

## **Western Sahara Research Group: Third Annual Conference (2024)**

### ***Call for Papers***

The Third Annual Conference of the Western Sahara Research Group is sponsored by the [Centre for European and International Legal Affairs](#) and will be held on **11 September 2024** at [Queen Mary, University of London](#). This event will be organised via several thematic panels with a view to interrogating Western Sahara's international status and its significance from the vantage points of public international law and the law and policy of the European Union.

The Conference is open to senior and junior scholars, as well as practitioners and members of International Organisations (and NGOs) working in the areas of public international law and/or European Union law. The Organisers invite such persons wishing to participate in the 2024 Conference to submit a paper abstract or summary (maximum 500 words) addressing for one or more of the following themes:

#### ***Thematic Panel 1: Western Sahara, Self-determination, and Human Rights***

This panel seeks to analyse the challenges associated with the current military and political situation in Western Sahara by recourse to the rules and principles of the applicable international law. Topics may include Self-determination; Recognition; Territoriality; Use of Force; International Humanitarian Law; and International Human Rights Law.

#### ***Thematic Panel 2: Western Sahara and the European Union***

This panel focuses on the European Union's external actions and its law and policy approaches to regional trade (and the extraction of natural resources) to the extent that they directly affect the territory of Western Sahara. This theme involves detailed consideration of the legal questions generated by the conduct of the EU's political institutions in this setting and the determinations made by the EU courts in the ensuing litigation instituted by the Polisario (and others). Topics may include interactions between EU law and international law; litigation before the EU courts; EU Trade Policy; EU External Action; and Member-States' diplomatic practices.

#### ***Thematic Panel 3: Western Sahara and International Economic Law***

This panel examines the legal issues arising from Western Sahara's international status by way of the exploitation of the region's natural resources in the light of the normative evolution of International Economic Law (encompassing the principle of Permanent Sovereignty over Natural Resources). This theme may prompt an assessment of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and/or the 2030 Agenda, along with the established codes and guidelines governing Business and Human Rights as far as they relate to economic operators working in Western Sahara. Topics may include International Trade Law; International Investment Law; the

exploitation of terrestrial and maritime natural resources; International Environmental Law; and Business & Human Rights.

***Thematic Panel 4: Western Sahara in International Politics***

This panel envisages engagement with the legal, political, and diplomatic causes (and effects) of the Western Sahara Question at national, regional, and international levels. This theme may provoke an appraisal of national responses to this ongoing dispute as well as the conduct, laws, and policies of the regional/global actors (such as the African Union or the United Nations). This theme could accommodate doctrinal and/or theoretical insights from other relevant disciplines including International Relations.

Conference paper abstracts must be sent via email to [Stephen Allen](#) accompanied by a working title and four key words by 19 July 2024. The Organisers will review submitted paper abstracts as part of the selection process and applicants will be contacted shortly thereafter.

The Research Group is currently editing a collection of essays entitled *Western Sahara and International Law: Fifty Years after the ICJ Advisory Opinion* (Brill, 2025). The book's publication is planned to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the ICJ's [\*Western Sahara Advisory Opinion\*](#).

Contributors to the 2024 Conference – along with participants from the Group's earlier annual conferences – are invited to submit full papers for consideration in connection with this publishing project. Further details can be obtained from the Organisers via the above email address.

The Organisers: Stephen Allen (QMUL); Andrea Mensi (University of Bologna); Francisco Pereira Coutinho (NOVA School of Law); and João Francisco Diogo (NOVA School of Law).