



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

Women's Participation in Violent Non-State Armed Groups: Re-Thinking International Law

Virtual Roundtable

9 May

University of Waikato

Information Booklet



General Information

A. Programme Schedule

The Roundtable will commence at 8:50am on Thursday, 9 May and finish at 10:30am. (Programme Schedule is copied below).

The conference will run on New Zealand time and will take place via Zoom.

A Google Calendar invite for all conference speakers will be circulated shortly with the Zoom link. You can also find the Zoom details below:

Join from PC, Mac, iOS or Android: <https://waikato.zoom.us/j/82560590158> and follow the install prompts. Or join by phone: +64 (0) 9 801 1188 (New Zealand Toll)

Meeting ID: 825 6059 0158

International numbers available: <https://waikato.zoom.us/j/82560590158>

Or join from a H.323/SIP video conference room system:

Dial: 162.255.37.11 (US West) or 162.255.36.11 (US East)

Meeting ID: 825 6059 0158

PLEASE NOTE: That if you are connecting from a corporate IT environment or behind a firewall the ITS Service Desk strongly suggests you do a test call before joining meeting. To do a test call email the ITS Service Desk on help@waikato.ac.nz or phone them on 07 838 4008. If your app stays in a "connecting" mode or timed out due to "Network error" please ask your IT department to open the following network output ports for Zoom and try again. TCP 8801, 8802, UDP 8801, 8802

Please arrive by 8.45am (New Zealand time) for our Mihi/Welcome at 8:50am. In order to facilitate question time for each presenter, please limit your presentations to a maximum of 25 minutes (unless you have been advised otherwise). All paper abstracts and author biographies have been included in this booklet for attendees' convenience.

B. Recording

We intend to record some of the conference sessions. Please also contact us if you have any concerns about this, as we will otherwise consider your participation to constitute consent to being recorded.

C. Questions

Please contact abrennan@waikato.ac.nz if you have any questions about the event. We look forward to seeing you on 9 May.

3 May 2024	Program
8:50am	<p><i>Mihi/Welcome</i></p> <p><i>Dr Anna Marie Brennan, University of Waikato</i></p>
9:00am	<p>Challenging Gender Norms in International Criminal Law: Does a Remissness to Recognise Women’s Agency Lead to Impunity for International Crimes Committed by Non-State Armed Groups?</p> <p><i>Dr Anna Marie Brennan, University of Waikato</i></p>
9:40am	<p>Female Involvement in Violent Non-State Armed Groups: The Role of Women and the Implications for the International Community</p> <p><i>Alexander Muse, New Zealand Police</i></p>
10:20am	<i>Mihi/Thanks</i>
10:30am	Conference Close

Roundtable Paper Abstracts

1. Challenging Gender Norms in International Criminal Law: Does a Remissness to Recognise Women's Agency Lead to Impunity for International Crimes Committed by Non-State Armed Groups?

Dr Anna Marie Brennan

In 2022, the International Committee of the Red Cross affirmed there were 524 non-state armed groups of humanitarian concern globally. Despite their proliferation and fragmentation over the last 30 years, little attention has been paid to the gender-specific motives for membership and participation in violent non-state armed groups and the implications this has for international law (Loken and Matfess, 2022). Indeed, the majority of existing studies on non-state armed groups overlook the matter of women's participation in combat from the perspective of international criminal law, international humanitarian law, international human rights law and transitional justice. Studies suggest that this is partly due to continued gendered coding of armed conflict situations where men are assumed to have a monopoly on violence and women are presumed to be victims and advocates for peace. This paper will examine whether tenacious gender norms combined with a remissness to recognise women's agency lead to impunity for international crimes committed by non-state armed groups. Some scholars have concerns that the few females of non-state armed groups subjected to criminal proceedings have leveraged socio-political, gendered beliefs in their defenses. Thus, this paper will consider whether female members of violent non-state armed groups convicted of crimes have received shorter than average sentences. If so, the paper will examine whether this is suggestive of permeating gender assumptions about women's lack of political agency and proclivity for non-violence.

Bio:

Dr Anna Marie Brennan is a Senior Lecturer (Above the Bar) where she is a member of the Executive Leadership Team of Te Piringa Faculty of Law. From January to August 2023 she served as Acting Dean. Anna has previously held lectureships at the University of Liverpool and University College Cork. She researches in the areas of international criminal law, international humanitarian law, counterterrorism and outer space law. Her first monograph, *Transnational Terrorist Groups and International Criminal Law* was published by Routledge in 2019 and her second monograph, *The Future of Outer Space Law* will be published by Routledge in 2024. In addition, Anna's research has been published in multiple international peer-reviewed law journals. In 2019, Anna was awarded the Thomson Reuters Prize for Research Excellence and a Borrin Foundation Travel and Learning Award in 2023.

2. Female Involvement in Violent Non-State Armed Groups: The Role of Women and the Implications for the International Community

Alexander Muse

This paper will explore the concept of female membership and participation in violent non-state armed groups, the numerous roles women play within these groups, to address the various implications that this phenomenon might have on human rights, and how it will impact international criminal law concerning female terrorists. Furthermore, this paper will explore military/policing operations taken against females in extremist groups. Male Soldiers/police detaining, searching, and questioning female combatants can be a sensitive issue, especially within Islamic terrorist groups. This paper will explore the proper application of force against female combatants and attempt to determine if military/police organizations are handling this adequately. Finally, this paper will also explore how these women are treated across the international criminal justice system in terms of prosecution and punishment for their roles in extremist organizations, as compared to their male counterparts.

Women are not typically seen as having prominent roles in terrorist organizations. When most people think of violent non-state armed groups, such as designated terrorist organizations, the thought of a female participant likely does not immediately come to mind. This is especially true in terms of Islamic terrorist organizations that have traditionally been dominated by male actors. Just as gender roles have shifted across Western societies, there have been apparent shifts in gender roles within these non-state groups, including within Islamic extremist groups. Terrorist organizations across the globe have been seeing the enlistment of female agents, in active combatant and non-combatant support roles. As women take up a more active role within terrorist organizations, the organizations are also being forced to evolve with the changes, as they adjust to having women within the ranks. As women train, fight, and kill on behalf of these terrorist groups, the international law enforcement community has been forced to recognize this problem, and to act against it.

Bio:

Alexander Muse is an Intelligence Analyst with NZ Police. He has over 15 years of policing experience, including roles with civilian and military police organizations, in the USA and NZ. While in the US Army, he was an Anti-Terrorism Officer and Protective Services Special Agent, with the assignment of protecting senior government officials (such as the Secretary of Defence). Alex was awarded the Global War on Terror Expeditionary Medal for military service overseas between 2015-2016. He served as a Polygraph Examiner with the US Government and holds a Master's Degree in Criminal Justice from Webster University.