

# International Law Roundtable

**Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna**  
**Aula Talento all'Opera - Palazzo Pilo Boyl | [Webex](#)**  
**21 May 2025 - 2:30 pm**

## International law, nature, and violence: conceptualizing the ecology of war and peace

### *Speaker:*

**Eliana Cusato**, Assistant Professor of International Law, University of Amsterdam

The wars in Gaza and Ukraine have brought the ecological dimensions of military conflict back to the fore. Yet, the 'environment' is more than a 'silent victim' of modern warfare, something to be legally protected and cherished. To better grasp the relationship between international law, nature, and violence, Prof. Cusato suggests turning to the work of political scientists, ecologists, and economists. Since at least the 1980s, research in peace and conflict studies has sought to explain how different environmental issues may contribute to the outbreak, prolongation, and resolution of violent conflict. While this literature is not monolithic, some theories have fed into international law influencing discourses and practices. In this talk, she will offer an overview of legal engagements with the 'ecology of war and peace' by focusing on two 'issues' that have preoccupied international lawyers and institutions: natural resource 'wealth' as paving the way to civil wars and humanitarian atrocities; and resource 'scarcity' as threatening global peace and security. Drawing upon different intellectual traditions, she will unpack the changing ideas of nature in rules governing war and the transition to peace, and argue that international law ends up normalizing (and even legitimizing) forms of slow and structural ecological violence. Lastly, she will consider how foregrounding the political ecology of international law may open new lines of inquiry and help rethink dominant approaches within our field.

### *Chair:*

**Riccardo Luporini**, Postdoctoral Researcher, Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies

The **International Law Roundtable** provides a forum for engaging in meaningful dialogue on contemporary issues in international law, showcasing recent research by our scholars or guest speakers.

**Convenors:** Matteo Colorio, Lorenzo Gasbarri, Alexander Kohler, Riccardo Luporini, Federica Montanaro and Emanuele Sommario.