



GENEVA CENTRE  
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS  
ADVANCEMENT AND  
GLOBAL DIALOGUE

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RIGHTS ADVANCEMENT AND  
GLOBAL DIALOGUE

# ANNUAL REPORT

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January 1 - December 31, 2022



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# FOREWORD BY OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## Dr. Umesh Palwankar

The Geneva Centre had another intensive and very fruitful year, beginning with the renewal of its **Special Consultative Status in ECOSOC**, for a period of four years.

In 2022 the Geneva Centre organized four international events, including a major panel event with 2 sub-panels, in collaboration with the **Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights** at their premises in Villa Moynier, and a joint panel with the **European Public Law Organization**. The third panel was organized to commemorate the International Day of Peace. All 3 panel proceedings, including analytical chapters were published, in addition to a research paper on **Women's Rights, Climate Change and Environment**.

The fourth event of the year was the Geneva Centre's **Human Rights Recognition Awards**, commemorating International Human Rights Day. The theme of this year's Awards was **Youth in Human Rights Advancement**, with four young individuals awarded for their innovative projects which have a significant impact on promoting human rights at the grass-roots level.

The Geneva Centre conducted **3 training sessions in human rights**, of which one, a 2-week course, was organized jointly with the **Webster University, Geneva**. The Centre continued its highly appreciated **Human Rights Council Reporting Initiative**, with over 90 reports prepared and shared with the Centre's numerous interlocutors including Permanent Missions, International Organizations, NGOs, Academic institutions and the media, and were published on our website. **The Scientific Café** initiative went into its second year, with a series of short interviews with academic experts and practitioners on a topical human rights subject, to raise awareness on and promote human rights world-wide.

The Geneva Centre appreciates and counts on your continuing interest in its activities and wishes you, on behalf of its Board of Management and staff, a Very Happy and Successful New Year.

# OUR REACH, BY THE NUMBERS

January 1 - December 31, 2022



**36** people from  
**21** countries

trained and equipped with  
knowledge on Human Rights



**4** events with  
**20** speakers and

**+250** participants  
organized on different human  
rights topics



**+90** reports

produced on 3 regular  
sessions of the UN Human  
Rights Council and one  
Special Session



**22** videos produced  
**+250** posts published

on social media to raise  
awareness on important human  
rights issues



**4** publications  
**2** newsletters



**+1421** people  
subscribed to our mailing lists

# PANEL EVENTS

## Promoting Equal Rights and Women's Participation Towards Peace (March 23)

The panel event on “Promoting Equal Rights and Women's Participation Towards Peace” was organized in collaboration with the **European Public Law Organization (EPLO)**.

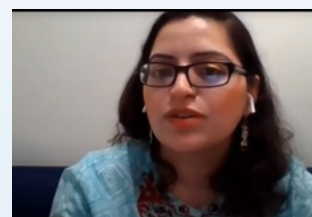
The event brought together 5 experts from around the world to share their unique experience. The panellists identified **best practices, innovative initiatives and existing partnerships** that reinforce women's meaningful participation in conflict prevention, protection and peace building.



*“The journey towards peace is a journey of trust.”*

– Visaka Dharmadasa.

The discussion highlighted ways to promote gender equality in **different societal contexts** and ways to reinforce participation of women in various decision and peace-making processes. Through the inclusion of a **gender perspective**, women's meaningful engagement in conflict prevention, recovery and peace building can contribute to tangible and lasting results.



**PANELLISTS:** **Visaka Dharmadasa**, Founder and Chair, Association of War Affected Women, **Professor Dr. Noreen Naseer**, Department of Political Science, University of Peshawar; **Saba Ismail**, Co-Founder, Aware Girls; **Prasansa Karki**, Program Development Coordinator, Nagarik Aawaz, Nepal; **Kawkab Al-Thaibani**, Gender and Communication Expert, co-founder, Women4Yemen.

[Watch the recording](#)



# Armed Conflicts, Environment and Human Rights (June 8)

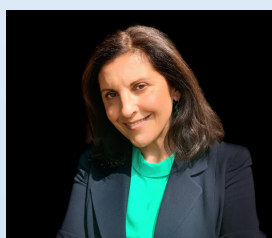
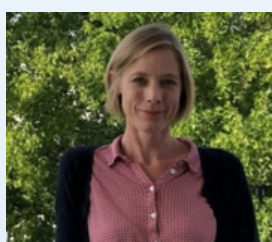
As part of a joint initiative, the Geneva Centre and the **Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights** organized a panel event entitled "Armed Conflicts, Environment and Human Rights" at the **Geneva Academy's premises**.

This hybrid event comprised two 1-hour panels. The first addressed the **Normative and Legal Framework**, and the second focused on **Experiences from the Field**. The discussion explored the international norms and legislation that can help address the threat posed by armed conflicts for the environment and human rights. The role of governments, international organizations, and civil society in adopting preventive measures, strengthening environmental protection, addressing the resulting human rights gaps, and empowering local communities was also addressed. Special attention was paid to **vulnerable groups as active contributors** in post-conflict rebuilding and reconstruction efforts.



**“ Human rights and environmental rights cannot be separated from one another or be undermined, both in times of war and in times of peace. ”**

– Dr. Hilal Elver.



## PANELLISTS: NORMATIVE & LEGAL FRAMEWORK

- **Dr. Hilal Elver**, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food (2014-2020 (Keynote Address))
- **Dr. Lindsey Cameron**, Head of the Unit of Thematic Legal Advisers of the ICRC
- **Dr. Emma Hakala**, Senior Research Fellow at the Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA)
- **Yulia Mogutova**, Teaching Assistant at the Geneva Academy

## PANELLISTS: EXPERIENCES FROM THE FIELD

- **Prof. Mohamed Ahmed Bin Fahad**, Chairman of the Higher Committee, Zayed International Foundation for the Environment (Keynote Address)
- **Hassan Partow**, Programme Manager, Disasters and Conflicts Branch, UNEP
- **Nazanine Moshiri**, Senior Analyst for Climate & Security at the International Crisis Group
- **Doug Weir**, Research and Policy Director at the Conflict and Environment Observatory (CEOBS)

# Building Peace - Ending Racism (September 21)

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. The panel sought to identify ways to address hate speech and fear of the other, **to foster peaceful and just societies** with racial equality, and highlight best practices and ways to support anti-racist action from the individual level to grassroots and structural levels.

The panellists agreed that the achievement of peace and security as well as development relies on the protection of human rights and ending racial discrimination. In this vein, it is imperative to continue being **intentional about how peace is built**, especially through **dialogue** and **education**.



***“If we want world peace and an end to racism, then we have to confront the issue of equal rights and human rights for those living with the legacies of colonialism.”***

– Prof. Verene A. Shepherd.

The panellists highlighted the important role of the **civil society, human rights defenders, and NGOs** working to fight racism and discrimination. It is paramount that they receive the support needed and can function in a safe and encouraging environment. Finally, the role of **governments** cannot be underestimated, and they must allocate appropriate resources and drive the fight against racism at every possible level.

## PANELLISTS:

**Prof. Verene A. Shepherd**, Director, Centre for Reparation Research, University of West Indies; Chair of the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD); **Dr. Doros Polycarpou**, co-founder and Executive Director, KISA – Action for Equality, Support and Antiracism; **Rethabile Ratsomo**, Anti-Racism Manager, Ahmed Kathrada Foundation, Anti-Racism Network South Africa (ARNSA).



**Watch the recording**

# HUMAN RIGHTS RECOGNITION AWARDS 2022

## Youth in Human Rights Advancement

Since the initiative started in 2021, the **Geneva Centre's Human Rights Recognition Awards** have offered recognition to individuals who dedicate themselves to making a positive impact on the lives of others. This year's theme highlighted the contributions and innovative projects **undertaken by youth in their communities**, where they have made a significant impact on defending and promoting human rights.



During the virtual ceremony, **Visaka Dharmadasa**, Founder and Chair, Association of War Affected Women and Parents of Servicemen Missing in Action and a collective Nobel Peace Prize nominee (2005), served as chairwoman of the selection jury. She announced the 2022 winners, who delivered inspiring speeches about their work to promote human rights.

The receivers of the **Award for Youth Human Rights Champion: Stacy Dina Adhiambo Owino** (Kenya), **Dr. Kriti Bharti** (India), and **Jose Adolfo Quisocala** (Peru). **The Award of Honour** went to **Tamara Altibi** (Palestine).

The Awards Ceremony is held in recognition of the **International Human Rights Day**, observed annually on 10 December. Applications for next year's Awards will open in **August 2023**.

### INTERNATIONAL JURY:

**Visaka Dharmadasa**, Founder and Chair, Association of War Affected Women and Parents of Servicemen Missing in Action  
**Alex Ayub**, National Youth Manager Road Safety Focal Point, Kenya Red Cross Society  
**Sayed Masoumi**, Junior Research Analyst, UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD); 2021 Awardee.



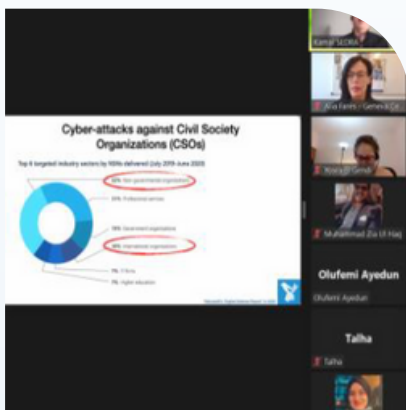
**Watch the  
Ceremony**



# TRAININGS

## Cybersecurity for Human Rights Professionals

Two trainings on Cybersecurity for Human Rights Professionals were held during 2022, both facilitated by Cybersecurity Consultant and Trainer **Kamal Sedra**. First a pilot course in March, and later a full-scale two-day training in October. Altogether 26 participants from 15 countries joined the online trainings.



The participants examined the 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.

*“ I thought I had a little bit of knowledge regarding cyber security, but this course has enhanced and polished my previous knowledge. ”*

– Course participant, Pakistan

## Joint Human Rights Training Program

The Geneva Centre, in collaboration with **Webster University Geneva**, organized a two-week training course (June 13-24) on human rights in conjunction with the 50th regular session of the Human Rights Council. This **tailor-made course** was developed for ten **Zayed University students** from the UAE with the aim of providing a comprehensive understanding of human rights and the issues and debates surrounding them. Lectures were delivered by **scholars, professionals and practitioners** and the course included field visits to a number of international organizations in Geneva.



# REPORTING: UN HUMAN RIGHTS MEETINGS

## UN Human Rights Council Reporting Initiative

The Geneva Centre monitors and participates in the United Nations human rights mechanisms in Geneva. Through its unique UN Human Rights Council Reporting Initiative, in 2022 the Centre closely followed the **49th, 50th, and 51st regular sessions of the UN Human Rights Council**, providing summary reports on several key meetings. The Geneva Centre also prepared a comprehensive report on the **35th Special Session of the HRC** addressing deteriorating human rights situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran, especially with respect to women and children.

[Access all our Reports](#)



### Numbers from the HRC Reporting Initiative:

- +90 reports produced on 3 Regular Sessions of the UN Human Rights Council, 1 Special Session and Organizational Sessions
- Report on the Committee Against Torture (CAT) consideration of UAE
- 564 HRC Mailing list 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.

Keep yourself informed and join our HRC Mailing list!  
Click [here](#) to subscribe.



(UN Photo Jean Marc Ferré)

# RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

## Newsletters Issue 9 and 10

The Geneva Centre published two of its **Human Rights Without Prejudice** Newsletters during 2022. Issue 9 covers the period between January and April 2022, and Issue 10 the period between May and October 2022. Newsletters provide key updates of the Geneva Centre's past and upcoming activities. Access all our Newsletters [here](#).



## Women's Rights, Climate Change and Environment: Materializing Climate Action of the Ground (2022)

Among global challenges climate change is one that is rapidly worsening and will have an impact on all humans. **Women are particularly effected** by climate change and environmental issues, which place them at greater risk of gender-based violence and poverty, among other gendered consequences.



Seeking **a multilateral response** at the global level is necessary, as is adopting an **intersectional approach** to climate change and women's rights. This **research paper** underlines the main challenges in this thematic, and proposes several recommendations.

The research paper is divided in four chapters: 1) Introduction, 2) Intersecting Challenges in Policy Making, 3) Implementation of Adaptation, Mitigation and Response Plans, and 4) Key Areas of Work and Recommendations. Access the research paper [here](#).

## Panel Event Publications

### Promoting Equal Rights and Women's Participation towards Peace

The publication includes the **proceedings of the online panel event** "Promoting Equal Rights and Women's Participation towards Peace", held on 23 March. It consists of a summary of the panellists' presentations, the panel discussions and an analytical **Lessons Learned and Ways Forward** chapter.



### Armed Conflicts, Environment and Human Rights

As a result of the hybrid panel event organized on 8 June in collaboration with the **Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights**, this publication highlights the key messages of the eight panel presentations. It also contains a summary of the Q & A session, full statements of the panellists and a **Lessons Learned and Ways Forward** chapter.



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.

### Building Peace – Ending Racism

This publication includes the **proceedings of the online panel event** Building Peace - Ending Racism, held on the International Day of Peace 21 September. It consists of a summary of the three panel presentations, the Q & A session and the full written statements of the panellists.





# PARTNERSHIPS

## Conferences and lectures

The Geneva Centre's Executive Director Dr. Umesh Palwankar was invited to deliver a lecture at the Webster University Geneva entitled **International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law: Differences and Complementarities** on 20 June.

Dr. Palwankar also participated as a panellists in the **27th annual International Humanitarian and Security Conference**, organized by Webster University Geneva.

The 27th annual International Humanitarian and Security Conference, Webster University  
(1-2 November)



The two-day conference was held on November 1 and 2 at the International Conference Center Geneva (CICG). This year's topic was "The Current Challenges to International Peace and Cooperation: The Search for Solutions", featuring keynote speeches and six-panel discussions. Dr. Palwankar spoke on the third panel entitled "The Need to Reaffirm the Fundamentals of International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law".

## Receiving visitors

The Geneva Centre received visitors to its premises during the year. On 22 September a nine-person delegation from the Dubai-based **Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government** (MBRSG), and on 11 November **Mr. Naji Moulay Lahsen**, the Chairperson of the **Network of the Independent Commission For Human Rights in North Africa**. Avenues for future collaboration were among the topics discussed.





# AWARENESS RAISING

## Videos on human rights issues

Since January 2022, the Geneva Centre has produced and shared 11 awareness-raising videos, taking part in global conversations on important human rights topics. These include the following:

International Day of Human Fraternity  
(4 February)

World Day of Social Justice (20 February)

Zero Discrimination Day (1 March)

International Women's Day (8 March)

International Day for the Elimination of Racial  
Discrimination (21 March)

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

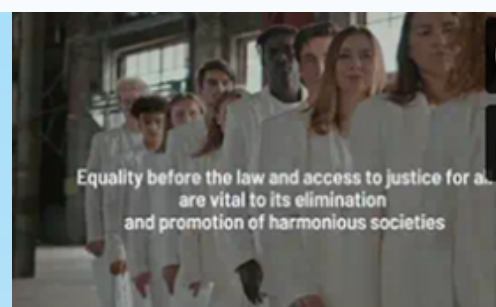
World Humanitarian Day (19 August)

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

International Day of Non-Violence (2 October)

International Day of Tolerance (16 November)

International Day for the Elimination of Violence  
Against Women (26 November)



**“ 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 videos [here](#).

# Social Media Presence

The Geneva Centre posted several social media posts throughout the year. During September 2022, the Geneva Centre participated in the discussions held during the 77th UN General Assembly with multiple posts on important topics discussed.



Click the icons below to follow us on social media!

**22** videos published



**1,185** video views



**235** social media posts



**48,713** social media followers



**1,421** mailing list subscribers



(December 2022).

# The Scientific Café Initiative

## Promoting Women's Role in Peace Building

The Geneva Centre's second edition of the Scientific Café initiative included three interviews on the theme "Promoting Women's Role in Peace Building". In the short interviews experts and practitioners analyze how to **promote gender equality in peace initiatives**, what can be the **role of digital technologies** to enhance women's participation in conflict prevention and peace building, and what are some of the **existing barriers** to women's participation.



**Episode 5.** Interview with **Dr. Racquel Warner**, Associate Professor & MPA Program Coordinator, **Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government, Dubai**. Since 2003, Dr. Warner has worked in various academic and leadership positions at three major off-shore branch campuses in the UAE. A career educator with over 25 years international teaching experience, her professional engagement has been defined by her keen interest in social justice and equality.



**Episode 6.** Interview with **Shekeba Ahmadi**, women's rights advocate, Women in Peacemaking team, **CMI-Martti Ahtisaari Peace Foundation, Finland**. Shekeba Ahmadi has contributed to the work of not-to-profit organizations in Singapore, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan for the last 6 years. Her previous role at Embassy of Finland in Kabul was Development Cooperation Advisor.



**Episode 7.** Interview with **Caryn Dasah**, Social Justice Activist, Youth Leader, and General Coordinator at **Cameroon Women's Peace Movement (CAWOPEM)**. Caryn has frontline experience in advancing women's rights, gender equality, and ending violence against women and girls. She is a Global Beijing 25 Youth Task Force Member with thirteen years of experience volunteering in Rural communities. Caryn has created a peace campaign called the "Her Place Project" aimed at engaging grassroots women as peace builders.



Watch the interviews [here](#).

# LOOKING INTO 2023

The Geneva Centre will continue to **robustly implement its mandate** to promote human rights and global dialogue...

with an **increased focus on partnerships** with academic institutions and NGOs to further develop and consolidate synergies,

**greater collaboration** with interns from universities and external consultants **for research and publications** on human rights issues,

...while continuing its intensive reporting on the **Human Rights Council** sessions,

expanding the **scope and audience** of its **training sessions**,

and organizing joint **international panels**, including a **major conference** on **climate change** and **human rights**.




**"Lasting peace goes hand-in-hand  
with equality at all levels, built upon  
a universal recognition of and respect  
for the inherent dignity of every  
human being."**

**Dr. Umesh Palwankar, Executive Director,  
Geneva Centre**



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