



## Call for Papers:

# Vulnerability, Protection, and Agency: An Interdisciplinary Conference on Migration

**24-25 May 2018, Faculty of Law, University of Oslo, Norway**

Organized by the Research Group on International Law and Governance in collaboration with the Research Group on Human Rights, Armed Conflict, and Law of Peace & Security, and the Peace Research Institute of Oslo (PRIO).

Migration is presenting a challenge to migration practitioners, policymakers and academics given the manifestation of extra-territorial approaches, increased reliance on technology, and weakening of accountability for violations of rights.

Migrants are increasingly limited in accessing rights and in receiving protection from harm when fleeing, both en route and upon arrival. The phenomenon of irregular migration, often organized by human smugglers, foments vulnerability. Legal and operational structures result in discriminatory treatment, detention, and deportation, signaling what Boaventura de Sousa Santos characterizes as “abyssal thinking”. The majority of migrants and displaced persons actually remain within their own countries or regions in Africa and Asia, thus we also seek understanding of the consequences of internal migration/displacement and “trapped migration” e.g. the Rohingya exodus, the Syrians, and Ukrainians.

A juxtaposition is the articulation of migrants’ agency, relating to their journey, drive to seek protection and regular status, and survival. Their agency is both strengthened and weakened by the use of technology and social media, modes of travel, smuggling, and use of migration brokers, the migration industry (detention, biometrics, security) and transnational remittances.

Finally, we consider the complex situation of the asylum bureaucracies; there are disagreements among and within Ministries of Justice, Immigration Boards, Immigration Judges and regular caseworkers as to the legality or morality of regulations and policy implementation. There are tensions regarding limited accountability of state and non-state actors acting in an official capacity as well as the negative and positive impact on the agency of migrants. Migrants have mixed experiences communicating with interpreters, police, caseworkers, and other actors.

The lack of an international refugee law court has resulted in a flood of cases being presented to human rights courts and committees at the universal and regional levels resulting in increased fragmentation without attaining normative clarity.

**This conference calls for papers proposing how to move beyond the abyss**, welcoming perspectives from law and the social sciences (including geography, anthropology, sociology, criminology, and international relations). Interdisciplinary approaches are encouraged. We call for paper proposals from scholars, policy makers, or practitioners, at different stages of their careers, Phd candidates, post-docs, and professors. Proposals for a poster session will also be evaluated.



## Topics may include:

### Accountability mechanisms for extra-territorial action by States, IOs, NGOs, and corporate actors

- Addressing Transparency challenges
- Strengthening application of the principle of non-discrimination
- Protection issues related to use of technology (including drones, biometrics, etc.)
- The economy of private security companies and corporate detention facilities
- The impact of the counter-terrorism and counter violent extremism regimes upon migration management
- The special situation of children
- Gendered vulnerabilities to harm and exploitation en route

### Towards de-construction of walls (literal and metaphorical)

- Combating the impact of media and social networks upon levels of xenophobia and immigration reforms
- How migrants use technology and social media to maintain agency
- Strategies for enabling IDPs and other “trapped” groups to seek protection
- Contestation of restriction or limitation of welfare rights of migrants
- Ideas for strengthening the role and access of legal aid organizations and increasing legal competence among NGOs working with migration
- Detention and Deportation- procedures, actors, and protection concerns
- Tactics of “conscientious objection” by case workers, teachers, asylum officers, etc.

### New interpretations for protection standards across or beyond normative regimes

- The interface between migration law and Law of the Sea
- The lack of ratification of the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees -grounding the right to flee or law of asylum in human rights law or customary international law
- How do UNHCR/IOM/and NGOs provide international protection spaces outside of the treaty regime?
- Understanding the complementary and contradictory output of courts and tribunals and human rights bodies (international, regional, and national)
- Fragmentation within regional and national bureaucracies and courts managing migration
- The impact of approaches to combat smuggling and trafficking on protection
- Whether cuts to development aid negatively impact “root causes” prevention strategies?
- What lessons have been learned and how can this influence the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework?



---

### **Submission:**

Please send a maximum 300 word abstract and CV to Cecilia Bailliet, email: [cecilia.bailliet@jus.uio.no](mailto:cecilia.bailliet@jus.uio.no) and Susanne Hendrika Flølo, email: [s.h.flolo@nchr.uio.no](mailto:s.h.flolo@nchr.uio.no) by 15 December 2017. We will notify participants by 15 January, 2018. We plan to publish selected papers in an anthology or special addition of a journal. Hence, the deadline for draft papers (minimum 5000 words) is 24 April, 2018. The draft papers will be made available to participants for commentary during the conference.