Call for Papers: Vulnerability in and Across International Law
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Edited Volume and Workshop: Call for Papers

The notion of vulnerability is a feature across a range of areas of international and domestic law. Individuals, groups, communities, geographies, resources and some States are increasingly described as ‘vulnerable’. In many areas of law (including to a large degree, human rights), vulnerability is ‘group-based’ - in that particular groups are assumed to be vulnerable - and this group-based approach has been the basis of much of the existing (legal) literature. However, such an approach ignores the situational and ‘imposed’ vulnerabilities that arise due to legal, policy and practical decisions, structures and approaches. Indeed, vulnerability can be inherent, structural, situational, or otherwise.

Different approaches to vulnerability (and the related notion of invulnerability) exist, often reflecting the broader structures and systems of the area in which the notion of vulnerability is being applied. Its broadened use, sometimes as a criterion for protection (e.g. in the asylum context) or for procedural safeguards, renders the indeterminacy of its definition a challenge for legal certainty and an opportunity for legal innovations.

This volume aims to examine the way in which vulnerability is understood and applied across different areas of international law. It explores whether a common core can be identified in this understanding and maps the diverging impacts of the notion on the implementation and application of the relevant legal standards. We are interested in the substantive and procedural implications of a finding of vulnerability or ‘invulnerability’.

A non-exhaustive list of areas of law we are interested in exploring includes: environmental and climate change law, labour law, human rights law, business and human rights, cultural heritage law, investment law, trade law, transnational criminal law, international criminal law, humanitarian law, law of the sea, maritime law, cyber law, law on sanctions, international development law, AI and data law, and the law of statehood. Proposals on other areas of law are also strongly encouraged.

Call for Papers

The editors of this volume are welcoming proposals from researchers interested in contributing. Interested authors are requested to submit abstracts of between 300 and 800 words accompanied by a short bio (approximately 150 words) to j.gauci@biicl.org, copying n.magugliani@biicl.org and g.greville@biicl.org to be received no later than 23 July 2023.

Abstracts should clearly highlight the approach to be taken (e.g., critical; socio-legal; interdisciplinary) in the article, and identify any case studies that might be the focus of the research. Proposals from early career researchers (including doctoral and post-doctoral researchers) and researchers from vulnerable backgrounds and communities are particularly encouraged. Authors are expected to meet the deadlines set out below and to participate in a workshop in February 2024 to present their chapters and provide comments on chapters by other authors.

- 23 July 2023: Deadline for abstracts
- Mid-August: Selection of abstracts
- End of December 2023: Advanced drafts of chapters due
- January 2024: Peer review
- February 2024: Workshop
- End of April 2024: Final drafts of chapters submitted
- June 2024: Manuscript submitted
