

SWAIL II

Mapping International Law's Second Worlds:
Middle Powers, Semi-Peripheries and Shifting
Hierarchies in the Global Legal Order

Yong Pung How School of Law
Singapore Management University

16 – 17 NOVEMBER 2026 | SINGAPORE



About the Conference

The global legal order faces growing contestation. Multilateralism and transnational cooperation increasingly yield to competitive bilateralism and transactional coexistence. Grave violations of international norms become routine and fear of great power backlash dilutes responsibility. Yet, while hegemonic and (neo-)imperial ideologies, concepts, and arguments are retrieved, refined, and reasserted, uncertainty reigns about how these shifts are best understood and conceptualised, with divergent perspectives emerging from the Global East(s), South(s) and West(s).

International law's role in perpetuating hierarchy, domination and exclusion – and the (post-) colonial foundations of global order – are increasingly acknowledged even in mainstream disciplinary accounts. However, less attention has been paid to the experiences, practices, processes, vocabularies and perspectives of *in-betweenness* that defy binary classifications of North-South, core-periphery, liberal-illiberal, etc. Recent debates have centered the notion of 'middle powers', a term encompassing actors as diverse as Canada or Australia at one end of the spectrum, or Turkey and BRICS+ at the other end. Applied unevenly to Latin America or Eastern Europe, the 'semi-periphery' traditionally described in-between and incomplete (usually economic) subordination or transition. Drawing on Second World Approaches to International Law (SWAIL), a self-reflexive project exploring how international law produces and manages 'in-betweenness' across different registers, this call for papers invites contributions that explore these themes, whether articulated as conceptual semi-peripherality and incomplete integration, or as actor-based claims to middle-power or emerging-power agency, including practices of asserting legally grounded sovereignty under imperial pressure. The central question is how international law's dominant classificatory schemes shape doctrines, institutions, and epistemic authority while flattening, marginalizing and occluding in-betweenness that does not fit within the hegemonic paradigm(s).

Building on emerging scholarship from Eastern Europe and Central Asia, SWAIL seeks to unsettle binary, and often hegemonic classificatory schemes like North/South, market-/state-based economy, liberal/illiberal, core/periphery, democratic/authoritarian, capitalist/socialist, developed/developing, Europe/non-Europe, civilised/uncivilised, perpetrator/victim, coloniser/colonised, empire/subaltern divisions of the globe. Arguing that 'Second Worldness' does not fit neatly within such categories, SWAIL conceptualises the Second World(s) not merely as a geographical label nor as a historical or ideological Cold War category, but rather as an **analytical device** for exploring structural and epistemic governance within the global order. Accordingly, Second World actors occupy in-between, liminal or semi-peripheral positions, characterised by conditional inclusion, legal mimicry, and persistent narratives of transition, incompleteness, or 'catching up' with ever-receding dominant standards defined elsewhere, often in the West or North Atlantic but increasingly also by competing global and regional hegemons like China, Russia, Turkey or Nigeria. Seen from a liminal perspective, international law operates not primarily through binary systems of domination or exclusion, but rather through complex techniques of incremental disciplining and adjustment. Middle powers or semi-peripheral actors are encouraged, and often compelled, to internalise dominant legal vocabularies while remaining structurally marginalised, albeit not entirely excluded, as producers of theory or legal subjectivity. Legal doctrines, institutional practices, evaluative frameworks, and quantitative indicators, including those used in rule of law assessments, human rights monitoring, security governance, and economic conditionality, operate as technologies of benchmarking, normalisation, translation, and adaptation through which multidimensional hierarchies and inequalities are registered, reproduced and contested.

Building on an inaugural event in Vienna in 2025, this conference broadens exploration of SWAIL as a critical lens for exploring international law's operation across openly defined liminal contexts. Contributions need not focus on the geographically defined Second World *qua* former Soviet space or processes. Papers that interrogate broader dynamics of semi-peripherality, inter-imperial contestation, and conditional ex-/in-clusion in international law are encouraged. We welcome contributions that engage theoretically, empirically, historically, etc. with the following non-exhaustive themes:

- Second World(s) as in-between actors in international law and global governance, including middle powers and semi-peripheral (economic) agents but also various non-state actors that shape and contest normative authority

- Epistemic marginalization and the politics of knowledge production in international law as seen from in-between spaces, including scholars, civil society, international institutions and states
- Practices of conditional sovereignty, liminal recognition, and multidimensional hierarchies
- Processes of translation, imitation, and mimicry in international legal discourse, including how such practices reproduce, negotiate, or destabilise classificatory schemes framed in terms of civilisation, development, or liberalism
- The political economy of middle-power support for international law, including the costs and benefits of disengagement
- Critiques of transition narratives, modernization, and legal temporality
- Case studies from Eastern Europe, Latin America, Eurasia and other semi-peripheral contexts, for instance (Ottoman) Turkey, (Imperial) Japan, China or Ethiopia
- Applications of SWAIL to specific fields, e.g. human rights, security and foreign policy, development, investment, rule of law, sustainability and the environment
- SWAIL in dialogue with critical international scholarship, Marxism, feminism, TWAIL, political economy, queer studies, cross-disciplinary methods, etc., including self-reflection on the promise and limits of SWAIL

By foregrounding in-betweenness, SWAIL offers a complementary perspective to existing critical approaches and opens new avenues for dialogical, comparative and reflexive inquiry. This project aims neither to develop (a) new universalism(s), nor to champion exclusionary regionalisms or particularisms. The conference hopes to diagnose overlooked forms of hierarchy and expand the critical vocabulary available for understanding international law's uneven global functioning. Submissions from scholars at all career stages are welcome.

Practicalities

This conference is organised by CCLA's Singapore Sustainable Futures Initiative (SSFI), with support of Prof Liu Nengye's Yong Pung How Fellowship. It will be held at SMU Yong Pung How School of Law as an in-person, invitation-only event.



Conference Co-Chairs



Nengye Liu

CONFERENCE CO-CHAIR

**Associate Professor
Yong Pung How School of Law
Singapore Management University**

Prof LIU Nengye teaches and conducts research at the nexus of the law of the sea and international environmental law. Prof LIU has taken the lead to edit three books: “The European Union and the Arctic” (Brill, 2017), “Governing Marine Living Resources in the Polar Regions” (Edward Elgar, 2019); “The Law of the Sea and the Planetary Crisis” (Routledge, 2025); published 50+ refereed journal articles and book chapters; and delivered 100+ presentations about his research findings across five continents. He sits on the editorial board of Marine Policy, Ocean Development and International Law and Polar Record. Prof Liu is the Founding Chair of Steering Committee, Asia Pacific Research Alliance on Law and Sustainability, Founding Director of Singapore Sustainability Futures Initiative and Co-Chair of American Society of International Law’s Law of the Sea Interest Group.



Patryk Labuda

CONFERENCE CO-CHAIR

**Assistant Professor
Central European University**

Dr. Labuda works at the intersection of international law, peace and security studies, and global history. Trained in law and history at Adam Mickiewicz University, Dr. Labuda earned his PhD from the Geneva Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. Drawing on his work and research experience in Africa, he supports justice initiatives and dialogue between the Global South(s) and Global East(s). An elected Board Member (2024-28) of the European Society of International Law, Dr. Labuda's scholarship includes an award-winning book (2024 ABILA Best Book for a First-Time Author, International Criminal Tribunals and Domestic Accountability) and an award-winning article (2025 ASIL International Criminal Law Scholarship Prize, Countering Imperialism in International Law).

PROGRAMME

DAY 1

Monday, 16 November 2026

9:00-9:15	Welcome and Group Photo • Michelle Lim, Associate Dean (Research), SMU Yong Pung How School of Law • Nengye Liu, SMU Yong Pung How School of Law • Patryk Labuda, Central European University
9:15-10:45	Panel 1: Interrogating the Concept(s) Chair: Shirley Scott (University of New South Wales) • Sivan Shlomo-Agon (Bar-Ilan University Law School) <i>In-Between Times in International Law: Producing Second Worlds</i> • KD Raju (KIIT University/Rajiv Gandhi School of Intellectual Property Law) <i>Second v Third World Approaches: A Third World Critique of Middle Power Internationalism</i> • Marek Jan Wasiński (University of Łódź) <i>'Liminality' as an Analytical Tool in SWAIL</i> • Jonas Benedikt Wiescholke (European University Institute) <i>Beyond Baleful Binaries: International Law, Legal Peripheralisation and the Case of Russian Imperialism</i>
10:45-11:15	Coffee break
11:15-12:45	Panel 2: Normative Spaces Chair: Katrin Kuhlmann (Georgetown Law) • Ahmed Raza Memon (Cardiff University) and Eric Loefflad (University of Exeter) <i>International Legal Transformation through Geo-Spiritual Pilgrimage: Muhammad Asad's Bridges Between Second, Third, and All Possible Worlds</i> • Otgontuya Davaanyam (Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg) <i>Pillar One Was Never Written for Us: Selective Localisation and the Second World State in Business and Human Rights: Mongolia and Central Asia</i> • Nengye Liu (Singapore Management University) and Ethan Beringen (University of Queensland) <i>Singapore and the Making of the Law of the Sea</i> • Péter D Szigeti (University of Alberta) <i>The Law of Uninhabitable Areas</i>
12:45-13:45	Lunch break
13:45-15:15	Keynote Roundtable Chair: Nengye Liu (Singapore Management University) • Shirley Scott (University of New South Wales) • Prabhakar Singh (BML Munjal University) • Katrin Kuhlmann (Georgetown Law) • Patryk I Labuda (Central European University)
15:15-15:45	Coffee break
15:45-17:15	Panel 4: From Asia's Centres to Europe's Easts Chair: Patryk Labuda (Central European University) • Sara Khash (Geneva Graduate Institute) <i>Beyond the Binary: The Problem of Ukraine's Double-Standard Debate—A Call for SWAIL?</i> • Darina Macková (UN Development Programme) <i>Second World(s) in International Law and Development: From Socialist Modernity to State-Designed Development</i>

	• Harshad Pathak (University of Geneva) <i>Problematising Eastern European Liminality through SWAIL: Leveraging the "First" within the "Second"</i> • Sergey Sayapin (KIMEP University) <i>Central Asia and Second World Approaches to International Law: Reframing a Region Between Empire and Postcoloniality</i>
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PROGRAMME	DAY 2 Tuesday, 17 November 2026
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9:00-10:30	Panel 5: (Un)Mapping Governance Regimes Chair: Asanka Edirisinghe (Singapore Management University) • Cheah WL (National University of Singapore) <i>The Philippines and Zones of 'Compromised Justice': Revisiting the San Francisco Peace Treaty System</i> • Olga Soldatkina (MGIMO Moscow) <i>For Resilient Data Governance: Self-positioning Beyond Periphery and Core</i> • Ying Sun (Tongji University Law School) <i>Legal Mimicry and Counter-Hegemony: China's Export Control Regime through a SWAIL Lens</i> • Eklavya Vasudev (Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg) <i>Perpetually Transitioning: Investment Arbitration, Climate Measures, and the Temporal Discipline of the Semi-Periphery</i>
10:30-11:00	Coffee break
11:00-12:30	Panel 6: Rethinking Geopolitical Contestation Chair: Prabhakar Singh (BML Munjal University) • Vito de Lucia (UiT/Arctic University of Norway) <i>The Revolt of the Pigs: Multiple Souths dentro e contro International Law</i> • Siyuan Liu (Chinese University of Hong Kong) <i>Contesting Unilateral Human Rights Sanctions from the Semi-Periphery: An Analysis of Belarus and Iran</i> • Sze Hong (Ocean) Lam (National University of Singapore) <i>A "Comprador Approach" to International Law?</i> • Ryan Martínez Mitchell (Chinese University of Hong Kong) <i>Geoeconomic Non-Alignment and Hierarchy in International Law: A Persistent Cold War Paradox</i>
12:30-12:45	Concluding Remarks Nengye Liu & Patryk Labuda



BIOGRAPHIES



Keynote Speakers

Shirley Scott

UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES



Shirley Scott is Professor of International Law and International Relations at UNSW Canberra. Her internationally recognised research explores the intersection of international law and international relations, with particular interests in the politics of international law, the rules-based global order, climate security governance, Antarctic and ocean governance, and Australia's foreign relations. A significant strand of her scholarship concerns her theory of international law as ideology and the political operation of international legal institutions. Professor Scott has held visiting fellowships and appointments at institutions including Beasley School of Law, China Foreign Affairs University and the University of Hamburg. She was President of the Asian Society of International Law from 2019 to 2021 and is Co-Chair of the Editorial Board of the *Asian Journal of International Law*. She is also a Fellow of the Australian Institute of International Affairs and the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia. She has authored and co-authored numerous books and scholarly publications, including *The Law of the Sea and the Planetary Crisis* (2025) and *International Law in World Politics: An Introduction* (2025).

Prabhakar Singh

BML MUNJAL UNIVERSITY



Prabhakar Singh is Professor at the School of Law, BML Munjal University, India, where he also serves as Director of the Centre for International Law. He holds a B.A. LL.B. (Hons) from the National Law Institute University, Bhopal, an LL.M. from the University of Barcelona, and a Ph.D. from the National University of Singapore. He has previously taught at Jindal Global Law School and was a DAAD Visiting Professor at Ruhr University Bochum. Professor Singh has published extensively in leading international law journals and is co-editor of *Critical International Law: Postrealism, Postcolonialism, and Transnationalism* (Oxford University Press, 2014). His contributions to international legal scholarship have been recognised through several distinctions, including the Asian Society of International Law's Young Scholar Prize (2019–21).

Katrin Kuhlmann

GEORGETOWN LAW



Katrin Kuhlmann is Professor and Faculty Director of the Center on Inclusive Trade and Development at Georgetown Law. She is a leading expert in international economic law, development, trade law, agriculture and food security, and comparative law. In 2010, Professor Kuhlmann founded the New Markets Lab (NML), a non-profit law and development innovation lab focused on empirical legal and regulatory research. She was previously a Lecturer on Law and Wasserstein Public Interest Fellow at Harvard Law School and the Yeutter Visiting Professor of Law at the University of Nebraska College of Law. Earlier in her career, she served as a trade negotiator at the Office of the United States Trade Representative and worked at two international law firms, as well as in senior positions with non-profit organisations and think tanks. She holds degrees from Harvard Law School and Creighton University and was a Fulbright scholar in international economics. Professor Kuhlmann is widely published in international law and development, international trade law, and comparative international law. Her recent scholarship includes her "Micro International Law" project in the *Stanford Journal of International Law* (2025), which examines how national and sub-national legal innovations contribute to international legal design and norm-setting.

Speakers



Sivan Shlomo-Agon

BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL

Sivan Shlomo-Agon is Associate Professor with tenure at Bar-Ilan University Law School, Israel. Her research focuses on public international law, global governance, international organisations, international economic law, international space law, international courts and dispute settlement, and international legal theory. She has held visiting academic positions at several universities, including the University of Zurich, Technical University of Munich, University of Graz, University of Toulouse 1 Capitole, Erasmus University Rotterdam, and the University of Oslo. Dr Shlomo-Agon is the author of *International Adjudication on Trial: The Effectiveness of the WTO Dispute Settlement System* (Oxford University Press, 2019) and has published widely in leading international law journals. Her contributions have been recognised through several awards, including the Fattal Prize for Excellence in Legal Research and the S.Z. Cheshin Young Scholar Prize for Academic Excellence in Law.



KD Raju

KIIT UNIVERSITY/RAJIV GANDHI SCHOOL OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW

KD Raju is Professor of Law and Pro-Vice Chancellor of KIIT University and Director of KIIT Law School, Bhubaneswar, India. He was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship by the United States Education Foundation in India (USEFI) to pursue his doctoral studies at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. His areas of expertise include international law, WTO law, trade and economic law, and intellectual property law. He received the Microsoft Outstanding Young Faculty Award in 2011 for his research on intellectual property and competition law. Professor Raju is a prolific scholar, with around 35 book chapters, 50 peer-reviewed articles, and 10 books to his credit. His publications include *WTO Agreement on Anti-dumping: A GATT/WTO and Indian Jurisprudence*, *Submarine Cable Protection and Regulations* (Springer, 2021), *A Handbook on Geographical Indications in India* (Thomson Reuters, 2022), and *Geographical Indications in the Free Trade Agreements Signed by Asian Countries* (Cambridge Scholars, 2024). His most recent book is *Regulation of Commercial Human Spaceflights* (Routledge, 2026).



Marek Jan Wasiński

UNIVERSITY OF ŁÓDŹ

Marek Jan Wasiński is Associate Professor of International Law at the University of Lodz, Poland. He has served as a Visiting Professor at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University and has lectured at Kenyatta University and the University of Granada. Since 2024, he has led the research project Eastern Europe as a Distinct Post-Imperial and Liminal Space within the International Legal Order. In February 2025, he co-organised the first international SWAIL workshop, In Search of Second World Approaches to International Law, in Vienna. In 2026, he co-edited the first journal symposium on SWAIL, published in the *International Community Law Review* (vol. 28, issues 2–3).

Jonas Benedikt Wieschollek

EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTE



Jonas Wieschollek is a Max Weber Fellow at the European University Institute. His book project offers the first critical history of international law in Russia's conquest in Central Asia (1860–1910s). Based on his doctoral research at the University of Cambridge, the book provides a novel analytical framework to accommodate the role of non-Western powers in the historiography on international law, imperialism, and colonialism. Drawing on archival materials from Central Asia and a range of Russian sources, the study examines legal scholarship, treaty-making and the use of military force to argue that Russia's resort to international law in Central Asia must be understood against the backdrop of its own ambiguous position vis-à-vis the leading European powers of the time. Jonas has served as Managing Editor and Editor-in-Chief of the Cambridge International Law Journal and his broader research interests include migration law, international arbitration, legal theory, and comparative law.

Ahmed Raza Memon

CARDIFF UNIVERSITY



Ahmed Raza Memon is a Lecturer at Cardiff School of Law and Politics, and a facilitator for student-led decolonising movements and organising. Ahmed's work is inter/trans-disciplinary with a broader focus on international legal history and theory, global governance, and decolonial theory/practice. His work takes inspiration from sociology, and political geography in the traditions of Indigenous, black radical, anti-caste and anti-colonial community practice which interrupt, negotiate and negate orthodox Euro-centric vocabularies of legal thought. He is a Decolonial Futures Research Priority Area Residence Scholar at the University of Amsterdam for the year 2025-2026 and is a member of Centre for Law and Society. His work has appeared in the London Review of International Law, the International Journal of Law in Context and the Law Teacher. He is currently a co-editor of Decolonial Dialogues, an interdisciplinary forum for decolonial practice, teaching, and research.

Eric Loefflad

UNIVERSITY OF EXETER



Eric Loefflad is a Lecturer in Law at the University of Kent and, as of September 1st, 2026, will be joining the University of Exeter as a Senior Lecturer in Law. His research is broadly focused on the history and theory of public international law, especially in relation to the world-historical legacies of varying forms of empire. His work here is highly interdisciplinary and draws extensively on global history, historical sociology, international relations theory, intellectual history, and political geography. His work has been published in various venues including the Leiden Journal of International Law, the German Law Journal, the German Yearbook of International Law, Transnational Legal Theory, Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development, and the International Community Law Review. Additionally, alongside Dr Vicky Kapogianni, he co-edited the volume Genocide and the Ocean: Law, History and Genocidal Realities Beyond Borders and Beneath Waves and his article 'China's Maritime Militias, Human Rights, and the Law of the Sea: Contested Norms in a Shifting International Legal Order' (co-authored with Dr Kapogianni) was awarded the Aldo Leucci and Ortensio Degli Atti Award for best article in Volume 4 of the Associazione di Consulenza in Diritto del Mare's Yearbook on the Law of the Sea.

Otgontuya Davaanyam

FRIEDRICH-ALEXANDER-UNIVERSITÄT ERLANGEN-NÜRNBERG



Otgontuya Davaanyam is a postdoctoral researcher at the Centre for Human Rights Erlangen-Nürnberg (CHREN), Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, where she previously held a research associate post in the Faculty of Law. She completed her doctorate in law at FAU in 2025. Her monograph, *Conceptualising the Corporate Human Rights and Environmental Responsibilities: A Bottom-Up Analysis through OECD Case Law*, is published in June 2026 with Springer. She is co-editor of the open-access volume *Exploring Corporate Human Rights Responsibilities in OECD Case Law* (Springer, 2025). She read law at Shihuhutug University in Ulaanbaatar before completing an LLM at the University of Liverpool and an MA in Global Challenges: Law, Policy and Practice at Swansea University, supported by the Hodgson Law Scholarship and the Hillary Rodham Clinton Global Challenges Scholarship. Her current research turns to the lived experience of Mongolian herders, examining mining, just transition and corporate responsibility as they bear on land, culture and Indigenous women, most recently in *Voices from the Gobi: Centring Indigenous Women in the Global Standards on Corporate Responsibility for Indigenous Peoples*. Alongside she currently leads the UKRI-funded research project *Environmental Governance, Extractivism, and Geopolitical Dependence in Mongolia: Soviet Legacies, Chinese and Russian Influence, and the Prospects for a Just Transition*.

Péter D Szigeti

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA



Péter D. Szigeti is an Associate Professor at the University of Alberta Faculty of Law (Edmonton, Alberta, Canada) and a Collegium Fellow at the Turku Institute for Advanced Studies and the University of Turku Faculty of Law (Turku, Finland). He researches and teaches in the areas of international law, property law, migration law and citizenship. Szigeti holds an SJD and an LL.M. from Harvard Law School; a Master 2 from Université Paris 1 (Panthéon-Sorbonne); and a Bachelor of Law from ELTE University, Budapest, Hungary. He has completed post-doctoral fellowships at McGill University, New York University and the European University Institute; and he has also held visiting professorships at Universität Wien and UCLouvain. His work has been published in the *International Journal of Constitutional Law* (ICON), the *Harvard International Law Journal*, the *Leiden Journal of International Law*, *Political Science Quarterly*, the *McGill Law Journal*, the *American Journal of Comparative Law*, *EJIL:Talk!* and *Opinio Juris*, among other venues. His first monograph, *“An Intellectual History of Migration Law, 1540-2025”*, will be published in 2027 by Anthem Press.

Sara Khash

GENEVA GRADUATE INSTITUTE



Sara Khash is a PhD candidate in International Law at the Geneva Graduate Institute, where her research examines performative sovereignty and the relationship between transitional justice and neo-colonialism, with a focus on Iraq, Syria and Palestine. She holds an MSc in International Migration and Public Policy from the London School of Economics, where she graduated with Distinction and received the Best Thesis Award for her research on the history and contemporary racial discrimination of Black-Iraqis. She also holds an LLB from King's College London. Sara currently works as a Human Rights Law Consultant with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, where she researches racialised and intersecting forms of discrimination associated with the securitisation of counterterrorism and migration. She is also a Researcher at the British Institute of International and Comparative Law, where her work focuses on labour exploitation, human rights, migration, climate justice and Indigenous displacement. Her publications address international human rights law, racial discrimination, forced displacement, universal jurisdiction and transitional justice.



Darina Macková

UN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Darina Macková is Associate Professor of Public International Law from Bratislava, Slovakia. As a Chevening scholar she studied International Law and Development at the University of Warwick, where she was taught by Professors Upendra Baxi, Shaheen S. Ali and other TWAIL-aligned scholars. After twelve years of teaching at the Faculty of Law, where she introduced the first International Law and Development courses in the CEE region, she has worked for the UNHCR, UNESCO and the UNDP, (co)authoring several international policy proposals and initiatives as member of the Academic Council of the UN system (including the Sustainable Development Goals; DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.26322.98248). The focus of her theoretical and professional interest is predominantly in the area of international law and development, various forms of international cooperation, international solidarity and socio-economic rights.



Harshad Pathak

UNIVERSITY OF GENEVA

Harshad Pathak is an international dispute settlement practitioner and researcher, with a focus on international economic law, investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS), and commercial arbitration. He is a Consultant with Mayer Brown Paris, acting as counsel in ISDS proceedings, and a Visiting Faculty at the National Law School of India University, Bangalore. He is also the co-editor (with David Hughes and Patryk I. Labuda) of The Double Standards in International Law project. Additionally, he regularly consults with policy organisations, governments, and arbitral institutions on projects relating to international investment law, sustainable development, and arbitral best-practices. Harshad's ongoing doctoral research at the University of Geneva (with Prof. Makane Moïse Mbengue) explores the relationship between international investment law and colonialism through the lens of Third World Approaches to International Law (TWAIL), aiming to bridge the regime's historical, political, and doctrinal dimensions. Harshad holds an LL.M. in International Dispute Settlement from the Geneva Graduate Institute and the University of Geneva, and a B.A., LL.B. (Hons.) from the National Law University, Delhi. His scholarship has been published in leading journals, including the Journal of International Dispute Settlement, Asian Journal of Comparative Law, Journal of International Arbitration, Pepperdine Dispute Resolution Law Journal, and Indian Law Review.



Sergey Sayapin

KIMEP UNIVERSITY

Sergey Sayapin is Professor of Law at KIMEP University in Almaty, Kazakhstan. He holds a doctorate in law from Humboldt University of Berlin and degrees from the University of Essex and the University of World Economy and Diplomacy. His research focuses on public international law, international criminal law, international legal history, and the place of Central Asia within the international legal order. He is the author of A Central Asian Perspective on International Law (Hart, 2026). He is the Founding Editor of the Central Asia Yearbook on International Law and Editor of the Brill | Nijhoff book series International Law on the Silk Road. His current research explores Central Asia's contribution to global international legal thought and develops "International Law on the Silk Road" as a framework for studying legal interaction across political, normative, and regional boundaries.



Cheah WL

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

Cheah WL is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Law, National University of Singapore. Her research focuses on international and comparative criminal law, transitional justice, and human rights, with particular attention to the intersections of law, history, and culture. Her work has been published in leading journals, including the *Law and History Review*, *Leiden Journal of International Law*, *European Journal of International Law*, and *Human Rights Quarterly*.



Olga Soldatkina

MGIMO MOSCOW

Olga Soldatkina is an independent researcher in public international law and a visiting lecturer at MGIMO University, Moscow. Her research focuses on comparative studies of states' international legal policies and theories of legal argumentation, with particular attention to how states position themselves in emerging areas of international regulation. She also serves as a research fellow at the Gaidar Institute for Economic Policy, where her work examines data markets in the Eurasian Economic Union, the secondary use of data for research, open data for innovation, and international trade. She holds a PhD in Law from MGIMO University, where her doctoral thesis examined the concept of the international legal policy of states in foreign legal scholarship. She has published on international legal policy, legitimacy in international law, Arctic governance, and states' selective approaches to international law. Her recent publications include work on cross-border access to health data and comparative approaches to international legal policy. Her research has been recognised through several awards, including the Diploma for Best Speech at the 2025 Blischenko Congress of International Law.



Ying Sun

TONGJI UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL

Ying Sun is an Assistant Professor of International Law at Tongji University Law School in Shanghai, China. Her research focuses on the theory and sources of international law, international dispute settlement, international organizations, socio-legal approaches to international law, and Chinese and Asian perspectives on international law. She holds a PhD in International Law from the European University Institute. Her doctoral thesis examines how the Permanent Court of International Justice and the International Court of Justice identify, infer, reformulate, or bypass state consent when engaging with instruments produced by international organizations. She also holds a master's degree from the Geneva Master in International Dispute Settlement (MIDS), jointly offered by the Geneva Graduate Institute and the University of Geneva, as well as master's and bachelor's degrees in law from Tsinghua University. Ying has been a Visiting Fellow at the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law, and the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law. Her research has been published in leading journals in the field, including the *Chinese Journal of International Law* and the *Journal of International Dispute Settlement*. Ying has also served as an Assistant Editor of the *European Journal of International Law* and as the case reporter on Chinese cases for *Oxford Reports on International Law in Domestic Courts*.

Eklavya Vasudev

FRIEDRICH-ALEXANDER-UNIVERSITÄT ERLANGEN-NÜRNBERG



Eklavya Vasudev is a postdoctoral researcher at the Cluster of Excellence "Transforming Human Rights" (EXC 3039) at Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, where his research examines how international investment law reconfigures the role of human rights in climate and environmental governance, with a focus on the justificatory reasoning of investment tribunals and constitutional courts across Germany, India, and South Africa. He holds a doctorate in law from FAU (summa cum laude), with a dissertation on transformative constitutionalism and climate litigation, and an LLM in environmental and health law from Georgetown University, where he studied on a merit scholarship. He was a visiting fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law in Heidelberg in 2023. Before moving to academia, he practised law in India for nearly a decade, including as counsel in the chambers of Gopal Subramaniam, former Solicitor General of India, during the right to privacy litigation before the Supreme Court, and as judicial clerk to Justice S. Muralidhar at the Delhi High Court. He co-convenes the ESIL Interest Group on International Law and Technology, co-edits the Business and Human Rights Journal Blog (Cambridge University Press), and is co-editor of *Climate Justice: Resisting Marginalisation* (Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2026). His writing has appeared in the *European Yearbook of Constitutional Law*, *EJIL:Talk!*, *Verfassungsblog*, and *ICONnect*.

Vito de Lucia

UiT/ARCTIC UNIVERSITY OF NORWAY



Vito De Lucia is Professor of (International) Law and Director of the Norwegian Centre for the Law of the Sea (NCLOS) at UiT/Arctic University of Norway. His research lies at the intersection of critical theory, law and ecology, with a particular focus on international environmental law, ecosystem governance and critical approaches to the law of the sea. His current research examines ocean commons, marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction, Arctic governance, the relationship between space law and the law of the sea, and critical histories of sovereignty and international legal modernity. He is Principal Investigator of the Norwegian Research Council-funded *Future Arctic Law and Governance* project and leads research on Ocean Commons within the NCLOS AURORA Centre. He is also the recipient of the Richard Macrory Prize for Best Article in the *Journal of Environmental Law* (2015).

Siyuan Liu

CHINESE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG



Siyuan Liu is a PhD candidate at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, with research interests in public international law, international human rights law, and legal philosophy. Her current research examines the theoretical and normative dialogue between Marxist theory and the contemporary use of economic sanctions for human rights protection. More specifically, her work asks to what extent a Marxist analysis should endorse the use of economic sanctions as a legal means to protect fundamental human rights. She holds a Master's degree in Human Rights Law from the China University of Political Science and Law (CUPL). She also previously served as a research assistant to a member of the United Nations Committee against Torture.



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Sze Hong Lam (Ocean) is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Centre of International Law (CIL) at the National University of Singapore (NUS). He holds a PhD in Public International Law and an Advanced Master of Law (LLM) from Leiden University. Previously, Ocean worked for the Legal Office of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the Office of the Prosecutor of the United Nations International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT) from 2020 to 2021. From 2022 to 2026, Ocean taught public international law at Leiden University and international criminal law at UC Santa Clara's the Hague Programme. Since 2023, Ocean has also served as an elected member of the Steering Committee of the European Society of International Law's Interest Group on the History of International Law. Ocean publishes widely across public international law, with a focus on issues relating to China and the Asia-Pacific Region. His current research focuses on conceptualising "strategic ambiguity" in public international law.



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Ryan Martínez Mitchell is an Associate Professor of Law at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. His work on international and comparative law, legal history, Chinese law and society, as well as legal and political thought has appeared in leading academic journals. His analysis of these issues has also featured in a number of policy-related publications and has been cited frequently in major international media. His first book, *Recentering the World: China and the Transformation of International Law*, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2022. Mitchell holds a B.A. from The New School, a J.D. from Harvard Law School, and a Ph.D. in Law with distinction from Yale Law School. He is a member of the State Bar of California and has experience in international human rights litigation in US federal courts. He has recently served as a Hitachi-Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellow in Japan. He has also been an academic visitor at Yale Law School, Freie Universität Berlin, Keio University, and the University of Tokyo. His current research focuses in particular on the connection between great power competition and changing norms of international law regarding unilateral sanctions and other forms of economic statecraft.

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