RELIGIOUS ACTORS & HUMANITARIAN NORMS COMPLIANCE IN ARMED CONFLICT: ROLES, INFLUENCE, ENGAGEMENT

The Generating Respect Project Online Conference
8 – 10 December 2021

Participation is free with prior registration here.
Contrasting with narratives which portray civilians as mere victims of conflict, recent interdisciplinary studies focus on the agency of civilians and the roles they (can) play in armed conflict. Specifically, we see an exponential interest civilian activities relating to State and non-State armed groups’ compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law. This is because, as the International Committee of the Red Cross has noted, civilians ‘do not wait for humanitarian actors to analyse and address the problems and threats they face. They permanently monitor their surroundings and take decisions themselves’, including concerning self-protection mechanisms.

This roundtable is co-organised by the Generating Respect Project, hosted at the University of York, and the humanitarian organisation Geneva Call. Participants will reflect on the role of civilians as key actors for enhancing respect for humanitarian norms in conflict settings. They will share theoretical reflections and practical insights on the topic, highlighting possible successes and challenges.

Chaired by Mr Ezequiel Heffes, Geneva Call, the participants in the roundtable are:

- Dr Rebecca Sutton
  Edinburgh Law School

- Mr Omar Ahmed
  Geneva Call

- Dr Katharine Fortin
  University of Utrecht

- Prof. Andrew Clapham
  The Graduate Institute, Geneva
Thursday, 9 December 2021, 9:45 – 17:45 GMT

Conference Proceedings: Religious Actors & Humanitarian Norm Compliance in Armed Conflict

9:45 – 10:00
Welcome
Dr Ioana Cismas, Centre for Applied Human Rights and York Law School, University of York & Mr Ezequiel Heffes, Geneva Call

10:00 – 11:00
Session 1/ Religion, its actors and international humanitarian law
Speakers: Dr Eve Massingham, University of Queensland
Exploring the role of religious actors in generating respect for the laws of war: a Common Article 1 perspective

Dr Maria Varaki, King’s College London
Generating moderation from Istanbul to Jerusalem and Athens

Chair & discussant: Mr Stephen Wilkinson, Diakonia International Humanitarian Law Centre

11:45 – 13:00
Session 2/ Religious leadership and armed conflict
Speakers: Dr Piergiuseppe Parisi, University of York & Mr Mohamed Assaleh, Geneva Call
Confronting rifles with words: the High Islamic Council of Mali and armed non-State actors

Dr Adelaide Madera, University of Messina
The Role of the Catholic Church in the field of International Humanitarian Law

Dr Chris Morris, University of Portsmouth
Religious leadership in armed conflict: the need to address unconventional forms of authority

Chair & discussant: Ms Émilie Max, Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights
14:00–15:15  Session 3/ Religious leaders’ influence: Lessons from the field – Colombia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar

Speakers:  
Dr Piergiuseppe Parisi, University of York & Ms Yolvi Lena Padilla Sepúlveda, The Generating Respect Project  
The role of Christian religious actors in the Colombian conflict: from visible influencers to discreet protagonists

Dr Mulanda Jimmy Juma, Mennonite Central Committee  
The influence of Congolese religious organisations on armed conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Lessons from the field

Dr Ioana Cismas, University of York & Mr Christopher Rush, The Generating Respect Project  
The relational influence between religious actors and the Kachin Independence Organisation/Army

Chair & discussant:  
Mr Ezequiel Heffes, Geneva Call

15:45–16:30  Session 4/ Religious leaders’ influence – Lessons from the field: Jordan and Libya

Speakers:  
Ms Ella Allen, IDARE  
The influence of women religious leaders in enhancing IHL compliance in Jordan

Ms Hasnaa El Jamali, The Generating Respect Project & Dr Ioana Cismas, University of York  
The multifactorial influence of Madkhali Salafism on Libyan armed actors

Chair & discussant:  
Professor Tanisha Fazal, University of Minnesota

17:00–17:45  Session 5/ Religious leaders in armed conflict – Lessons from the field: Syria and Yemen

Speakers:  
Ms Marta Furlan, The Generating Respect Project & Mr Omar Ahmed, Geneva Call  
Novel Paths towards Respect for IHL and IHRL: Explaining the Influence of Religious Leaders on Armed Groups in Yemen and Syria

Mr Yousuf Syed Khan, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  
Overlooked iconoclasm: intangible heritage and endangerment in Syria

Chair & discussant:  
Dr Katharine Fortin, University of Utrecht
**10:00 – 11:00**

**Session 6/ Religion and law: potentialities and limitations for engagement**

Speakers: 
**Dr Jennifer Philippa Eggert**, Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities/ University of Leeds  
Countering Violent Extremism, Humanitarian Response and Faith: Practical Insights from a Research Capacity-Building Project

**Dr Miriam Abu Salem & Dr Ludovica Decimo**, Università degli Studi della Campania “Luigi Vanvitelli”  
Religious declarations and humanitarian Law

**Dr Ahmed Al-Dawoody & Ms Kelisiana Thynne**, International Committee of the Red Cross  
Protection of the natural environment in conflict under IHL and Islamic law

Chair & discussant: **Dr Julie Fraser**, University of Utrecht

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**11:30 – 12:15**

**Session 7/ Humanitarian engagement with religious leaders**

Speakers: 
**Dr Olivia Wilkinson**, Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities & **Professor Emma Tomalin**, University of Leeds  
Secular-religious dynamics and their effect on humanitarian norms compliance

**Mr Dominic Earnshaw**, International Committee of the Red Cross & **Mr Datuan Magon**, Regional Madrasah Graduate Academy  
Engaging ulama in the promotion of international humanitarian law: a case study from Mindanao

Chair & discussant: **Ms Katherine Kramer**, InterAction
Organised by the Generating Respect Project in partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, this roundtable aims to provide a platform for theoretical and practice-oriented reflection on peer pressure as a strategy for enhancing respect for international humanitarian law and international human rights law in conflict settings. Whilst a number of important studies have theoreticised State compliance with international law, pressure among and across categories of peers, especially when these include non-State actors, requires further exploration. The participants in the roundtable will address the dynamics between peers, such as States, non-State armed groups, corporations, and faith-based actors, as well as across these categories.

Chaired by Dr Ibrahim Salama, Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the participants in the roundtable are:

- **Prof. Azza Karam**
  - Religions for Peace

- **Prof. Ahmed Shaheed**
  - UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief

- **Dr Michael Wiener**
  - Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights