

'The Roles of NGOs in the International Human Rights System'

GHR Expert Seminar and book launch GSS-40)

Thursday 15 June 2023 from 15:00 to 18:00

Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights

(Villa Moynier, Rue de Lausanne 120 B, Geneva)

Draft Programme

(updated 6 June 2023)

Invited Chair: Felix Kirchmeier (*Executive Director, Geneva Human Rights Platform, ADH*).

15.00 Welcome and introduction

- Felix Kirchmeier (*Executive Director, Geneva Human Rights Platform, ADH*).
- Barbara Fontana (*Head Human Rights Section, Swiss Permanent Mission*).
- Olivier Coutau (*Délégué à la Genève Internationale, Canton of Geneva*).
- Ms. Ines French (*GHR redaction team*): presentation of the book.
- Prof. Bertrand Ramcharan: highlights on the first international NGOs.

15.30 Round Table-1. *The essential role played by non-governmental actors in building the international human rights system.*

- Chair: Mr. Michael Khambatta (*Director Gulf Centre, Canada*).
- Key note speech: Adrien-Claude Zoller (*President GHR*).

Experts on the Round-table¹:

- Mr. Ian Seiderman (*International Commission of Jurists*).
- Mr. Miloon Kothari (member *UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel, India*).
- Mrs. Diane Ala'l (*former Representative Baha'i International Community, Geneva*).
- Mrs. Christa Meindersma (writer, former senior political advisor to the UN, NL).
- Mrs. Fay Parris (President Women's Bar Association, Queens, New York).

16.45 Round Table-2. *The role of NGOs and the international human rights system in addressing the current and future human rights challenges (such as rising authoritarianism, civil society repression, persistent and rising inequalities, climate crisis, racial justice, AI and social media, regression of human rights standards, threats to universality, and protection of defenders).*

- Chair: Nicolas Agostini (*Geneva Representative DefendDefenders*).
- Key-note speech: Clement Nyaletsossi Voule (*Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Togo*),

Experts on the Round-Table:

- Mr. Gustavo Gallon (*Ambassador of Colombia, former Special Rapporteur on Equatorial Guinea and on Haiti*),
- Mrs. Lucy McKernan (*Human Rights Watch*) (tbc).
- Mrs. Anna-Karin Holmlund (*Amnesty International*).
- Mr. Olivier de Schutter (*Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights*)
- Phil Lynch (*Director International Service for Human Rights*).

17.30 Conclusions

GHR invited the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, **Mr. Volker Türk**, to conclude with a **key-note speech on the protection of human rights defenders** (tbc).

18.00 Reception in the Geneva Academy.

Co-sponsors: *Permanent Mission of Switzerland at the UN-Geneva, Canton of Geneva, and the Geneva Human Rights Platform.*

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¹ Experts having confirmed. Other names may be added.