

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ATROCITY CRIMES

INTERNATIONAL AND DOMESTIC PATHWAYS TO CRIMINAL JUSTICE

ONLINE | JUNE 2026



DESCRIPTION

This course examines how international law seeks to ensure criminal accountability before international and national courts and tribunals for ‘core’ atrocity crimes—genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and aggression—within a fundamentally decentralised system of enforcement. The course highlights the structural tensions that shape contemporary international criminal justice. It explores, in particular, the relationship between the International Criminal Court and domestic jurisdictions, the limits of complementarity in practice, and the legal and practical obstacles to the prosecution of high-level officials. Drawing on contemporary situations, the course addresses key contested issues such as immunities of state officials and competing jurisdictional claims. Through the analysis of case law and current debates, participants will develop a critical understanding of how criminal accountability for atrocity crimes operates in practice.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Analyse the legal framework governing the prosecution of atrocity crimes under international law.
- Critically assess the role and limitations of the International Criminal Court, including its jurisdiction and the principle of complementarity.
- Evaluate the potential and constraints of domestic prosecutions, including those based on universal jurisdiction.
- Examine the legal and practical challenges surrounding immunities and the prosecution of high-level state officials.
- Assess competing models of accountability, including ad hoc and hybrid tribunals, in light of current developments.

LECTURER

Paola Gaeta, Professor of International Law at the Geneva Graduate Institute and Co-President of the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights.

She is a leading scholar in international criminal law, with a particular focus on the prosecution of atrocity crimes and the functioning of international criminal courts and tribunals. Her research and teaching address key issues such as genocide, individual criminal responsibility, immunities of state officials, and the relationship between international and domestic jurisdictions. Her work combines doctrinal analysis with close engagement with judicial practice and has contributed to shaping scholarly debates on the limits and possibilities of international criminal justice. She has also written extensively on emerging challenges, including the legal implications of autonomous weapons systems, and is currently working on genocide in the context of warfare. She is Co-Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of International Criminal Justice and has published widely in leading journals and edited volumes in the field. Professor Gaeta has held visiting positions at several institutions and regularly teaches and lectures at international programmes, including at the Hague Academy of International Law.

AGENDA OF THE ONLINE SESSIONS

- Wednesday 3 June, 12:00 to 13:00 - *Introduction*
- Monday 8 June, 12:00 to 14:00
- Thursday 11 June, 12:00 to 14:00
- Monday 15 June, 12:00 to 14:00
- Thursday 18 June, 12:00 to 14:00
- Monday 22 June, 12:00 to 14:00
- Thursday 25 June, 12:00 to 14:00
- Monday 29 June, 12:00 to 14:00

HOW TO APPLY

Please send an email to digital.academy@geneva-academy.ch with a CV and a motivation letter expressing your interest in the specific course.

Selected applicants will receive a confirmation of acceptance. To secure their place, accepted participants are required to pay a non-refundable deposit of **CHF 100**.

Please note that this course is subject to a minimum of 10 participants. If this minimum is not reached two weeks prior to the start date, this course will not be delivered and all registered participants will receive a full refund of the deposit. Places are limited to 25 participants, and therefore early application is strongly encouraged.

TUITION FEE

CHF 950.

A discount of CHF 100 is available for students, alumni of the Academy, UNIGE, IHEID, and individuals who have previously participated in our trainings or educational activities.

**MORE INFORMATION
ON OUR WEBSITE**

