



Boğaziçi University International Law Conference

BILC 2024: “Rethinking International Law After Gaza”

3 - 4 August 2024

The recent invasion of Gaza has posed profound challenges to international law, prompting a critical examination of its efficacy, legitimacy, universality, and fairness. Triggered by these, Boğaziçi University International Law Conference (BILC) 2024 will serve as a timely platform for scholars and practitioners committed to reshaping the contours of international law. Specifically, the conference hopes to provide a transformative re-examination of the theory and practice of international law by sharing research that foregrounds the perspectives of the marginalised. In this regard, the conference seeks to unsettle the obsolete understandings that prevail in international law and challenge orthodox perceptions, displacing these with diverse perspectives.

Spearheading the conference is the imperative to interrogate the historical and present-day intersections of exclusionary frameworks and international law, particularly highlighting the interplay of power, politics and law. We hope that such a critical lens will allow the conference to scrutinise the formative influence of hegemonic structures on international law. To address such challenges, the conference will also confront the many modes through which epistemic colonialism silences critical voices, emphasising the importance of foregrounding inclusive intersectionality.

For this purpose, the conference seeks to critically interrogate existing paradigms and envision a more just and inclusive global legal order. Boğaziçi University Faculty of Law extends an invitation to participate in this intellectual exploration, encouraging contributions of varying lengths/stages of development that aim to rethink international law from the margins – a task that has taken on a new gravity “After Gaza.”

Central Themes

1. Rethinking International Law After Gaza:

Taking note of the most recent scholarship from diverse theoretical perspectives, how do we locate the war in Gaza in the broader history of international law? Is it a watershed moment or yet another recurring episode in the persistent patterns of international law? What are the implications of the invasion of Gaza for alternative frameworks and understandings of international law?

2. Decolonising the Global Narratives of Human Rights and International Law:

In what ways do colonial-era power structures affect contemporary international legal frameworks, and how can these enduring influences be addressed? How have historical struggles against domination influenced the evolution of human rights law and international legal norms, and what insights can be gleaned from these narratives? How has the concept of universalism in international law historically contributed to Eurocentric biases, and what are the implications of such biases on marginalised communities? What role has the Gaza War played in exposing these limitations and what alternatives can be proposed to address these shortcomings?

3. Business and Human Rights: Is “Business as Usual” After Gaza?

How effective are the current rules and legal platforms in holding corporations accountable for human rights violations in conflict zones? What reforms or additions may be needed to enhance their efficacy? How have recent conflicts, especially in Gaza, influenced the attitudes and practices of corporations towards corporate social responsibility in conflict zones, and what specific changes or challenges have emerged in international economic law with regard to armed conflicts?

4. Potential of International Adjudication:

How have international judicial mechanisms navigated the complexities of individual and state responsibility in the cases related to the Israel-Palestine conflict, particularly the Genocide cases before the ICJ? What implications do these cases have for the broader understanding of state and individual accountability in international law? To what extent do perceptions of "inefficiency," "lawfare," or "double standards" impact the legitimacy of international judicial bodies, and how can these concerns be addressed to rebuild trust in their processes? In light of the ongoing challenges, what innovative proposals or reforms can be considered to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of international judicial bodies in addressing serious crimes and fostering accountability?

5. International Law and War:

While the 21st century was envisioned to be a period of peace and unipolarity in the wake of the century, the past two decades have shown that we live in a fragile world marked by devastating armed conflicts and the potential for others. The conflict in Gaza intensified both the discussions about legitimate grounds to go to war (*jus ad bellum*) and the law governing the conduct of war (*jus in bello*). The conduct of the Israeli military has caused an uproar, especially with regard to the latter. The brutality of the conflict in the Gaza Strip also had a spillover effect across the broader region. Is international law in crisis in addressing one of its proclaimed tenets: functioning as a peaceful means of conflict resolution? How have the recent conflicts in Gaza and beyond affected the use of force and the law of armed conflict?

6. Reforming Knowledge Production:

The discussions around the Gaza conflict have demonstrated how oppression may manifest in the methodologies, ontologies and epistemologies employed in the study and practice of international law. What role do educational institutions play in reinforcing colonial narratives of international law? How can this problem be tackled? In this regard, what alternative approaches can be adopted to reform knowledge production?

Conference Format

Each panel will comprise three to four presenters and a moderator. Each presenter will be allotted 15 minutes for their paper. The conference will be held in English only.

Submission procedure

The deadline for abstract submission is June 30, 2024. Please submit your abstract (max. 300 words) via our website (<https://bilc.bogazici.edu.tr/abstract-submission>). Abstracts will be selected on the basis of their originality and relevance to the Conference theme.

Time and Venue

The Conference will be conducted in person on August 3-4, 2024, at Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, Türkiye.

Costs

There is no participation fee.



Boğaziçi University
Albert Long Hall