

Gender Parity in International Courts and Organs: Moving the Agenda Forward After the Groundbreaking Human Council's Report on the Representation of Women in International Human Rights Mechanisms

25 January 2022, 17:00 – 18:00 Zoom Webinar

Abstract

In 2015, a group of female human rights lawyers launched GQUAL, a campaign to address women's underrepresentation in international justice. As part of our work, GQUAL contributed to the adoption of a report by the UN Human Rights Council Advisory Committee on "Current levels of representation of women in human rights organs and mechanisms" in 2021. This ground-breaking report was the first document prepared by the Human Rights Council on the issue of gender balance in UN Treaty Bodies and Special Procedures. It provides a clear roadmap for States, the UN, and other actors to achieve gender equality. In addition to acknowledging that underrepresentation of women in international bodies is a long-standing issue, the report concludes with a set of targeted recommendations to the Human Rights Council and its organs, the States, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Among the most important recommendations, the report focuses on the role of States in selecting and nominating more women to international positions and devising voting mechanisms that make gender parity in the composition of international courts and organs a reality. Moreover, to achieve success, the role of the Human Rights Council will remain essential to follow up on the key actors identified in the report and press for the adoption of the necessary measures to ensure women's equal representation in the not-so-distant future. Ultimately, as the report acknowledges, the underrepresentation of women in international justice not only breaches the principle of equality and non-discrimination, but also questions the effectiveness and legitimacy of UN bodies and mechanisms, limiting their potential and impact.

Biography of the speaker



Professor Claudia Martin is the Co-Director of the Academy on Human Rights and Humanitarian Law and Professorial Lecturer in Residence at American University Washington College of Law. She is also a co-founder and serves as a member of the Secretariat of GQUAL, a campaign to promote gender parity representation in international court and organs. At the Academy, Prof. Martin is the Co-Director of the LL.M in International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law, and oversees the academic coordination of the Program of Advanced Studies in Human Rights and Humanitarian Law and the Inter-American Moot Court Competition. She is the co-convenor of a project on "Ending Impunity for Sexual Gender Violence in Latin America" and provides technical advice to domestic and regional courts through amicus briefs and expert opinions. Since 2021 she is one of the founders and coordinators of the Latin American Network for Gender-based Strategic Litigation (ReLeG). Prof. Martin specializes in international and comparative human rights law and Inter-American human rights law.

This lecture is part of the Gender Lecture Series 'Know the GAP! Looking for Gender Parity' organized by **Prof. Elisa Fornalé** who leads the SNSF-funded research project 'Gender Equality in the Mirror (GEM): Clothing the Invisibility of Women's Participation at International Level' housed at the World Trade Institute, University of Bern.

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