

HUMAN RIGHTS CONVERSATIONS: THE US' RETURN TO THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

FRIDAY 26 FEBRUARY 2021, 15:30 - 17:00 CET
ONLINE

Join us online for our first Human Rights Conversation of the year to discuss what the United States' return to the UN Human Rights Council means for the work of the Council and the overall promotion and protection of human rights?



On 8 February, United States (US) Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken announced that the United States will 'reengage immediately and robustly with the UN Human Rights Council', stating that 'it is our view that the best way to improve the Council is to engage with it and its members in a principled fashion. We strongly believe that when the US engages constructively with the Council, in concert with our allies and friends, positive change is within reach'.

What does this return of the US to the Human Rights Council (HRC) as an observer mean for the work of the Council and the overall promotion and protection of human rights?

Back in 2018, we discussed the legal implications of the US's withdrawal of the Council. Now, at a time when global crisis triggered by the COVID pandemic and geopolitical tensions are making strong stands on human rights even more necessary, we want to turn to the political and institutional questions about its reengagement.

This online panel discussion will look into the priorities of the US in the HRC, see what their re-engagement could mean for a number of substantive initiatives and resolutions, and the institutional importance of this reengagement, including the implications for the political weight of the UN's main human rights organ. The discussion will also touch upon the impact that the US participation might have on the 2021-2026 HRC review process, to be undertaken by the UN General Assembly. With no country currently formally abstaining from the HRC, panelists will also discuss whether this is a moment to strengthen the understanding of, and agreement on the universality of human rights.

MODERATION

- **Felix Kirchmeier**, Executive Director, Geneva Human Rights Platform (GHRP)

PANELISTS

- **Mark Cassayre**, Chargé d'Affaires, US Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva
- **Sarah Cleveland**, Professor, Columbia University and Member, GHRP Advisory Board
- **Jürg Lauber**, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the UN in Geneva

ONLINE PARTICIPATION AND REGISTRATION

This event will take place online on the platform Zoom.

To follow it, [register here](#). After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the event.

ABOUT THE HUMAN RIGHTS CONVERSATIONS

Human Rights Conversations are a series of events, hosted by the Geneva Human Rights Platform, aimed at discussing contemporary issues and challenges related to the promotion and protection of human rights in Geneva and beyond.