



GENEVA CENTRE
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS
ADVANCEMENT AND
GLOBAL DIALOGUE

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NEWSLETTER

Human Rights Without Prejudice

ALL HUMAN BEINGS
ARE BORN
FREE AND EQUAL

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ARMED CONFLICTS, ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS

8 JUNE 2022

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Expert infantry

As part of a joint initiative, the Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue and the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights held a panel event on [Armed Conflicts, Environment and Human Rights](#) on 8 June 2022 in Geneva at Villa Moynier, and online via Zoom. The event comprised of two 1-hour panels, namely, **Normative and Legal Framework**, and **Experiences from the Field**.

During the event the panellists explored the normative and legal frameworks that guide and help address the threat posed by armed conflicts for the environment and human rights, and shared experiences from the field on the widespread patterns of environmental degradation caused by armed conflicts, that result in adverse implications for the enjoyment of human rights. Opening remarks were delivered by **Ambassador Ghazi Jomaa**, Chairman, Board of Management, Geneva Centre.



Dr. Hilal Elver, Former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food (2014-2020) and member of the High Level Panel of Experts (HLPE) of the Committee of World Food Security (CFS), observed in her keynote address that internal and international armed conflicts are one of the major reasons for increased food insecurity and malnutrition.



Dr. Lindsey Cameron, Head of the Unit of Thematic Legal Advisers of the ICRC analyzed how the IHL protects the natural environment during armed conflict and highlighted that the ICRC, instead of trying to develop new rules, focuses on strengthening the implementation of existing law.



Dr. Emma Hakala, Senior Research Fellow at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA) focused on the current international policies and laws that address the issue of environmental destruction during wartime. She regretted that currently there is no overarching framework within international law specifically aimed at dealing with wartime damage to the environment.



Yulia Mogutova, Teaching Assistant at the Geneva Academy, completed the first panel by analyzing the effects of exploitation of natural resources on the human rights of the civilian population. She observed the lack of provisions under IHL in this matter, stating that in armed conflicts the belligerents have access to natural resources which they can and will exploit to their own benefit.

ARMED CONFLICTS, ENVIRONMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS

8 JUNE 2022

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Expert infantry



Prof. Mohamed Ahmed Bin Fahad, Chairman of the Higher Committee, Zayed International Foundation for the Environment, in his keynote address, highlighted that nature is often the silent victim, of wars and restoring or rebuilding the environment should be part of both conflict prevention and peacebuilding strategies.



Mr. Hassan Partow, Programme Manager, Disasters and Conflicts Branch, UNEP, affirmed that the weaponization of the environment is probably the most dramatic consequence due to its visual nature and human rights costs. He concluded that environmental and human rights experts should learn more about each other's mandates, approaches and needs.



Ms. Nazanine Moshiri, Senior Analyst for Climate & Security at the International Crisis Group, described challenges and issues faced by the population particularly in the Sahel and Horn of Africa regions. She highlighted that the long-term effects of severe climate hazards are likely to exacerbate existing political and social fragility, with potential conflict risks.



Mr. Doug Weir, Research and Policy Director at the Conflict and Environment Observatory (CEOBS) focused his presentation on the effect of armed conflicts on pollution and polluting incidents through disruption and degradation of environmental governance.

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*The **post-conflict environmental assessments of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP)** is an interesting example where the aim has been both to produce **reliable assessment data on the environmental situation immediately or soon after a conflict**, but also to facilitate and make recommendations for more **long-term remediation and reconstruction work.***

- Dr. Emma Hakala

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Read more about the event [here](#).



BUILDING PEACE - ENDING RACISM

21 SEPTEMBER 2022

On the **International Day of Peace**, the Geneva Centre organized a panel event aimed at promoting equality and raising awareness of the multiple forms of racism experienced by racial and ethnic minorities and how to tackle it. Furthermore, it sought to identify ways to address hate speech and fear of the other to foster peaceful and just societies with racial equality, to identify best practices to support anti-racist action from individual to grassroots and structural levels, and to provide an opportunity for dialogue and information sharing.



Dr. Verene A. Shepherd, Director of the Centre for Reparation Research, University of West Indies and Chair of the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) framed the search for peace and antiracism within the context of the search for reparatory justice. She affirmed that a peaceful world without racism has to confront the issue of equal rights and human rights for those living with the legacies of colonialism.

Ms. Rethabile Ratsomo, Anti-Racism Manager of the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation and member of Anti-Racism Network South Africa (ARNSA), focused on the situation in South Africa which despite progressive policies and legislations is experiencing a resurgence of racism and racial discrimination. Ratsomo highlighted the need to continue to be intentional about how we build peace especially through dialogue and education. It is also necessary for the government to allocate appropriate resources and drive the fight against racism at every possible level.



Dr. Doros Polykarpou, the Executive Director of KISA (Action for Equality, Support and Antiracism) concluded that human rights defenders, the civil society and NGOs play an important role in tackling racism, and they need a safe and encouraging environment. In addition, a powerful and independent monitoring body, judicial system, a media and journalist independent institute, and political leadership are needed.

The panel was moderated by **Dr. Umesh Palwankar**, Executive Director of the Geneva Centre.



Read the follow-up publication [here](#)

Click [here](#) to watch the recording.

TRAINING: CYBERSECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS FOR PROFESSIONALS

4-5 OCTOBER 2022

In response to public demand, the Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue organized its "Cybersecurity and Human Rights Professionals" training course from the 4th to 5th of October.

The two-day training is designed for organizations, journalists, lawyers and anyone with an interest in human rights. During the workshop, participants examined various **digital risks related to human rights**, learned how to deal with them and acquired the knowledge and skills needed to ensure basic protection against privacy violations and the protection of communications and sensitive data. The training was conducted by **Cybersecurity Consultant and Trainer Mr. Kamal Sedra**.

Twenty participants from different countries around the world joined the training, including from the **United Kingdom, Italy, Netherlands, Bulgaria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nigeria, Zambia, Ghana, Ethiopia (Permanent Mission) and Trinidad and Tobago**.



"Thanks for organizing the training. I learned several new things, While I am quite familiar with some of the stuff taught, it was refreshing the knowledge. I will share my knowledge with fellow Sri Lankan activists"

”

*Damith Chandimal
Course participant from Sri Lanka*

"Very insightful and thought-provoking. Loved the fact that the presenters/facilitators were so patient when it came to answering our questions"

*Jinjimali Mukamate Mpopwe
Course participant from Zambia*

"The Cyber Security Course with Geneva Centre was obviously above board. I thought I had a little bit of knowledge regarding cyber security but this course has enhanced and polished my previous knowledge. It was wonderful to learn from the platform of the Geneva Centre."

*Muhammad Zia Ul Haq
Course participant from Pakistan*

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HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL REPORTING INITIATIVE

Through its unique monitoring initiative the Geneva Centre's provided summary reports on some of the key meetings during the **50th and 51st regular sessions of the Human Rights Council** (13 June to 8 July and 19th September to 7 October), with **64 reports** produced on both **country specific** and **thematic topics**, as well as on several **panel discussions, urgent debates** and **general debates**.

Access all our HRC50 reports [here](#).

Access all our HRC51 reports [here](#).



HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 51ST SESSION

The Geneva Centre will closely monitor the 51st session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) in September 2022.

[READ MORE >](#)



HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 50TH SESSION

The Geneva Centre monitored the 50th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC) in June 2022.

[READ MORE >](#)



HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 49TH SESSION

The Geneva Centre closely monitored the 49th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC).

[READ MORE >](#)



Stay up to date on our reports by subscribing to our unique HRC Newsletter [here](#).



Currently, the Geneva Centre's UN Human Rights Council mailing list consists of **563 subscribers**, including representatives from Permanent Missions, Foreign Ministries, the OHCHR, INGOs, NGOs, National Human Rights Institutions, Universities as well as News Media including Reuters and The New York Times.

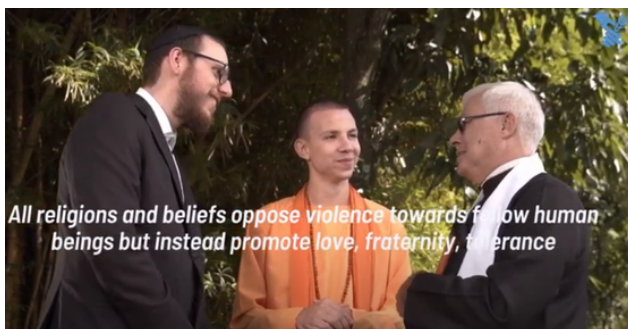
Photo: General view of the 51st session of the Human Rights Council. Palais des Nations, room XX, Geneva, Switzerland. September 12, 2022. UN Photo by Pierre Albouy

RAISING AWARENESS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

Videos and **social media posts** are an important medium for the Geneva Centre to raise awareness and bring attention to issues related to human rights. With our communications we participate in global dialogue, give our support to different actors and join the celebration of international days. During May - October the Geneva Centre produced 10 videos and more than 20 posts.



World Humanitarian Day (19 August)



International Day Commemorating Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief (22 August)



World Day for Cultural Diversity, Dialogue and Development (21 May)

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"Non-violence is indeed the most poignant expression of humanism transcending race, religion, nations, regions in respect of the inherent dignity shared by all mankind"

(International Day of Non-violence)

”



Access all our short videos [here](#).

RAISING AWARENESS ON HUMAN RIGHTS

The Geneva Centre is active in all of its main social media platforms. We share news, create visual content, and exchange with our partners and followers via our **Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook** and **YouTube channels**. During September, the Geneva Centre participated online in the General Debate at the **77th UN General Assembly**.



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"The education of our children cannot wait. Dignified jobs cannot wait. Full equality for women and girls cannot wait"

UN Secretary-General Guterres in global call at the SDG Moment
19 September 2022

Stressing the urgency of addressing challenges in the protection of fundamental rights of vast numbers of the world population

*"The **education of our children** cannot wait. Dignified jobs cannot wait. **Full equality for women and girls** cannot wait"*

- UN Secretary General Guterres

Stressing the urgency of addressing challenges in the protection of fundamental rights of vast numbers of the world population.

"Diversity is a strength, not a liability"

*The Geneva Centre strives to foster, by offering a platform for intercultural and interfaith dialogue, the values of **tolerance, mutual understanding** and **celebration of diversity**.*



GENEVA CENTRE
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"Diversity is a strength, not a liability – you affirmed"

observes the President of the UN General Assembly in remarks to Member States at closing of the General Debate

26 September 2022

The Geneva Centre strives to foster, by offering a platform for inter-cultural and interfaith dialogue, the values of tolerance, mutual understanding and celebration of diversity



4,626
followers



30,634
followers
+4,326 since April



11,443
followers



368
subscribers

PUBLICATIONS

Building Peace - Ending Racism

The present publication is the result of an online panel debate organized by the Geneva Centre entitled “Building Peace – Ending Racism” on the **International Day of Peace**, 21 September, reflecting its theme for 2022. Lasting peace goes hand-in-hand with equality. It is built on an universal recognition of and respect for the inherent dignity of every human being. Racism, related discrimination, injustice and violence erode efforts to build just and peaceful societies, exacerbating conflict and deepening social and economic inequalities. The publication contains a summary of the three panel presentations, the Q & A session and the full statements of the panellists. [Read the publication here](#) or [Watch the full recording](#) of the panel event.



Armed Conflicts, Environment and Human Rights

The book discusses the role of governments, international organizations, and civil society in adopting preventive measures, to strengthen environmental protection, address the resulting human rights gaps, and empower local communities, in particular vulnerable groups, to be active contributors in post-conflict rebuilding and reconstruction efforts. In the publication, experts and academics explore the **normative and legal frameworks** that guide and help address the threat posed by armed conflicts on the environment and human rights, and **share experiences from the field** on the widespread patterns of environmental degradation caused by armed conflicts, that result in adverse implications for the enjoyment of human rights. [Go to publication.](#)



Access all our publications [here](#).

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Scientific Café: COVID-19 and the Right to Information

In the Scientific Café, experts and practitioners from various fields are invited to discuss questions linked to human rights. The theme of the first four episodes was "COVID-19 and the Right to Information". In the latest episode, **Biagio Andò, Associate Professor of Comparative Law, University of Catania** reflects on the following 3 questions:

- How can we help citizens understand the emergency measures imposed by the authorities and their relation to freedom of choice?
- How to ensure transparency and freedom of the press and social media when confronted with restrictions from governments?
- How can media help hold governments accountable?



[Click to watch the latest Scientific Café episode](#)

Visit from MBRSG

The Geneva Centre received a nine-person delegation from the Dubai-based **Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government (MBRSG)** on 22 September 2022. A number of avenues for collaboration between the Geneva Centre and MBRSG were explored, including in the fields of joint research and publications,



organizing training sessions, and hosting panel events and conferences. **Dr Umesh Palwankar**, the Centre's Executive Director welcomed **Dr Immanuel Azzad Moonsesar**, Associate Professor of Health Administration & Policy at the MBRSG and his accompanying delegation. The visit was organized in the context of the MBRSG delegation's field visit to international institutions and human rights organizations in Geneva.



Read the full article here:

<https://gchragd.org/involvement/news/>

COMING UP NEXT

Human Rights Recognition Awards

The Geneva Centre's Human Rights Recognition Awards 2022 edition celebrates **Youth in Human Rights Advancement**. This year's edition highlights contributions and innovative projects undertaken by youth in their communities where they have made a significant positive impact.

International Human Rights Day is celebrated annually to commemorate the adoption of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948.



To contribute to this celebration, the Geneva Centre will present its awards at the Awards Ceremony, which will be held online on Zoom, **Friday 9 December**. Read more about the awards and application process [here](#).

Scientific Café: Promoting Women's Role in Peace Building

The Geneva Centre will host the second edition of its Scientific Café initiative, consisting of short interviews with experts from different fields and regions on issues linked to human rights. The theme for the 2022 edition is **"Promoting women's role in peace building"**. Experiences from the field show that there is an urgent need to effectively protect women's equal rights and actively promote their invaluable role in conflict prevention, dialogue and peace building.

The guests of the Scientific Café will consider the vital role of women in countering extremist discourse and

fostering intercultural and interfaith dialogue, particularly at the community level. The first interviewees include the Cameroon Women's Peace Movement, and Dr. Racquel Warner from the Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government.

Watch previous episodes [here](#).



Annual Report

The Annual Report 2022 will be published in January 2023. **Read our previous Annual Reports [here](#).**



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