Panelists addressed current legal, policy and operational challenges raised by disasters, providing academic and stakeholders' perspectives on the role of law in disasters.	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Disaster Law Programme; Jean Monnet Project 'Disseminating Disaster Law for Europe', Roma Tre University.

DATE	EVENT	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PARTNER(S)
11 March In-person	Which Role for International Humanitarian Law in the Face of Daily Operational Challenges?	Discussion	Pierre Krahenbühl, former Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near-East, discussed operational challenges characterizing situations of armed conflict. Drawing from his unique experience, he shared his thoughts on the role played by international humanitarian law as a legal framework contributing to the daily work of international humanitarian organizations.	
26 March Online	Transitional Justice in Post-Conflict Settings	Transitional Justice Café	Students of our Master of Advanced Studies in Transitional Justice, Human Rights and the Rule of law debated the issue of transitional justice in post-conflict settings, best understood as a political bargaining process involving both domestic and international actors, and discussed this issue with Professor Christine Bell from Edinburgh Law School.	
8 April Online	Fighting Two Battles at the Same Time: Responding to Covid-19 in Conflict Zones	IHL Talk	Panelists addressed the challenges faced by humanitarian organizations in organizing the response to COVID-19, and states' obligation of due diligence to prevent the further spread of the virus.	
8 April Online	Fighting Online Hate Speech and Fake News in a Global Crisis	Right On	Panelists discussed the human rights challenges related to fake news, disinformation campaigns and online hate speech, notably in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.	DiploFoundation; Geneva Human Rights Platform; Geneva Internet Platform; Human Rights Centre, University of Essex; Permanent Missions of Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands to the United Nations in Geneva; Universal Rights Group
15 April Online	Inequality and Discrimination During COVID-19	Right On	Panelists addressed the human rights challenges related to the deepening inequalities brought about by COVID-19, such as the right to health, right to education, right to work and right to life.	DiploFoundation; Geneva Human Rights Platform; Geneva Internet Platform; Human Rights Centre, University of Essex; Permanent Missions of Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands to the United Nations in Geneva; Universal Rights Group
15–16 April Online	UN Treaty Bodies Chairpersons' Meeting: From a Vision to a Plan	Geneva Human Rights Platform	Initially scheduled to take place in New York, this informal chairpersons' meeting was the first successful treaty body (TB) chairs meeting held fully online. Participants discussed how to translate their vision on the future of the TB system into concrete action.	Columbia University

DATE	EVENT	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PARTNER(S)
22 April Online	Democracy and Rule of Law in Crisis?	Right On	Panelists discussed ways to tackle the global health crisis without undermining democratic practices and reflected on the consequences of COVID-19 for the future of democracy and the rule of law.	DiploFoundation; Geneva Human Rights Platform; Geneva Internet Platform; Human Rights Centre, University of Essex; Permanent Missions of Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands to the United Nations in Geneva; Universal Rights Group
25 April Online	The Summer 2014 Gaza Conflict: Public Pleadings	LLM in International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights	In the framework of the LLM course on international humanitarian law, students pleaded online on the international humanitarian law questions that arose from the Summer 2014 Gaza conflict. They addressed questions such as the classification of the conflict and applicable law, the classification of persons and territory, compliance with the rules on the conduct of hostilities and the treatment of persons.	
29 April Online	Women and COVID-19: The Gendered Impact of the Crisis	Right On	Panelists addressed the gendered impact of the COVID-19 crisis with Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.	DiploFoundation; Geneva Human Rights Platform; Geneva Internet Platform; Human Rights Centre, University of Essex; Permanent Missions of Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands to the United Nations in Geneva; Universal Rights Group
5–6 May Online	Inclusive Cities for All	Geneva Human Rights Platform	Around 60 experts – local activists, academics and representatives from local authorities, civil society, international organizations and the private sector – discussed best practices to ground the development of cities in a human rights framework.	UN-Habitat; Geneva Cities Hub; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
6 May Online	Contact Tracing and Challenges to Privacy	Right On	Panelists discussed human rights and privacy questions in the context of the current health crisis, notably in relation to surveillance and the use of technology to track infections and their routes.	DiploFoundation; Geneva Human Rights Platform; Geneva Internet Platform; Human Rights Centre, University of Essex; Permanent Missions of Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands to the United Nations in Geneva; Universal Rights Group
6 May Online	IHL in Humanitarian Diplomacy and Negotiations	LLM in International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights	Professor Marco Sassòli discussed with the LLM students his experience regarding the place of international law in humanitarian diplomacy and negotiations when working for the International Committee of the Red Cross and chairing the board of Geneva Call. Legal arguments can block a negotiation aimed at a compromise and a win-win result, but they can also facilitate it, especially when they remain in the background, and make sure that the result is compatible with the interests of the affected persons. They put people from very different backgrounds and with very different interests on the same playing field.	

DATE	EVENT	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PARTNER(S)
7 May	Weapons Law Seminar	LLM in International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights	With a focus on the means of warfare, this seminar enabled LLM students to acquire new knowledge, tools and skills related to the legal framework applicable to weapons, develop their judgement and decision-making and facilitate their relationships with the military, humanitarian organizations and diplomacy through the understanding of terms, notions of military use and concepts.	
Online				
13 May	From Crisis to Opportunity: How to Build Back Better?	Right On	Panelists discussed how to draw lessons from the Covid-19 crisis to help build a more just, equitable, greener and more peaceful world.	DiploFoundation; Geneva Human Rights Platform; Geneva Internet Platform; Human Rights Centre, University of Essex; Permanent Missions of Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands to the United Nations in Geneva; Universal Rights Group
Online				
16 May	The 2008 South Ossetian Conflict: Public Pleadings	LLM in International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights	In the framework of the LLM course on international humanitarian law, students pleaded online on the 2008 South Ossetian conflict. Representing Russia or Georgia, they notably addressed the classification of the conflict and applicable law, the classification of persons and territory, the killing and destruction of property of ethnic Georgians, the use of weapons, the targeting of persons and the detention of prisoners by Georgian and South Ossetian forces.	
Online				
19–20 May	Inclusive Cities for All	Geneva Human Rights Platform	Around 60 experts – representatives of organizations of people with disabilities, experts from United Nations and governmental agencies, members of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities – analysed existing challenges and barriers for persons with disabilities and older persons in an urban context and made specific recommendations.	UN-Habitat; Geneva Cities Hub; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; General Assembly of Partners; World Blind Union; World Enabled
Online				
20 May	Women's Perspectives on a Career in International Law	Panel Discussion	Lorraine Anderson, Legal Adviser and First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations in Geneva, and Joanna Korner, former Senior Prosecutor, International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, reflected on what propelled them into an international career and the challenges they have faced, offering advice to young professionals on a similar path.	ATLAS Network
Online				

DATE	EVENT	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PARTNER(S)
20 May	How to prevent COVID-19 becoming a humanitarian disaster in the context of conflict situations, refugee and IDP populations?	Right On	Panelists addressed the impact of COVID-19 in the context of conflict situations, refugee and internally displaced persons.	DiploFoundation; Geneva Human Rights Platform; Geneva Internet Platform; Human Rights Centre, University of Essex; Permanent Missions of Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands to the United Nations in Geneva; Universal Rights Group
Online				
22 May	Targeting and Internment – The Rules of IHL according to the ICRC and the US: How Important are the Differences?	LLM in International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights	Randy Bagwell of the American Red Cross and Professor Marco Sassöli debated the US perspective on unlawful combatants, the conduct of hostilities and the interpretation and application of various IHL concepts.	
Online				
26 May	Generating Compliance with Humanitarian Norms: The Less-Explored Avenues	Panel Discussion	Panelists discussed some innovative approaches to generate compliance with humanitarian norms, exploring the interaction between international humanitarian law (IHL) and Islamic law, the role of religious leaders as influencers of state and non-state parties to armed conflicts, the relationship between emotions and IHL and civilians' self-protection in territories under the control of armed groups.	University of York Centre for Applied Human Rights
Online				
27 May	Protecting the Rights of Older Persons During the COVID-19 Pandemic	Right On	Panelists addressed the protection of the rights of older persons during the COVID-19 pandemic.	DiploFoundation; Geneva Human Rights Platform; Geneva Internet Platform; Human Rights Centre, University of Essex; Permanent Missions of Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands to the United Nations in Geneva; Universal Rights Group
Online				
27–28 May	Inclusive Cities for All	Geneva Human Rights Platform	About 80 gender experts – members of the UN-Habitat Advisory Group on Gender, local-level politicians and activists, the Chairperson of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Hillary Gbedemah, and the City of Geneva Mayor, Sami Kanaan – discussed gender equality at the local level and measures that local government could take towards this goal.	UN-Habitat; Geneva Cities Hub; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Online				

DATE	EVENT	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PARTNER(S)
4 June Online	Access to Information and the Safety of Journalists in Times of Crisis	Right On	Panelists discussed the challenges to the right to access to information in a time when most governments need to come up with strategies to mitigate the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic.	DiploFoundation; Geneva Human Rights Platform; Geneva Internet Platform; Human Rights Centre, University of Essex; Permanent Missions of Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands to the United Nations in Geneva; Universal Rights Group
4 June Online	Advisory Board of the Geneva Human Rights Platform	Geneva Human Rights Platform	The Advisory Board of the Geneva Human Rights Platform – Virginia Brás Gomez, Sarah H. Cleveland, Miloon Kothari, Florence Simbiri-Jaoko and Valentin Zellweger – met for the first time to discuss the platform's strategy, priorities and activities.	
10 June Online	Business, the Economy and Livelihoods in a COVID-19 World	Right On	Panelists addressed the human rights responsibilities of businesses during global health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic.	DiploFoundation; Geneva Human Rights Platform; Geneva Internet Platform; Human Rights Centre, University of Essex; Permanent Missions of Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands to the United Nations in Geneva; Universal Rights Group
11 June Online	The Status and Protection of Animals in Armed Conflict	Expert Conference	Academics and experts in the field of international humanitarian law, international criminal law and animal law discussed controversial issues related to the status and protection of animals in armed conflict in the context of a research project on this issue carried out by the University of Geneva and the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law.	Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law; University of Geneva
16 June Hybrid	Executive Master in International Law in Armed Conflict	Open House	This Open House allowed professionals interested in the Executive Master in International Law in Armed Conflict to meet staff, students and alumni, learn more about this programme and discuss career opportunities.	
17 June Hybrid	UN Treaty Body Individual Communications: Steps Towards More Efficient and Coherent Case-Management	Geneva Human Rights Platform	This expert conference discussed – based on research conducted by the Geneva Academy – the lessons learned from a visit to the Registry of the European Court of Human Rights.	

DATE	EVENT	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PARTNER(S)
18 June Hybrid	Options and Positions towards the 2020 Treaty Body Review	Geneva Human Rights Platform	Based on an analysis of the submissions by all stakeholders to the 2020 Treaty Body (TB) Review, this Geneva Academy Friday provided an update to the Geneva-based diplomatic community on the different processes and inputs towards the 2020 review to help prepare state positions. The open informal discussion benefited from inputs from states, TB members, academics and NGOs.	Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations in Geneva; Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the United Nations in Geneva
26 June Online	The Status and Protection of Animals in Armed Conflict	Expert Conference	Academics and experts in the field of international humanitarian law, international criminal law and animal law discussed controversial issues related to the status and protection of animals in armed conflict in the context of a research project on this issue carried out by the University of Geneva and the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law.	Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law; University of Geneva
30 June Online	Online Discussion Space during the 44th session of the UN Human Rights Council	Geneva Human Rights Platform	In the context of COVID-related meeting restrictions, the Geneva Human Rights Platform offered an online space to delegations to discuss their initiatives at the 44th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council.	Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations in Geneva
7 July Online	Protecting the Environment in Situations of Armed Conflict	IHL Talk	Panelists addressed the rules of international law that provide protection to the natural environment in situations of armed conflict, as well as initiatives aimed at clarifying and/or reinforcing such rules.	
13 July Hybrid	Input to 2020 TB Review Resolution	Geneva Human Rights Platform	The Advisory Board of the Geneva Human Rights Platform and select experts discussed input to the potential United Nations Treaty Body 2020 Review report and resolution.	
15 July Online	Women's Perspectives on a Career in International Law	Panel Discussion	Kate Gibson, Australian lawyer and Associate Counsel of Mr Ntaganda and Mr Bemba before the International Criminal Court, Fernanda Perez Solla, Officer at the Complaints Mechanism of the European Investment Bank in Luxembourg, and Trishna Mohan, Legal Programme Manager for South Asia at Thomson Reuters Foundation, reflected on what propelled them into an international career and the challenges they have faced, offering advice to young professionals on a similar path.	ATLAS Network

DATE	EVENT	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PARTNER(S)
15-16 July	Corruption and Human Rights	Geneva Human Rights Platform	Members of several United Nations treaty bodies (TBS), civil society and staff of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights discussed the issue of corruption and human rights, with the aim of strengthening the capacity of TBS to effectively address corruption and its negative effects on human rights.	Centre for Civil and Political Rights
Hybrid				
20 July	A Conversation with an ICC Judge	Transitional Justice Café	Students of our Master of Advanced Studies in Transitional Justice, Human Rights and the Rule of Law conversed with Judge Ibáñez, who shared her experience as a prosecutor in Peru and a judge at the International Criminal Court from the perspective of promoting victims' claims.	
Online				
4 September	Reactions to the Consultation Process of the 2020 Treaty Body Review	Geneva Human Rights Platform	This Geneva Academy Friday discussed the results of the consultation process of the 2020 Treaty Body Review and allowed stakeholders to react to the areas highlighted by states and, in particular, by the co-facilitators.	
Hybrid				
4 September	Covid-19, Amplifying Voices: Our Lives, Our Say	Geneva Human Rights Platform	United Nations civil servants, members of UN treaty bodies, diplomats, experts, academics and members of the World Blind Union (WBU) community discussed the results and recommendations of a WBU report that highlights the greater impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on blind and partially sighted persons. The Geneva Human Rights Platform facilitated, in an accessible online format, the presentation of this major report by WBU.	World Blind Union; Geneva Cities Hub
Online				
8 September	Women's Perspectives on a Career in International Law	Panel Discussion	Judy Mionki, Programme Researcher at the International Bar Association, Rashmin Sagoo, Legal Adviser at the British Red Cross, and Ximena Vengoechea, Advocate at the Faculty of Advocates (Scottish Bar), reflected on what propelled them into an international career and the challenges they have faced, offering advice to young professionals on a similar path.	ATLAS Network
Online				
9 September	Communicating Human Rights: How to Win the Global 'Battle of Ideas'	Right On	Panelists addressed the role that communication techniques and strategies can play in the 'global battle of ideas' with the world's populist and nationalist leaders who reject universal values and supranational institutions.	DiploFoundation; Geneva Human Rights Platform; Geneva Internet Platform; Human Rights Centre, University of Essex; Permanent Missions of Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands to the United Nations in Geneva; Universal Rights Group
Online				

DATE	EVENT	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PARTNER(S)
28 September	Navigating a Career in International Law	Opening Lecture of the Academic Year	Catherine Marchi-Uhel, Head of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism on international crimes committed in Syria, shared her experience of a career in international law through an interactive discussion with students.	
Online				
29 September	Swiss Counter-Terrorism Laws: What are the Legal and Policy Challenges?	Panel Discussion	Panelists discussed the legal and policy challenges of the new Swiss counterterrorism laws in light of international law.	
Hybrid				
30 September	SDGs and Human Rights: Leading the Way to COVID-19 Response and Recovery	Right On	Panelists addressed practical experiences and efforts to place human rights standards and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals at the core of immediate responses to COVID-19 and long-term recovery strategies.	DiploFoundation; Geneva Human Rights Platform; Geneva Internet Platform; Human Rights Centre, University of Essex; Permanent Missions of Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands to the United Nations in Geneva; Universal Rights Group
Online				
30 September	The UN @75: Challenges for the New Quarter-Century	Panel Discussion	Panelists addressed issue areas at the heart of the United Nations' mandate and where a renewed vision for collective global action is urgently called for: nuclear disarmament, humanitarian assistance, sustainable development and human rights.	Glasgow Centre for International Law and Security
Online				
14 October	Rights not Charity! True and False Solutions to Hunger and Malnutrition in the US	Panel Discussion	Panelists reflected on the false and true solutions to ending hunger and its root causes in the United States.	FIAN International; Human Rights Clinic, Miami University School of Law; WhyHunger
Online				
15 October	The Connectivity between Regional and Global Human Rights Mechanisms	Geneva Human Rights Platform	The 2020 Annual Conference of the Geneva Human Rights Platform addressed the connectivity between regional and global human rights mechanisms. Participants notably discussed the overall effectiveness of these interactions, including in a number of specific policy areas like climate change, the fight against corruption and the COVID-19 pandemic.	Centre for Civil and Political Rights; Center for International Environmental Law; Center for Reproductive Rights; FIAN International; Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung; Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; International Commission of Jurists; International Service for Human Rights; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; Paris Human Rights Center; UNCA Coalition; UN-Habitat
Hybrid				

DATE	EVENT	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PARTNER(S)
20 October	A Practical Anatomy of the Human Rights Council	Book Launch	<i>A Practical Anatomy of the Human Rights Council</i> (Elgar) dissects every aspect of the United Nations Human Rights Council's (HRC) work. Authored by Eric Tistounet, Chief of the HRC Branch at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the book is the outcome of a six-month research fellowship at the Geneva Academy.	Geneva Human Rights Platform
Hybrid				
20 October	Celebrating Women in Civil Society and Activism	Side Event	This virtual side event at the United Nations General Assembly discussed the findings of the report Celebrating Women in Civil Society and Activism by Clément Voule, UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association.	Access Now; CIVICUS; Freedom House; International Center for Non-Profit Law; Mesoamerican Initiative for Women Human Rights Defenders; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; Solidarity Center; Women's Major Group; Women's March Global; World Movement for Democracy
Online				
21 October	The Attribution of Conduct During UN Peace Support Operations	Geneva Academy Wednesday	Our Teaching Assistant Tadesse Kebebew, PhD candidate at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, presented a draft chapter of his doctoral thesis titled 'The Legal and Practical Intricacies of the Duty to Investigate Under IHL in the UN Peace Support Operations', which discusses the attribution of conduct during United Nations peace support operations. In this chapter, he argues that the conduct of such operations, as subsidiary UN organs, should be attributable to the UN based on an organic link rather than a factual control test.	
Online				
28 October	Human Rights and the Precarious Condition of Electoral Democracy	Right On	In the context of the US presidential elections, panelists discussed the precarious condition of electoral democracies in these challenging times.	DiploFoundation; Geneva Human Rights Platform; Geneva Internet Platform; Human Rights Centre, University of Essex; Permanent Missions of Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands to the United Nations in Geneva; Universal Rights Group
Online				
28 October	The United Nations and Human Rights: A Critical Appraisal	Book Launch	Some contributors to the new edition of Philip Alston and Frédéric Mégret's book <i>The United Nations and Human Rights</i> examine the functions, procedures and performance of the major UN organs dealing with human rights.	Center for Human Rights and Global Justice, New York University School of Law
Online				

DATE	EVENT	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PARTNER(S)
29 October	Launch Event: Joint Initiative on the Digitalization of Conflict	Panel Discussion	For the launch of our new research initiative, carried out jointly by our Swiss Chair of International Humanitarian Law, Robin Geiß, and the International Committee of the Red Cross, panelists addressed the rapidly evolving digitalization of armed conflicts.	
Online				
30 October	Graduation Ceremony		Around 150 guests, including graduates' families, attended the 2020 online Graduation Ceremony under the auspices of Professor Gloria Gaggioli. Professor Marco Sassòli delivered an inspiring keynote speech on the use and abuse of international law by humanitarians.	
Online				
4 November	Taking Armed Non-State Actors Into Account: An Assessment of their Humanitarian Commitments	Panel Discussion	Panelists presented the preliminary results of one of our research projects on armed non-state actors (ANSAs) – carried out with Geneva Call – that examines ANSAs' practice and interpretation of core international humanitarian law norms.	Geneva Call; Geneva Peace Week
Online				
10 November	New Report Sheds Light on what Governments, Business and the UN need to do in Conflict-Affected Areas: But What's Next for this Field?	Geneva Human Rights Platform	At this side event at the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly, panelists discussed the report of the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights on business-related human rights abuse in conflict and post-conflict contexts.	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung; Quaker United Nations Office
Online				
11 November	Peasants' Rights in Austria	Public Conference	This online conference addressed the implementation in Austria of the United Nations Declaration on the rights of peasants and other people working in rural areas.	FIAN Austria
Online				
11 November	Thinking out of the (Tool) Box: Promoting Implementation of and Respect for International Humanitarian Law	IHL Talk	Panelists addressed the various ways of promoting respect for and implementation of international humanitarian law (IHL). They notably tackled theoretical questions on the scope of common Article 1 to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and touched upon states' engagement while seated on the Security Council and voluntarily reporting on the implementation of IHL.	
Online				
11–12 November	The Effectiveness and Legality of Counterterrorism Measures	Expert Meeting	Leading international humanitarian and human rights legal scholars, social scientists and practitioners discussed legal, scientific and practical aspects of counterterrorism measures, with a focus on their effectiveness, side effects and legality.	Counter-Terror Pro LegEm
Online				

DATE	EVENT	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PARTNER(S)
18 November	The Management of Natural Resources in Armed Conflict	Geneva Academy Wednesday	Our Teaching Assistant Yulia Mogutova, PhD candidate at the University of Geneva, presented the topic of her PhD thesis, which focuses on the management of natural resources in armed conflict.	
Online				
20 November	Litigating International Humanitarian Law before the European Court of Human Rights	IHL Talk	Panelists addressed the various angles and actors involved in litigating a case dealing with international humanitarian law before the European Court of Human Rights.	
Online				
20 November	Virtual Launch of the Impact Database 2020+	Geneva Human Rights Platform	The Impact Database 2020+ is an online resource that will combine all available official documentation from past treaty body review cycles for all countries of the world, made searchable by human rights themes and groups of affected persons.	University of Pretoria; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; Global Campus of Human Rights
Online				
23–27 November	The 2020 Human Rights Week		The 2020 Human Rights Week addressed – via online discussions and conferences and online film screenings – ongoing and intersectional crises: the climate crisis, economic crisis and health crisis.	University of Geneva; Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs; Republic and State of Geneva; Festival Les Créatives; Geneva Human Rights Platform
Online				
24 November	Ukraine and Transitional Justice	Transitional Justice Café	Ilya Nuzov, Head of the Eastern Europe-Central Asia Desk at the International Federation for Human Rights, discussed with students of our Master of Advanced Studies in Transitional Justice, Human Rights And the Rule of Law the challenges and dilemmas related to transitional justice and Ukraine.	
Online				
25 November	Our Future, Our Voice: Placing Children and their Rights at the Centre of the Drive Towards a Better, Greener World	Right On	The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, discussed, along with other panelists, children's rights in the context of the environment, international efforts and youth engagement.	DiploFoundation; Geneva Human Rights Platform; Geneva Internet Platform; Human Rights Centre, University of Essex; Permanent Missions of Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands to the United Nations in Geneva; Universal Rights Group
Online				

DATE	EVENT	TYPE	DESCRIPTION	PARTNER(S)
25 November	US Department of Defense Structure and Policy-Making: The Strategic and Tactical Levels	Military Briefing	The speaker, Lt. Col. John Cherry, focused on how high-level strategic decisions are 'operationalized' at the tactical level. He provided an overview of the US Department of Defense's structure and policy-making procedures at the strategic level in Washington, and contrasted these with the structure and tactical decision-making of the US military.	
Online				
26 November	Measuring the Impact of Special Procedures	Geneva Human Rights Platform	More than 20 United Nations special rapporteurs and members of UN working groups, as well as OHCHR staff, civil society representatives and lawyers explored how the impact of UN special procedures' visits, recommendations and inquiries can be effectively measured and evaluated.	United Nations Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of association and of assembly; United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment; United Nations Working Group on Business and Human Rights
Online				
2 December	Contemporary Slavery and Racial Discrimination: Civil Society Support for Survivors during the Global Pandemic	Geneva Human Rights Platform	This panel discussion notably explored the links between contemporary forms of slavery and discrimination, as well as the disproportionate social and economic impact of COVID-19 on racial groups who are discriminated against and subjected to contemporary slavery due to rising poverty and inequality.	United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund on Contemporary Forms of Slavery; UK Permanent Mission to the United Nations in Geneva
Online				
2 December	The Implementation of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants in France: Focus on the Right to Seeds	Public Conference	Participants discussed the content and recommendations of our 2020 publications on the right to seeds with French partners.	Confédération paysanne; Comité français pour la solidarité internationale
Online				
2–3 December	COVID-19 Working Methods of UN Treaty Bodies	Geneva Human Rights Platform	Members of all United Nations treaty bodies discussed the elaboration of common methods of work regarding dialogues with states, issuance of recommendations and measures to balance the impossibility of carrying out country missions.	Paris Human Rights Center, Paris 2 Panthéon-Assas University
Online				
8–9 December	The Role of National Human Rights Systems in the Implementation of International Human Rights Standards	Expert Meeting	More than 60 participants – experts from Geneva-based human rights mechanisms and representatives from more than 20 different national human rights systems, ranging from Latin America, Northern Africa, East and Southeast Asia and the Pacific – discussed the implementation of human rights standards through national human rights systems.	
Online				

Ensuring our financial sustainability is a high priority and a constant challenge.

We closed the year with a positive financial result of 67,378 Swiss Francs. With an initial 2020 budget of 4 million Swiss Francs, we attained a total operational result of 3.6 million Swiss Francs at the end of the year following the implementation of our activities.

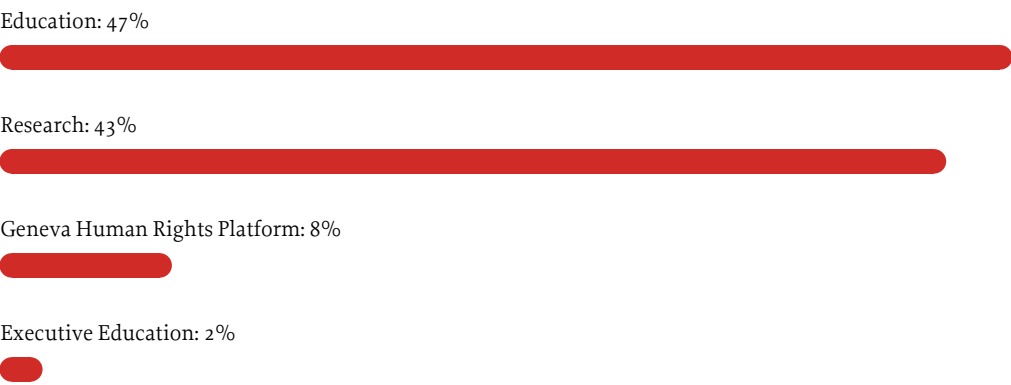
EXPENDITURE

Our expenditure for 2020 decreased to 3.6 million Swiss Francs, compared to 4.4 million Swiss Francs in 2019. This difference mainly relates to the COVID-19 sanitary crisis. Travel expenditure decreased by 87 percent compared to the initial budget, and costs related to events and meetings by 60 percent. In parallel, due to the necessity of moving our activities online – notably our master’s programmes, events and conferences – we invested during the year in information technology (IT) and materials to ensure the continuity of our activities. Therefore, the related expenditure increased by 56 percent compared to our initial budget.

Despite this decrease in expenditure related to the COVID-19 pandemic, we managed to reach our objectives and pursue our activities while also developing our IT capacities.

As illustrated below, our master’s programmes and research – two main pillars of our mission – accounted for the main proportion of our 2020 expenses.

Proportion of Expenditure Per Activity

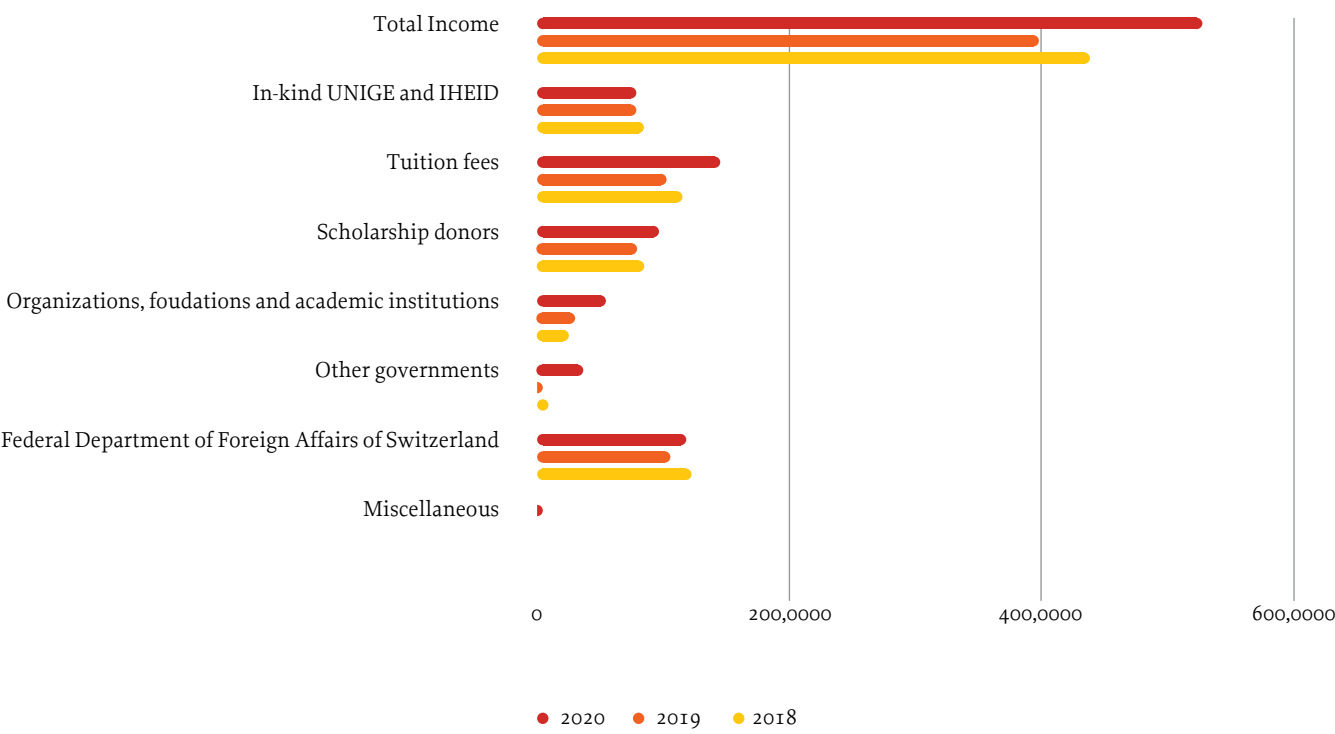


INCOME

In 2020, the Geneva Academy’s total income was 5.2 million Swiss Francs, compared to 3.9 million Swiss Francs in 2019. This increase relates to three main factors: (1) a significant growth of participants in our Executive Master in International Law in Armed Conflict and its new distance-learning offering; (2) new donors supporting our research; (3) new donors funding scholarships for our master’s programmes.

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland	1,153,600
Other governments	360,303
Organizations, foundations and academic institutions	545,869
Scholarship donors	968,000
Tuition fees	1,428,733
In-kind contributions from the University of Geneva and the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies	781,781
Miscellaneous	33,612
Total Income	5,271,898

Income from Donors



DONORS

The Geneva Academy is deeply grateful to all the donors who generously supported our work in 2020. Thanks to their contributions and commitment, we were able to promote, through our research and education, better respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

INSTITUTIONAL DONORS

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland, in particular:

- Directorate of Public International Law
- Human Security Division
- UN Division

Federal Republic of Germany

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

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OUR MISSION

The Geneva Academy provides postgraduate education, conducts academic legal research and policy studies and organizes training courses and expert meetings. We concentrate on branches of international law that relate to situations of armed conflict, protracted violence and protection of human rights.

Established in 2007 by the Faculty of Law of the University of Geneva and the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, the Geneva Academy has acquired a global reputation for excellent teaching and research, and it attracts exceptional students to its master's and training programmes. Our graduates are employed around the world, promoting and protecting international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights in governments, NGOs, international organizations and academic institutions. The Geneva Academy thus contributes to the dissemination of legal knowledge in these crucial sectors.

Our scientific research focuses on clarifying IHL, strengthening human rights protection and developing the areas of complementarity between IHL and international human rights law (IHRL). In these areas, the Geneva Academy makes a specific contribution to policy development and debate, in government and among scholars and practitioners.

The Geneva Academy is a cosmopolitan community located in the heart of Geneva, an international city and humanitarian hub. Through close interaction with international organizations, NGOs, experts, governments and the private sector, we actively participate in global discussions on IHL, human rights, international criminal law and transitional justice.

HOW WE WORK

TRAINING EXPERTS AND PRACTITIONERS

Our three master's programmes and various training and short courses disseminate legal knowledge in IHL, IHRL and transitional justice. Our teaching enables specialists to apply these legal frameworks to complex situations – Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Colombia, Iraq, Syria – and challenging processes such as criminal proceedings, political transitions, international negotiations and humanitarian interventions.

INFORMING POLICY

Our research examines issues that are under-explored, need clarification or are unconventional, experimental or challenging. It thus advances understanding and stimulates debate in the academic community and in policy-making institutions and government. The findings of our research regularly inform policy recommendations and support practitioners working on issues such as IHL, human rights or transitional justice.

OUR CONVENING POWER

The Geneva Academy regularly convenes expert meetings, seminars, conferences and events. This provides a critical and scholarly forum for experts and practitioners to discuss and debate topical issues in IHL, human rights and transitional justice. For example, the right to life, the duty to investigate, reparations for past mass crimes, new trends and developments in international law in armed conflict or the work of United Nations human rights mechanisms.

PROMOTING DIVERSITY

We are committed to promoting diversity in all respects: cultural diversity, diversity in the geographical origin of students, staff and speakers, as well as gender diversity. This is implemented through all kinds of measures: our pursuit of diversity in recruitment and invitations to guest speakers, and our adoption of a social policy aimed, in particular, at assisting young parents. We also promote diversity in the events we convene. In particular, we will not convene or participate in the organization of events where none of the speakers are women.



THE BOARD

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SWISS CHAIR OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

Robin Geiß is Professor of International Law and Security at the University of Glasgow and Director of the Glasgow Centre for International Law and Security. On 5 February 2021, he was appointed Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research by the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres.

He is our Swiss Chair of International Humanitarian Law (Swiss IHL Chair) and, as such, develops and promotes our expertise in IHL via policy work, cutting-edge research, expert meetings, the development of partnerships and teaching.

At the Geneva Academy, Professor Geiß pursues research projects on disruptive military technologies, with a particular focus on the legal and ethical challenges raised by cyberwarfare and AI-supported decision-making in military affairs.

SWISS HUMAN RIGHTS CHAIR

Nils Melzer has been our Swiss Human Rights Chair (HR Chair) since March 2016.

In this position, he develops and promotes the Geneva Academy's expertise in human rights via policy work, cutting-edge research, expert meetings, the development of partnerships and teaching.

Since November 2016, Nils Melzer has also been the UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment.

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