



Centre of Law and Society

In collaboration with

Centre for Human Rights and Public Law

Workshop: Call for papers

Corporate Accountability for Human Rights Abuses and Natural Resources Governance:

A Study in Global Law, Development and Justice

Context and objectives

The constant drive for profits and wealth maximization largely explains why corporations commit human rights abuses especially in developing countries with lax environmental, tax and labor laws and standards. The ‘resource curse’ phenomenon is well known to many developing countries in particular in least developed countries rich in mineral, energy and other natural resources where many multinational extractive groups operate. Simultaneously, there is a well developed body of international and regional human rights norms recognizing a human right to a ‘clean’ or ‘healthy’ environment; as well as economic, cultural and social rights to all ‘peoples’ including their right to freely dispose of their natural wealth, resources and the indigenous peoples’ rights to land. Worryingly, illegal exploitation of natural resources and large-scale land grabbing is widespread in many countries, as has been widely documented in the case of a Cambodian government policy of forced evictions and land reallocations from the early 2000s with the collaboration of powerful multinational corporations.

This two-days workshop will aim to critically examine the role played by international, regional and national institutions in holding corporations (in particular multinational corporations) effectively accountable for violations of human rights law in light of the imperatives of social and ecological justice and inter-generational equity. The discussions will be contextualized with case studies in natural resources governance in selected countries and regions, in particular Africa, Asia and Latin America. The workshop will also aim to propose a global legal framework for the liability of and law enforcement against corporate groups and their directors, employees, managers and shareholders for human rights abuses, taking account of the

existing initiatives and human rights standards such as the OECD Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the work of the UN Special Representative on Business and Human Rights, John Ruggie.

Format and scope of the workshop

The workshop will be held over two days and the selected participants will be invited to present and/or discuss papers. It is anticipated that the workshop Panel sessions will cover theoretical, doctrinal or socio-legal angles relating to the accountability of corporations in at least some of the following contexts:

1. Land grabbing, indigenous peoples and the human right to property
2. Nature, armed conflicts, and corporate criminal responsibility
3. Transnational remedies and extra-territorial jurisdiction over corporate human right abuses
4. The practical operation of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the OECD Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises in the Global South
5. Economic and social human rights and the extractive industries - the social license to operate in context
6. Agribusiness, environmental harm and human rights
7. Human rights in the oceans and freshwater rights – the accountability of water, shipping and offshore mining companies
8. Climate change liability of energy and mining companies

The participants will include scholars and practitioners with expertise in international law and global justice, human rights, natural resources & environmental law, or corporate law, sustainability and governance. The workshop and individual panel sessions will be open to staff and PGR students in LAWPL and Cardiff University (space permitting).

The workshop is jointly organised by Cardiff University's Centre of Law and Society and the Centre for Human Rights and Public Law, in collaboration with the European Center for Constitutional and Human Rights.

Abstract submission deadline

A 200-500 words abstract to be submitted to the event organisers by Thursday 30th January 2020.

Workshop Date

5-6 May 2020

Publication of workshop proceedings

It is anticipated that the workshop output will be published either as a journal special issue or an edited book collection. The options and opportunities for publication to be discussed with the workshop participants prior to and in the course of the event.

Location

Cardiff University, Law Building, Museum Avenue, CF10 3AX, United Kingdom

For any queries and for submission of an abstract, please contact the event organisers at:

Dr Ricardo Pereira, Senior Lecturer in Law, Cardiff Law & Politics School
Email: PereiraR1@cardiff.ac.uk