Conference Call for Papers

**Transitional Justice beyond the State: Non-State Actors as Object and Agents in Transitional Justice Processes**

Jerusalem, June 14-15, 2023

**Introduction:**

The Minerva Center for Human Rights at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv University is organizing an international conference on non-state actors in transitional justice processes, examining their rising importance and diverse roles as objects and as agents in transitional justice interventions. The conference will take place in Jerusalem on June 14-15, 2023.

Prof. Kieran McEvoy of Queen’s University Belfast School of Law and Senator George J Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice, world-renowned scholar and practitioner in the field, will present the Conference Keynote Address.

This call for papers invites proposals for presentation of papers at the conference. Authors of selected proposals will be offered full or partial flight and accommodation expenses.

Submission deadline: April 3, 2023.

**Background:**

Historically, the field of transitional justice, developed in the context of transitions from authoritarian to democratic regimes in the late 1980s, has focused on the actions of the state – in line with the traditional framework of human rights. However, in recent years there is growing attention to the existing and potential roles of non-state actors – armed groups, private companies, municipalities, religious organizations, universities, museums, professional bodies, civil society organizations, and others – within the transitional justice universe.

There are two, intersecting, dimensions to the ways in which non-state actors are brought within the purview of transitional justice. First, there is the notion that non-state actors have responsibility for the commission of abuses that are the object of transitional justice interventions, and that they could and should be held to account (as collective entities, in addition to the targeting of individuals from their ranks). Second, there is the claim that non-state actors could lead or be integrated into transitional justice processes, for example by leading truth-recovery processes, providing apologies and reparations, and so on. In other words, non-state actors can become both **objects** and **agents** of transitional justice, whether in conjunction with states or independently.

These developments reflect changes in global politics, such as the rise in importance of rebel/terrorist groups, corporations and others, as well as the evolution of transitional justice thinking and practice. The issues involved are at the cutting edge of contemporary transitional justice, as illustrated by the fact that the latest thematic report of the UN Special Rapporteur on transitional justice (in 2022) was on the topic of non-state actors. At the same time, there are many lingering questions and dilemmas involved in pursuing accountability for the actions and inactions of non-state actors and in facilitating and encouraging their engagement with transitional justice processes. More specifically, discussions tend to be held separately in relation to armed groups, corporations, and other non-state actors, and there will be much benefit in pursuing them together in a coherent way.

Armed groups have long been recognized as under the purview of international law, especially in relation to international humanitarian law, and their leaders have become a common target of international criminal law. Their involvement in transitional justice processes, such as providing reparations (material or symbolic) raises intricate questions and is now at the forefront of transitional justice debates. The links between corporate responsibility and transitional justice have also been pursued, and addressing the challenges involved remain crucial, with the prominent involvement of mercenaries in the Ukraine war providing yet another illustration.

More broadly, in many countries debates about historical responsibility for wrongs have addressed the roles of sub-state public bodies such as municipalities, universities, religious bodies, museums or professional associations (e.g. of lawyers and physicians). Protests against the legacy of slavery, colonialism and discrimination – associated with Rhodes Must Fall and Black Lives Matter – have often focused on the role of municipalities and universities in addressing legacies of discrimination and abuses, including in relation to statues symbolizing racial supremacy. Religious institutions have also been object and at times actors of transitional justice-like processes, most notably in relation to the responsibility of churches for systematic sexual abuses, though there is much more to be done in this respect. Professional bodies – e.g. the legal professions and physicians – have been addressed by the South African TRC and elsewhere, but challenges remain.

Across these different contexts and cases, several shared questions arise, with which the conference seeks to engage: What are the relevant international human rights standards? How to address the limitations of the international law framework in relation to non-state actors? What is the repertoire of mechanisms, and what new practices, technologies, and methods can be developed in these cases, including in social and cultural rather than legal settings? How to navigate the disparate needs and positions of victims? How to determine the responsibility of non-state actors without minimizing that of the state? When does inaction turn into complicity in abuses? What lessons can be identified from past and ongoing interventions?

**The conference organizers invite proposals to present a paper dealing with one or more of the above issues, or** **other relevant and contemporary issues relating to the topic of the conference.**

**Publication:**

The *Israel Law Revie*w, the Minerva Center’s journal of human rights, public and international law (published by Cambridge University Press), is interested in publishing selected full-length papers based on conference presentations, subject to its standard review and editing procedures. The organizers will consider other publication options as well, such as publishing an edited collection or a special issue arising from the proceedings.

**Submissions:**

Researchers and practitioners interested in addressing these issues are invited to respond to this call for papers with a proposal of up to 500 words for an article and presentation, along with a brief CV.

**Proposals should be submitted no later than** **April 3, 2023, via the Hebrew University’s application platform:** <https://gss.ekmd.huji.ac.il>. After creating an account on the platform, select “General and Cross-Faculty Applications”, and then “Minerva Conference on Transitional Justice beyond the State”.

**Applicants should expect notification of the committee's decision by mid-April 2023.** Written drafts or outlines, based on the selected proposals, will be expected by June 7, 2023, for distribution among the conference speakers.

For questions regarding the application process, please contact: [mchr@savion.huji.ac.il](mailto:mchr@savion.huji.ac.il)

**Organizing Committee:**

Dr. Ron Dudai, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev; Dr. Einat Albin, Dr. Or Avi-Guy, Dr. Michal Huss, Dr. Uri Ansenberg, and Adv. Danny Evron, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Prof. Leora Bilsky, Dr. Hagit Keysar, and Ms. Yuli Litov, Tel-Aviv University.