

International Legal Order and the Middle East: National and International of a Global Pandemic beyond Regional Engagements

Tuesday 22 June 2021 09:00 (1h 30m)

Historically, crisis is bound to reveal aspects of chaos and inequality. This is particularly when addressing economy, lives and livelihood is to take place within the sense of sustainability and human rights. The outbreak of the pandemic has its clear implications on inequalities all around the world and beyond national limits. It is in such extraordinary times that these implications expand and become much more visible and much more acute. While, Emergency rule and governance has always been conventionally a part of the lexicon in development postcolonial contexts, the emergency of the moment exposes a much larger international inability of most systems around the world to socially, economically, and medically protect the most vulnerable in societies and clearly fail to have a sense of social security.

Emergency in the last at least two decades was more often used internationally in relevance to the fight against terrorism. The novelty and unprecedented environment have been always argued to justify measures and restrictions on personal liberties and fundamental human rights. The concurrent vagueness however of the language used was enough to trigger the everlasting challenge to the hollowness of liberal legal rationales and associated international principles of temporality, proportion and necessity let alone state discretion over all of the above. Scholars of third world reading of international law argue that emergency governance as a colonial legal technique has been absorbed into the norms of international law and politics. It is in the international legal domain that it is so hard to argue rupture from the history and the end of the era of colonialism exclusion and domination. It has been argued that colonial experience in the Third World was one of the main fibres to establish the international system with regard to crises.

Although, the current crisis be it of international health nature that does not discriminate, from the outset, across race ethnicity or religion, is not particularly exceptional neither novel and it will not be temporal since wider cross-sectional inequalities nationally and internationally predated this current manifestation of state of exception. However, what this crisis unveils in terms of inequality and the presence of developing reality within neo liberal states, will recondition our present and future.

This study will consider, inter alia, the reality of economic and social rights in the Arab world it will highlight the need to rethink social structures at further international level beyond the countries of the region. It will explore how the pandemic of Covid 19 has magnified existing economic grievances and exacerbated their effect throughout the world beyond states that are characterised with development issues. The discussion seeks to engage with the role of international institutions in offering a form of coordination and protection (pursue new practices?) and to whether this part of the world could afford the same kind of exceptional measures expected by international regulations in other countries and the consequences of these measures on economic and social securities throughout the world.

For this purpose, the roundtable will explore the range of responses offered by countries in the region and beyond such as responses in Europe and UK. To understand these responses, the roundtable will attempt to reflect on available International policies and geopolitical contexts. The focus on the area's policies will be addressed within three categories of states; states of political fragility (such as Palestine, Syria, Yemen and Libya), states of economic fragility (High debt, the size of informal economy and budget deficit such as Lebanon and Tunisia) and oil exporting states (States in the Arab Gulf). At the international level, international policies in the UK and some European states will be addressed to stand at divergence and convergences offered by the available International norms and the structures of the legal order.

Track Classification: International Studies of the Mediterranean, Middle East & Asia Working Group