



Shaikh Ahmad Hassan School of Law

CALL FOR PAPERS

Annual Conference

Shaikh Ahmad Hassan School of Law

Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS)

21-22 April 2025

Futures of International Law

Conference Theme and Panels

Shaikh Ahmad Hassan School of Law (SAHSOL) is pleased to announce our flagship annual conference to be held on April 21-22, 2025. The theme of this year's conference is Futures of International Law. The inadequacy and fragility of international legal order has been thrown into sharp relief recently, most notably and painfully in reference to Israel's expanding wars against the people of Palestine and the surrounding regions. With untold bloodshed and displacement caused, the hallowed principles of the law of war (proportionality, distinction, military necessity) seem to have all gone up in smoke in these most ruthless military campaigns.

Yet, we also see that victims of oppression and violence continue to deploy international law as the language of condemnation. In insisting that Israel's war in Gaza be defined as 'genocide', Palestinians — and millions around the world who identify with their cause — appropriate a legal category that was written into international law in the aftermath of the horrors of the Holocaust. The largely positive reception of the International Court of Justice's Provisional Measures Order in the South Africa v. Israel Case perhaps also testifies to the fact that international law has something of at least symbolic value to offer in moments of catastrophic crises.

While the genocide in Gaza confronts the global legal order most starkly with difficult questions of legitimacy and relevance — and accusations of hypocrisy and double standards — it is not the only issue which provides reasons for systematic reevaluation and rethink of international law and institutions. Serious doubts have been raised, for example, with regards to the capacity of the extant international legal framework to respond to global refugee movements, including forced displacements owing to climate emergency. International financial law and its institutions are reproducing poverty, inequality and environmental degradation through structural readjustments programmes. Likewise, climate activists are divided between those who place high hopes in the potential of

international litigation in helping arrest at least some of the ravages of climate change, and those who believe that environmental law, being essentially anthropocentric, cannot furnish satisfactory solutions to the unfolding ecological crises.

Against the above backdrop, the conference seeks to reexamine our understanding of the nature of the international legal order from diverse theoretical and empirical perspectives. It aims to probe the values which should guide the evaluation and development of international legal norms and institutions. It seeks to assess the efficacy and significance of the contemporary forms of international adjudication from the International Court of Justice to regional human rights courts to specialized disputes settlement mechanisms such as those adopted by the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The conference theme invites participants to assess current legal responses in critical areas of global concern and explore alternatives which might allow us to cope with future challenges. The conference will provide a space for exploring possible ways of bringing international law into conformity with the demands of justice in specific domains such as international humanitarian law, international human rights law, international refugee law and international investment law.

Within the overall theme of the conference, submissions will be organised into the following streams:

- The legitimacy of international law: Historical challenges and contemporary issues
- Structures and practices of international adjudication
- The myth and reality of international humanitarian law
- International economic, climate and investment law: Imperialism, colonialism, and global inequalities
- Human Rights and inhuman wrongs: The promise and pitfalls of international human rights law
- Displacement, Migration and Refugees in the Anthropocene

Proposals for Papers

Scholars from all disciplines, practicing lawyers, activists, and PhD students from around the world are invited to submit abstracts (not exceeding 500 words) of proposed papers no later than Friday, 28 February 2025. A short biography (200 words) should accompany the abstract. The papers selected for inclusion will be allocated to plenary or parallel sessions at the organisers' discretion. Notification of acceptance will be sent by 15 March 2025. Please note that we are able to support accommodation and meals for all participants over

the days of the conference but can only provide reimbursements for travel for those coming from within Pakistan.

Information and contact

A webpage for the conference will be put up shortly. In the meantime, please feel free to contact us at sahsolevents@lums.edu.pk should you have any questions.

**The event is planned as an in-person gathering, and participants are encouraged to attend physically. However, hybrid participation may be considered in exceptional cases at the discretion of the organizing committee.*