



מרכז מינרבה לזכויות האדם
The Minerva Center for Human Rights
مركز مينيرفا لحقوق الإنسان



הפקולטה למשפטים
FACULTY OF LAW
كلية الحقوق

האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים
THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM
الجامعة العبرية في القدس



Conference Call for Papers

The 19th Annual Minerva Conference on International Humanitarian Law

The Gaza War and International Law: Norms and Institutions

Jerusalem, 17-18 December 2024

Introduction:

The 19th Annual Minerva Conference on International Humanitarian Law (IHL) at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's [Minerva Center for Human Rights](#) will focus on international law aspects of the current escalation of the armed hostilities between Israel and Hamas, which followed from the attack of 7 October 2023. The discussion will include an inquiry of applicable *jus ad bellum* norms, IHL, and the study of the role of international courts and quasi-judicial mechanisms.

The conference will take place on 17-18 December 2024, in Jerusalem. The conference will be held in an in-person format but would also allow for online presentations.

Recipients of this call for papers are invited to submit proposals to present a paper at the conference.

Submission deadline: 20 August 2024

Authors of selected proposals may be offered full or partial flight and accommodation expenses.

Background:

The current Gaza war is one of the most devastating events in the painful history of Palestinians and Israelis and one of the longest “rounds” of active hostilities in the history of the Israeli-Arab conflict. It has also led to armed hostilities in other fronts as well, including fighting across the Israeli-Lebanese border, intensification of violence in the West Bank and hundreds of projectiles shot at Israel from Yemen and Iran. The war has focused attention on the shortcomings of international law as a system of norms and institutions designed to prevent, regulate and end wars, and to establish a rule of law on the international plane.

Many have pointed to systemic *implementation failures* of varying scales and severity by both sides to the conflict, some of which according to the ICC Prosecutor may amount to international crimes. These include, among others, the atrocities committed inside Israel on 7 October, the taking and holding of hostages from Israel, the very high numbers of Palestinian casualties as a result of Israeli military operations, extensive devastation of civilian property and infrastructure in the Gaza Strip, extreme food insecurity and collapse of medical services inside Gaza, mass displacement on both sides of the border and harsh detention conditions in detention facilities inside Israel. The inability of international law norms and institutions to protect victims on both sides of the conflict from the scourge of war has even been described by some as the “end of the rule-based order”.

Some have also pointed in this regard to the *indeterminacy* of key IHL rules, principles and concepts relevant to the conduct of armed hostilities, such as proportionality, precautions, and effective control over territory. Moreover, there is lingering *uncertainty* on questions of self-defense against non-state actors, conduct of hostilities against fighters embedded in the civilian

population, conflict classification and associated tensions between IHL and international criminal law in this regard, the concrete impact of international human rights law (IHRL) norms – including norms designed to protect victims – in complex situations of urban warfare, military siege and evacuations, the application of the rule on perfidy to concrete breaches of the principle of distinction and the conduct of tunnel warfare.

International courts and other international institutions have been involved in the current hostilities in Gaza to an unprecedented extent. Their interventions have nonetheless been criticized by some as ineffective, legally unsound or biased. While the growing involvement of international courts and other law-applying bodies in armed conflicts fill an accountability gap in international relations, it also raises many *challenges*, which are made apparent in connection with the war in Gaza. Some are rather prosaic, concerning questions as to judges' specialized expertise and access to evidence which allows them to fully engage with the legal complexities of armed conflict situations. Other aspects are more fundamental and go to the legitimacy and effectiveness of international adjudication, especially in light of the narrow jurisdictional basis on which such institutions intervene. Questions regarding the peace v. justice dimensions of judicial involvement are also present in the Gaza war, which, like other current conflicts, invite a critical evaluation of the contribution of courts and legal institutions to international peace, security and justice.

The conference seeks to discuss and evaluate the interpretation and application of international law norms and institutions to the Gaza war, including the performance of different international bodies involved in efforts to enforce international law in the context of the war. Comparative and multi-disciplinary perspectives involving lessons drawn from other conflicts and other bodies of knowledge are also of great interest to the organizers.

The conference organizers invite proposals to present papers relating to issues mentioned in this call for proposals and to other aspects of the conference topic.

Submissions:

Researchers and practitioners interested in addressing these issues are invited to respond to this call for papers with a 1-2 page proposal for an article and presentation, along with a brief CV.

Proposals should be submitted via email no later than 20 August 2024, to the Hebrew University's Minerva Center for Human Rights: mchr@savion.huji.ac.il

Applicants can expect notification of the committee's decision by mid-September 2024.

Written contributions of approx. 20 pages, based on the selected proposals, will be expected by 1 December 2024.

Publication:

The Minerva Center's journal of human rights, public and international law, the [Israel Law Review](#) (a Cambridge University Press publication), is interested in publishing selected full-length papers based on conference presentations, subject to its standard review and editing procedures, in a special issue devoted to the conference topic. We also offer the option of submission for publication to those who cannot attend the conference.

Conference Academic Committee:

Hala Khoury-Bisharat, Ono Academic College; Ziv Bohrer, Bar-Ilan University; Tomer Broude, Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Danny Evron, Minerva Center for Human Rights, Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Emanuela-Chiara Gillard, Chatham House; Françoise Hampson, University of Essex; David Kretzmer, Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Barak Medina, Minerva Center for Human Rights, Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Tamar Megiddo, Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Yaël Ronen, *Israel Law Review*, Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Yuval Shany, Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Chair).