# Public Law and Human Rights Forum

CityU
香港城市大學
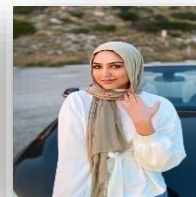City University of Hong Kong

**CPLR, Webinar Series on Asian Perspectives on Human Rights**

## Who Won the War in Afghanistan? –The Present and Future of Human Rights and Governance Under the Taliban Regime

### THURSDAY, 26 MAY 2022 (ONLINE 15:00-16:30 HKT)

Afghanistan's history is fraught with conflict. During the 19th century, Afghanistan was a classic buffer state between Russia and British India up until 1947. Afghanistan then suffered a brutal civil war in the 1970s as well as multiple foreign invasions, including the Soviet Union in 1979 and the US and UK in 2001. This was followed by 20 years of war during which time serious violations of international humanitarian law, including war crimes, sexual violence as well as indiscriminate and targeted killings were carried out by warring parties. The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan after the withdrawal of US and NATO troops in 2021 resulted in rebellion that included the loss of people's livelihoods and the erosion of human rights, particularly women's and girls' rights. Furthermore, certain countries which viewed the Taliban as illegitimate retaliated by freezing Afghanistan's national reserves, which caused millions of dollars in lost income, aid cut-offs and cash shortages, thereby depriving the population basic access to food, water, shelter, and health care. In response, Deborah Lyons, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), called upon the international community to prevent 'irreversible' damage in Afghanistan by engaging with Afghanistan's de-facto authorities, the Taliban. Although no country officially recognises the Taliban government, some countries like China suggest that the Taliban can be recognised as a legitimate government 'when conditions are ripe'. As an unstable Afghanistan is clearly a security threat to its people, neighbours and global peace and security, the bigger question is how to and on what terms should the international community engage with the Taliban government to establish peace and stability and to protect the human rights of its people?

The CPLR is organising this 90-minute thematic webinar, which is a part of the CityU Series: Asian Perspectives on Human Rights. This event aims to provide a critical discussion on questions such as:
(1) Who won the war in Afghanistan? What did it achieve and what still needs to be done?
(2) Why is the human rights and governance situation in Afghanistan deteriorating under the Taliban government?
(3) What challenges do women and girls face under the Taliban regime? How can we prevent conflict related sexual violence in Afghanistan and improve victims' access to justice?
(4) How can the international community influence the Taliban government towards improving the human rights and governance situation in Afghanistan?
(5) How can the international community aid the Taliban government in building an economically stable Afghanistan?
(6) The Taliban is not recognised by the international community, but China is suggesting recognising the Taliban 'when conditions are ripe'? What are those conditions?
(7) How can the international community support local Afghans in creating sustainable change from within?



**MODERATOR:** **LONE, Fozia,** Associate Professor & Associate Director Public Law and Human Rights Forum (CPLR), School of Law, City University of Hong Kong.

**PANELLISTS:**
- *WANG, Jiangyu*- Professor & Director, Centre for Chinese and Comparative Law (RCCL), School of Law, City University of Hong Kong
- *NILAND, Norah* – Co-Founder, Activist, United Against Inhumanity
- *FRY, James* - Associate Professor of Law, Faculty of Law, the University of Hong Kong
- *PAYKHAR, Sangar*- Host of the Afghan Eye Podcast, Freelance Journalist, and a Commentator on Afghan Current Affairs
- *KHATAB, Pashtana*- Clinical Psychologist/Therapist and Active Afghan Diaspora

Please register at https://cityu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMkc-2srjkuE9NDD9x7hQ93xtkmA3eiZ0Gj
After registering, you will receive a confirmation email, and Zoom link for joining the event.