

22nd International Humanitarian and Security Conference:

Upholding Refugee Protection, Human Rights and Humanitarian Law: The Role of Geneva in International Humanitarian Action

Thursday-Friday, 16-17 February 2017

Webster University Geneva's Department of International Relations, together with the Webster Humanitarian Association (WHA), will hold the twenty-second International Humanitarian and Security Conference on 16-17 February 2017. This event is being organized with the cooperation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and with the support of the Government of the Republic and Canton of Geneva.

The aim of the conference will be to discuss and to assess many facets of the vulnerability and protection of refugee populations and to propose various steps and solutions to alleviate the current global crisis.

The primary themes of the 22nd International Humanitarian and Security Conference will be:

- The Role of Geneva in International Humanitarian Action
- The Continuing Challenge of the Respect of International Humanitarian Law
- The Degradation of the Environment and Human Rights
- The Fight against Human Trafficking on the Migration Routes
- The Role of Private Foundations: Nonprofit Organizations and Humanitarian Action
- The Role of Prevention: The Responsibility to Protect

The trials and tribulations that these fleeing populations experience, from war-torn environments to the perilous journeys that they are forced to embark on, result in a dire need of assistance. Emotional and mental stress felt by people affected by different stages of an armed conflict is often neglected. The horrors of war provoke post-traumatic stress, which can only be detrimental to both physical and mental well-being of individuals and their families.

The International Humanitarian and Security Conference has become a long-standing tradition at Webster University, held annually in Geneva, a city long regarded as the international humanitarian capital, with the largest concentration of international organizations and NGOs in the world. Since 1996, the Conference has been organized in close cooperation with the UNHCR and the ICRC. As in previous years, the conference will be held under the auspices of the Government of the Republic and Canton of Geneva.

For the World Refugee Day in June, Mr Grandi released a statement in which he affirmed that: "The UNHCR sees 2016 as a watershed moment for the refugee cause. As wars spiral out of control we feel this must be a year to take collective responsibility and action to end the conflicts, which force people to flee and also to help the millions of people whose lives have been destroyed by this violence." In September 2016, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants expressed the political commitment of world leaders to save lives, protect rights on a global scale and proposed actions for

implementation. We are now facing the most important refugee crisis in Europe since the end of the Second World War and walls are not the right answer to this crisis. The appointment of former UNHCR António Guterres to the position of UN Secretary-General symbolizes the paramount importance of this global crisis.

The 2017 edition also marks the merger between Webster University Geneva's Security Forum with the International Humanitarian Conference in order to offer a holistic approach to the increasingly complex challenges of today's world. The Department of International Relations trusts that the security and humanitarian fields of research can be mutually reinforcing. Security and humanitarian actions can be dealt with as a *unicum*, because they are intrinsically interconnected. Additionally, this new format will broaden the conference's interdisciplinary spectrum.

For more information, please visit and register online (www.webster.ch), or contact directly the conference chair, Dr Oreste Foppiani, at foppiani@webster.ch.

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CALL FOR PAPERS/SPEAKERS

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The two-day conference will be held at the Geneva International Conference Center (CICG). English-French simultaneous interpretation will be provided throughout the conference. Presentations will last fifteen minutes. Speakers must send an abstract of their proposal with a title and outline (1-2 pages) and a short biography. The above-mentioned documents should be received by the deadline of 13 January 2017 in order to establish a thorough program of approximately thirty panelists. When submitting a proposal, please specify the theme most relevant to your topic.

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