

GENEVA FORUM:

Safeguarding Multilateral Justice

JUSTICE & THE DISCRIMINATORY DEATH PENALTY

24 April 2026 | Palais des Nations, Geneva

FORUM OBJECTIVE

24 April is the [International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace](#), proclaimed by the UN General Assembly. The forum marks this date in Geneva – the birthplace of international humanitarian law – to reaffirm, in the spirit of paras. 2 and 6, final clause: '*including through educational and public awareness-raising activities*' of that [resolution \(A/RES/73/127\)](#), the importance and relevance of multilateralism and international law – the foundation of collective peace. The universality of legal accountability and multilateral cooperation stand at the center of this forum. The Geneva Forum convenes international law experts, state representatives, and civil society to examine institutional threats to judicial independence and systematic compliance failures in ongoing armed conflicts worldwide.

Format:	Hybrid 100 in-person + Online Livestream (max. 1000 viewers)
Event Modality:	Prior registration and approval (UNOG Badge) required. Register here
Location:	UNOG, Palais des Nations Building A, Room VIII 14 Avenue de la Paix 1202 Geneva

SESSION I: 10:00 – 13:00

The independence and effectiveness of international courts as a Frontline of Multilateralism

This session addresses an institutional question: how judicial institutions are currently placed under pressure and what this means for the multilateral order. The focus lies on the ICJ and ICC – their independence, sanctions against court personnel, non-cooperation with arrest warrants, and non-compliance with judicial orders. Following Prof. Goldmann's and H.E. Dr. Harold Young's presentations, the Forum opens to inclusive, multi-stakeholder dialogue – an exchange of perspectives between state delegations, international legal scholars, human rights organizations, and all other participants.

Time (UTC+2)	Agenda	Speaker(s)
10:00 – 10:05	Welcome, objectives, housekeeping	Ms. Martinez GHRD UN Coordinator
10:05 – 10:15	Opening: “Why 24 April matters“	Mr. Ferhan Osseili Convener of the Geneva Forum (DJfdV/dbco.)
10:15 – 10:45 20 min talk + Q&A	Independence and Impartiality of International Courts in Times of Autocratic Oligarchy	Prof. Dr. Matthias Goldmann, LL.M. (EBS University)
10:45 – 11:15 20 min talk + Q&A	ICJ and ICC Under Pressure (from a diplomatic point of view)	H.E. Dr. Harold Young (Ambassador, PR of Belize to the UN)
11:15 – 11:30	15 min break	
11:30 – 13:00 Open end; max. 90 min	Roundtable Discussion	State Representatives International Legal Experts & NGOs All Forum Participants Dr. Gleb Bogush (Research Fellow, Institute for International Peace and Security Law, University of Cologne)

SESSION II: 15:00 – 18:00

Compliance challenges in international law: What happens when courts fail?

This session examines the impact of the failure of multilateralism and diplomacy for peace on compliance with various bodies of international law – international humanitarian law (IHL), international human rights law (IHRL), international criminal law (ICL), and jus contra bellum – in multiple ongoing conflicts worldwide.

The Forum will close with an inclusive, multi-stakeholder dialogue and an announcement of the statement of 24 April 2026.

Time (UTC+2)	Agenda	Speaker(s)
15:00 – 15:10	Re-opening	Dr. med. Qassem Massri (Palestinian, Plaintiff on German Arms Transports)
15:10 – 15:25 15 min talk	Talk 1: From Genocide to Accountability: The Death Penalty as Institutional Mirror	Ms. Rana Arrabi (Counsellor, POM of Palestine to the UN)
15:25 – 15:40 15 min talk	Talk 2: Lethal Injustice: An International Law-Based Assessment of Israel’s “Death Penalty for Terrorists” Law	Dr. Eitan Diamond (Manager & Senior Legal Expert, IHL Centre)
15:40 – 16:10 20 min talk + Q&A	Talk 3: The Impact of Multilateralism on Compliance with the Jus Contra Bellum	Assist. Prof. Dr. Ka Lok Yip (Hamad Bin Khalifa University)
16:10 – 16:45 20 min talk + Q&A	Talk 4: Is IHL still relevant in contemporary armed conflicts?	Prof. Dr. Marco Sassòli (Professor Emeritus, Univ. of Geneva; Honorary)
16:45 – 16:55	10 min break	
16:55 – 17:25 20 min talk + Q&A	Talk 5: Politics over Law	Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Kai Ambos (Judge Kosovo Specialist Chambers, The Hague)
17:25 – 17:55	From Principles to Practice – Roundtable Discussion	State Representatives International Legal Experts & NGOs All Forum Participants
17:55 – 18:00	<i>Announcement</i> of the Statement & Closing Remarks	GHRD & DJfDV

The Geneva Statement of 24 April 2026

The forum culminates in a joint call to safeguard multilateral justice and strengthen mechanisms for universal compliance with the UN Charter, IHL, IHRL, and ICL.

Chronological order:

Prof. Dr. Matthias Goldmann, LL.M. (NYU)

Chair of International Law, EBS University; Research Fellow, Max Planck Institute

Prof. Goldmann holds the Chair of International Law at EBS University and is a research fellow at the Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law in Heidelberg. Previously, he served as an assistant professor at Goethe University Frankfurt (2016–2021). In 2015, he was awarded a Freigeist Fellowship from the Volkswagen Foundation. He earned his Ph.D. from Heidelberg University and an LL.M. from New York University. Prof. Goldmann has published numerous articles in national and international legal journals and served as editor of the German Law Journal (2017–2022). His research focuses on the political economy of finance law, the transformation of economic constitutions, and the history of European and international law, particularly its colonial past. His talk will reflect on the role of the judiciary in international relations. The goal is to find out how it has changed to better understand current challenges. International courts and tribunals emerged in the 18th century after the bourgeois revolutions. They rose in significance during the 19th and 20th centuries, chiefly to settle post-war and post-independence problems. States had a vital interest in this activity. Towards the end of the 20th century, international courts and tribunals became an instrument of Western hegemonic power, which was aligned with emancipatory ends. Throughout the entire time, they did not have much of a say in actual conflicts and only rarely confronted hegemonic (military) power. This has changed profoundly. With the decline of the post-1990 order and the rise of autocratic oligarchy on a worldwide scale, courts and tribunals are assuming the role of a conscience of the world. This puts them at risk; their protective legal framework is not strong enough.

H.E. Dr. Harold A. Young

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Belize to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva; International Law & Peace Studies; Advisor to the Department of History (University of Belize), Associate Professor of Political Science and Public Management (Austin Peay State University), Licensed Attorney (Belize, since 1992)

Dr. Harold Young, the new Permanent Representative of Belize to the United Nations Office at Geneva, today presented his credentials to Tatiana Valovaya, the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva. Prior to his appointment to Geneva, Mr. Young had been serving as an Advisor to the Department of History at the University of Belize since August 2024. He was an Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science and Public Management at Austin Peay State University, United States, from August 2016 to end of July 2024. He was an Adjunct Professor at the Department of Political Science at Georgia State University, United States, from August 2011 to May 2016. He was also an Adjunct Professor at the Department of Political Science at Oglethorpe University, United States, from January to December 2015. He has held a legal license to practice law in Belize since 1992. Mr. Young has a PhD in public law from Georgia State University, United States (2016); a master's degree in managerial leadership from National Louis University, United States (1999); a juris doctor degree in law from the University of the West Indies/Norman Manley Law School, Jamaica (1992); and a bachelor of science degree in political philosophy from the University of Dallas, Irving, United States (1987).

Dr. Gleb Bogush

Research Fellow, Institute for International Peace and Security Law, University of Cologne

Since May 2024, Dr. Gleb Bogush has been a research fellow at the Institute for International Peace and Security Law at the University of Cologne, supported by the Philipp Schwartz Initiative of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. His main areas of interest include international criminal law, the law on the use of force, and international humanitarian law. Dr. Bogush is a member of the International Law Association (ILA) Committee on the Use of Force and Council of Advisors of the

Global Institute for the Prevention of Aggression (GIPA). He also serves on the editorial boards of the Criminal Law Forum and the Revue Internationale de Droit Pénal, and is an adjunct associate professor at the University of Luxembourg, where he teaches international criminal law. Dr. Bogush, whose work has contributed to discussions on the crime of aggression, head-of-State immunity, and the design of the Special Tribunal for Russia's war against Ukraine, will help guide this exchange among State representatives, international legal experts, NGOs, and Forum participants.

Dr. med. Qassem Massri

Palestinian, Plaintiff on German Arms Transports

Dr. Qassem Massri is a senior physician in pediatrics and adolescent medicine at a clinic in Berlin-Buch. He grew up in Beit Hanoun in the northeastern Gaza Strip and has been living in Germany for over 21 years. Since his deployment in the Gaza Strip in 2024, he has repeatedly reported on his personal experiences and the systematic destruction of the health care system there. He is taking legal action in Germany against arms shipments to Israel and was a speaker at the Gaza Tribunal in Berlin (2025).

Ms. Rana Arrabi Counsellor

Counsellor, Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations in Geneva

Ms. Rana Arrabi is a diplomat serving as Counsellor at the Permanent Observer Mission of the State of Palestine to the United Nations in Geneva. She works on human rights issues within the Human Rights Council and related bodies. She previously served at the Embassy of the State of Palestine in Jordan, where she was responsible for relations with international organizations and bodies, and at the Mission in Geneva, focusing on human rights and accountability. Following Dr. med. Qassem Massri's re-opening remarks, Ms. Arrabi will address the ongoing genocide in the oPt, grounded in the most authoritative international legal determinations. Ms. Arrabi will situate these determinations within the factual and legal reality of the expanding occupation, examining the discriminatory death penalty law as a manifestation of systematic measures reflecting broader patterns of non-compliance and accountability failures. She will demonstrate that this legal instrument – far from being isolated – reflects the same intent documented across multiple international bodies and reflects structural concerns that extend beyond Gaza into the broader oPt.

Dr. Eitan Diamond

Manager & Senior Legal Expert, IHL Centre – Israeli-Palestinian Context; Gaza Tribunal Berlin 2025

Dr. Eitan Diamond is an international lawyer specializing in international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law. He currently serves as Manager and Senior Legal Expert at the IHL Centre overseeing its work on the Israeli-Palestinian context. Previously, he worked in various managerial and legal capacities, including at the International Committee of the Red Cross, UNICEF, and with Israeli NGOs Gisha and B'Tselem. Diamond serves on the Board of Directors of NGOs Gisha, the Public Committee against Torture in Israel, and Parents against Child Detention, and on the Editorial Board of the Journal of International Humanitarian Legal Studies. He participated in the Gaza Tribunal Berlin 2025. The presentation of Dr. Eitan Diamond will critically appraise the death penalty law newly enacted in Israel on the basis of applicable norms of international law including international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and the prohibition on apartheid.

Assist. Prof. Dr. Ka Lok Yip

International Law & Peace Studies, Hamad Bin Khalifa University

Assist. Prof. Dr. Ka Lok Yip holds an interdisciplinary Ph.D. (summa cum laude) in International Law and International Relations from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva. She also has a Bachelor of Civil Law (with distinction) from the University of Oxford and a Bachelor of Laws (first class honors) from King's College London. Dr. Yip focuses her research on peace and conflict, drawing on a wide range of disciplines including international law, international

relations, philosophy, psychology, and sociology to study the causes of armed conflicts and strategies for their management, resolution, and prevention. She has published extensively on peace and conflict issues, and her recent monograph 'The Use of Force against Individuals in War under International Law – a Social Ontological Approach' won the Francis Lieber Book Prize 2023. Dr. Yip is also admitted to the practice of law in England, Wales, and Hong Kong. Assist. Prof. Dr. Ka Lok Yip will examine the impact of multilateralism on compliance with the jus contra bellum.

Prof. Dr. Marco Sassòli

Professor Emeritus, Faculty of Law, University of Geneva; Honorary Professor

Prof. Marco Sassòli was until his retirement in 2024 professor of international law at the Faculty of Law of the University of Geneva, where he remains honorary professor, as well as associate professor at the Université du Québec à Montréal, Canada. He is commissioner and member of the Executive Committee of the International Commission of Jurists and has worked from 1985-1997 for the International Committee of the Red Cross at headquarters and in the field. His talk presents his view on the current state of IHL in contemporary armed conflicts in Gaza, Ukraine, Lebanon, Iran, and the many neglected non-international armed conflicts. Prof. Dr. Marco Sassòli will provide a nuanced analysis of whether IHL is still relevant in contemporary armed conflicts: It will be suggested is under fire, but not more, rather less, than other branches of international law, that violations are nothing new but open declarations by leaders that they do not care about it and rare reactions, marked by double standards by other States are increasing, that it would be astonishing if in a situation like armed conflict legal rules were regularly respected and that IHL rules are in fact more often respected than public opinion believes. Prof. Sassòli will be of the view that substantive IHL rules are, with some exceptions, fit for purpose, but we have to fight against abusive interpretations. However, as for most of international law enforcement is the weakest point because States have no will to enforce it.

Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Kai Ambos

Professor of Criminal Law and Criminal Procedure, Comparative Law, International Criminal Law and International Law (Georg August University of Göttingen), Head of the Department of Foreign and International Criminal Law, Judge Kosovo Specialist Chambers, The Hague; Counsel (amicus curiae) to the Colombian Special Jurisdiction for Peace, Executive Director of the Institute for Criminal Law and Criminal Justice

Since May 2003, holder of the Chair for "Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure Law, Comparative Law, International Criminal Law and Public International Law" at Georg-August-Universität Göttingen (as of 7 May 2003). Head of the Department of "Foreign and International Criminal Law" at the Institute for Criminal Sciences. From 24 March 2006 to February 2017, Judge at the Landgericht Göttingen (Regional Court of Göttingen); seconded to the Oberlandesgericht Braunschweig (Court of Appeal) from January 2015 to September 2015. Since December 2013, Director of the Research Centre for Latin American Criminal and Criminal Procedure Law (CEDPAL) at Georg-August-Universität Göttingen. Honorary Doctorate awarded by the Universidad Nacional de la Amazonía Peruana, Iquitos, Peru, 9 November 2013. Dean of Studies at the Faculty of Law at the University of Göttingen between April 2008 and 2010. Magister coordinator of the Faculty of Law from April 2006 to June 2014. Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Winter Semester 2011/2012. Lifetime member of Clare Hall College, University of Cambridge, UK. List Counsel at the International Criminal Court (ICC). Since 7 February 2017, Judge at the Kosovo Specialist Chambers (KSC); elected as amicus curiae adviser to the Colombian Special Jurisdiction for Peace on 6 December 2017. On 17 September 2018, he received the "Orden Carlos Lemos Simmonds" prize for his commitment to the Colombian peace process. On 17 November 2020, he received the Science Prize of Lower Saxony (Wissenschaftspreis Niedersachsen). Since 19 May 2021, external member of the Faculty of Law at the University of Lisbon, Portugal. The Fellowship at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (Berlin Institute for Advanced Study) granted for the academic year 2023/2024 could unfortunately not be taken up. In December 2023, Prof. Ambos was elected to the DFG Review Board for Legal Sciences for the election period 2024–2028. Research specialization in

criminal law and criminal procedure law, comparative law, and international criminal law with particular focus on Latin America, Portugal, Spain, and Eastern Europe. Numerous publications in English, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, and other languages, including notably the three-volume Treatise of International Criminal Law (OUP 2013–2016), European Criminal Law (CUP 2018), and Internationales Strafrecht [International Criminal Law] (Beck, 5th ed. 2018). Furthermore, Editor-in-Chief of the Criminal Law Forum and member of the Editorial Board of numerous German, foreign, and international journals, including Goltdammer's Archiv für Strafrecht, International Criminal Law Review, L'Indice Penale, Revista Penal, Revista Portuguesa de Ciência Criminal, and Zeitschrift für internationale Strafrechtsdogmatik. Additionally, member of the Advisory Board of the ELTE Law Journal and Journal of Criminal Law. Guest professorships at numerous universities throughout Europe, Latin America, and Asia, including Verona and Trento (Italy), Renmin University (Beijing, China), Valparaiso (Chile), and Federal University of Paraná (Curitiba, Brazil). Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Kai Ambos will examine how state exceptionalism and doctrines of necessity have become tools for circumventing international legal obligations, with particular focus on how powerful states invoke reasons of state (Staatsräson) to justify weapons transfers that perpetuate cycles of violence — a theme Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Kai Ambos will address in his analysis of politics over law.