

TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE AND STRUCTURAL VIOLENCE: MAKING CONNECTIONS

ONLINE | AUGUST 2026

DESCRIPTION

This course explores the intersections between transitional justice (TJ), development, and the realization of economic, social, and cultural rights (ESCRs) in post-conflict and post-authoritarian contexts. While the field of TJ has traditionally focused on civil and political rights, this course complements that focus by highlighting how TJ processes can address systemic inequality, poverty, dispossession, and structural violence.

Particular attention is given to the voices, agency, and lived experiences of victims and affected communities, examining how they shape demands for truth, accountability, reparations, and guarantees of non-recurrence. The course interrogates whether victims' needs for dignity, recognition, and socioeconomic justice are met in practice, and how development actors and policies can either enable or constrain victim-centred approaches to justice.

The limits and boundaries of a solely victim-centred approach are also critically examined. In this respect, the course debates the functional adequacy of traditional TJ mechanisms in addressing structural violence. Drawing from theory, jurisprudence, and global case studies, students will critically assess whether transitional justice can advance transformative development agendas that promote social justice and sustainable peace. The course also explores the impact of new and emerging technologies on transitional justice, with particular attention to their role in supporting development processes and advancing the realization of ESCRs.



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Critically analyse the theoretical underpinnings of transitional justice and its historical evolution.
- Understand the normative and legal foundations of ESCRs under international law, as well as the institutional architecture that supports their protection and enforcement.
- Critically assess the relationship between transitional justice mechanisms (truth commissions, reparations, prosecutions, institutional reform) and structural violence, such as economic violence, poverty, racism, gender-based violence, including their capacity to address victims' needs and demands.
- Evaluate country case studies (e.g., Bosnia and Herzegovina, Syria, Colombia, Tunisia, Kenya, The Gambia, Guatemala) to understand successes and challenges in linking TJ, development, and ESCRs—particularly from the perspective of addressing root cause and structural violence.
- Design context-sensitive policy and programmatic recommendations that integrate TJ with socioeconomic transformation processes in ways that prioritize victim-centred approaches. Learn how to deal and overcome practical dilemmas.
- Analyse the opportunities and risks posed by emerging technologies for victims' participation, memory preservation, and socioeconomic justice in transitional settings.

LECTURER

Thomas Unger, Director of Policy and Research at Impunity Watch and an independent expert on transitional justice.

He regularly advises international organisations including the UN, EU, Council of Europe and the Swiss Foreign Ministry, and previously served as Senior Adviser to the UN Special Rapporteur on truth, justice and reparation. He has extensive field and legal experience, including roles with the Austrian Foreign Ministry, the OSCE Mission in Kosovo, and the ICTY. He also teaches and lectures on transitional justice, has published widely on the subject, and holds advanced degrees in international law and human rights.

AGENDA OF THE ONLINE SESSIONS

- Monday 17 August, 12:00 to 13:00 - **Introduction**
- Tuesday 18 August, 12:00 to 14:00
- Wednesday 19 August, 12:00 to 14:00
- Thursday 20 August, 12:00 to 14:00
- Friday 21 August, 12:00 to 14:00
- Monday 24 August, 12:00 to 14:00
- Tuesday 25 August, 12:00 to 14:00
- Wednesday 26 August, 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 and alumni of the Academy, and individuals who have previously participated in our trainings or educational activities.

**MORE INFORMATION
ON OUR WEBSITE**

