

## Human Rights Based Approaches to Protracted Conflict:

An Empowerment, or a Slow Demise of Human Rights Law?

27 March 2023, 12.30-17.00

Advanced Research Centre (ARC), 11 Chapel Lane, Glasgow G11 6EW,  
University of Glasgow

Organised as part of the [Endless Conflicts](#) project\*

In recent decades, human rights-based approaches (HRBA) have been promoted by a variety of institutions, particularly in the development field, but to a more limited extent also in the humanitarian and peace sector. The term is now a widely accepted in the policies of western donors and some international institutions. Generally, such approaches aim to mainstream human rights into the donor interventions to protracted conflict and/or post-conflict situations.

While appearing in the policies that govern a range of sectors (humanitarian, peace and development, among others), the concept of HRBA has no clear and settled content in international law. Rather, the relationship between HRBA and traditional international human rights law is open to interpretation: HRBA may be seen, for example, as the (voluntary) application of human rights-inspired principles by the donor community, implementation agencies and NGOs (human rights 'light'), or alternatively as an attempt to implement donor or recipient human rights' obligations in situations of protracted conflict (a 'hard' HRBA). Each approach carries with it potential risks but also advantages. For critics HRBA is nothing more than a shallow policy response to mute accountability concerns, whereas for others, HRBA is a progressive policy response to streamline human rights among all relevant actors. This in turn underlines the importance of clarifying the relationship between the concept of HRBA and human rights law, more strictly understood, in situations of protracted conflict.

This event aims to bring together scholars and practitioners working on HRBA and human rights law to facilitate dialogue on the content and promise of HRBA in protracted conflicts. The aim is to take stock of existing knowledge, evidence, and understanding in this area of research, and to share knowledge and insights across academic and practitioner communities to better navigate the relationship between HRBA and human rights law in protracted conflict.

\* The *Endless Conflicts* project examines whether an integrated humanitarian and development response to protracted conflicts can be anchored in and promoted by international law in the pursuit of sustainable peace. Jointly funded by the AHRC and DFG, *Endless Conflicts* is a collaborative project of the University of Glasgow, Freie Universität Berlin, in partnership with the University of Rosario, and IPCM at the Université Catholique du Congo (UCC). This event is co-organised under the auspices of the University of Glasgow's "International Law Under Pressure" research programme (PI Dr Henry Lovat).