

## **Global Minority Rights Summer School** **(GMRSS) 2024:** **Environmental Justice and Minority Rights**

**July 7-13, 2024**

The *Tom Lantos Institute* (TLI), the *Ludovika University of Public Service* (Budapest), and the *Human Rights Consortium* (School of Advanced Study, University of London) invite applications for the twelfth **Global Minority Rights Summer School**. The theme of the 2024 Summer School is “Environmental Justice and Minority Rights”.

### **Background**

In a 2021 statement at the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, noted that “human action – and inaction – have brought us to a ‘triple planetary crisis’ of climate change, pollution and nature loss” that has impacted a wide range of human rights, such as the rights to food, water, education, housing, health, and development.<sup>1</sup> The “triple planetary crisis” referred to by Bachelet in her statement has amplified existing conflicts and structural inequalities, and has had the most severe impact on persons in already marginalised situations, including persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities, in terms of their access to basic services and resources, justice and security, and the protection of their human rights.

In order to address the challenges caused and exacerbated by climate change, pollution, and the loss of nature, the United Nations is increasingly focusing on environmental justice as a key priority. Although there is no universally accepted definition of “environmental justice” at the global level, it is generally understood to encompass the “fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies”.<sup>2</sup> Environmental justice entails a number of considerations, including intra- and intergenerational environmental equity, the distribution of environmental benefits and burdens in a manner that avoids contributing to the further marginalization

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<sup>1</sup> Environmental Justice. Securing our right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New York, 2021, available at: <https://www.undp.org/publications/environmental-justice-securing-our-right-clean-healthy-and-sustainable-environment>.

<sup>2</sup> Definition of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, available at: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>.

of disadvantaged groups, remedies for environmental harm, transparent and inclusive decision-making in environmental matters, and environmental sustainability as a condition for justice.<sup>3</sup>

Recent UN documents, such as *The Highest Aspiration: A Call to Action for Human Rights, Human Rights Council Resolution 48/13 on the Human Right to a Clean, Healthy, and Sustainable Environment*, and the UNDP's paper *Environmental Justice: Securing our right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment* have emphasized the need for a broader conceptualization of environmental justice focusing on the protection of human rights, access to justice and effective remedies for environment- and climate-related harms, combating environmental racism, as well as ensuring a “just transition”<sup>4</sup>.

Such issues are of key concern for persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities. The impact of climate change, pollution, and the loss of nature often disproportionately and differently affects disadvantaged groups with limited access to resources and less means to respond to the consequences of environmental changes. In particular, climate change can have an impact on housing, employment, food security, migration, and conflict, all of which are acute issues for persons belonging to minority groups.

The 2024 Global Minority Rights Summer School therefore seeks to explore the complex issues of environmental justice and climate change and their implication for persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities, while also examining how minority rights can be mainstreamed into environmental laws, regulations, and policies to ensure that minorities are not left behind in the pursuit for environmental justice.

The foundation of the curriculum of the Summer School will focus on the international normative framework for the protection of persons belonging to minorities, including legal standards and monitoring mechanisms at the international and regional levels. By critically engaging with these issues, the Summer School is designed to offer participants new perspectives on the protection of the human rights of minorities.

### **Invited Speakers**

This unique, global summer school offers participants the opportunity to interact and discuss with leading experts in the field, including the UN Special Rapporteur on minority issues, Professor Nicolas Levrat.

The summer school will bring together internationally-known experts, activists, policy makers, civil society representatives, academics, and other key stakeholders in a one-week interactive program.

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<sup>3</sup> Environmental Justice. Securing our right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New York, 2021, available at: <https://www.undp.org/publications/environmental-justice-securing-our-right-clean-healthy-and-sustainable-environment>

<sup>4</sup> According to the International Labour Organization, a “just transition” means “greening the economy in a way that is as fair and inclusive as possible to everyone concerned, creating decent work opportunities and leaving no one behind.” This definition is available at: [https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/WCMS\\_824102/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/green-jobs/WCMS_824102/lang--en/index.htm).

In addition to theoretical knowledge, participants will gain valuable practical skills for engaging with the global governance structures of minority rights. Participants will also be given an opportunity to make presentations on relevant subjects of interest to them, including existing research and/or advocacy work.

The Summer School will host approximately 20 participants from around the world, providing them with the opportunity to gain theoretical knowledge and practical skills from leading experts and practitioners in international human rights law, political science, international relations, and other fields.

Learning aims of the summer school will include:

- Gaining a critical overview of the normative framework governing the rights of minorities at the international and regional levels;
- Learning about recent developments in the international minority protection regime and opportunities to engage with it;
- Discussing current norms, issues, and challenges related to minority rights and environmental justice;
- Exploring the roles that various international and regional mechanisms, civil society, and other actors play in addressing minority rights and issues related to environmental justice;
- Examining case studies related to specific minority groups and to the issue of environmental justice and minority rights;
- Developing practical skills through group work, discussions, and participant presentations on relevant topics of their choice.

**The tuition fee is 150 Euros.**

**Financial support is available for a limited number of participants.** Please find the details below.

**To apply, fill in the application form, save it with the following name: 2024GMRSS\_lastname\_firstname, and submit it to [gmrss@tomlantosinstitute.hu](mailto:gmrss@tomlantosinstitute.hu).** Please do not send any other documents. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.

**The deadline for applying is Sunday, March 17, 2024, 18:00 p.m. CET.** Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application as soon as possible following the deadline.

## **Who should participate?**

- MA and PhD students who wish to acquire knowledge and skills beneficial for their future careers in academia or in practice-oriented professions;
- Public servants, decision-makers, teachers in higher education institutions and journalists with an interest in minority rights, diversity, equality, and relevant international law;
- Members of civil society organizations, practitioners;
- Everyone who is interested in recent developments, current theories and advanced training in the field of minority rights protection.

A strong command of English is required.

Information about previous Global Minority Rights Summer Schools [is available here](#). In addition, videos from previous years are [available at this link](#).

## **Financial Support**

The following types of financial support are offered by TLI:

- Full scholarships to cover the tuition fee and travel to Budapest.
- Partial scholarships to cover the tuition fee.
- Accommodation is provided to all participants on the campus of the Ludovika University of Public Service in Budapest.

Applicants for scholarships must have:

- A proven current interest or work in the field of minority rights;
- A strong motivation to improve their understanding and skills;
- Demonstrated plans for future activities or a career that would utilize the knowledge, contacts, and skills acquired.

We strongly encourage people belonging to national or ethnic, linguistic, religious or racialized minorities, as well as Indigenous people to apply for the Summer School.

## **Location and Institutions**

The Summer School is organized by the *Tom Lantos Institute* (TLI), the *Ludovika University of Public Service* (Budapest), and the *Human Rights Consortium* (School of Advanced Study, University of London). The summer school will be held in-person at the Ludovika University of Public Service (Budapest). Preparatory information and learning materials will be available via the Moodle online learning platform. Some guest lectures may be delivered in a hybrid format.