

Call for Papers

The Italian journal *Diritti umani e diritto internazionale* (Human rights and international law, see <https://www.mulino.it/riviste/issn/1971-7105>) intends to host a forum on 'Deconsolidation of Democracy, Populism, and the Role of Human Rights Law/Scholars' (Forum). Professor Pasquale De Sena, the Editor-in-Chief of the journal and Secretary of the Italian Society of International Law is seeking suitable contributors.

Final contributions should be between 5,000 and 9,000 words (excluding footnotes). The journal prefers quality over quantity. Contributions are ultimately due in June 2019 (though it will be for the Editor-in-Chief of the journal to set a more precise date). Publication is planned for the fall of 2019 in the summer issue of *Diritti umani e diritto internazionale*. It is also hoped to host a conference or seminar in Milan on the topic of the Forum. The preferred language for the submissions is English, but contributions in French, Italian and Spanish are also welcome.

All those who may be interested in contributing should contact Professor De Sena at pasquale.desena@unicatt.it and/or Dr Andrea Carcano at andrea.carcano@unimore.it (cell phone: 3883568938) to discuss their interest, ideas, and questions.

Here are a few lines to introduce the Forum and some of the topics it hopes to cover:

Far from ushering in a new world order based on shared governance and unity, let alone a well-ordered society, globalization has unleashed economic and financial forces of impressive strength and reach. In what resembles an economic arena more than an international community, notwithstanding areas of global governance, private actors - especially financial firms and transnational corporations - compete with each other for profit and with States in the provision of services and opportunities. Globalization made it possible for inequality to decrease between at least some countries, pulling several hundred million people above the threshold of absolute poverty. However, globalization (together with other factors such as technological developments) produced winners and losers, causing a rise in inequality within certain countries.

In light of these developments, a snapshot of contemporary international society might capture the gradual affirmation of a competitive, multipolar world order fractured in its ideals and aspirations, and 'between the ultra-rich and the middle and lower classes'.

Nation-States, especially some democratic States in the Western world, appear in difficulty. Discontent, protest and, at times, resistance define the response of the layperson—especially, but not exclusively, after the 2007-08 financial crisis. Alienated citizens who, for various reasons, did not benefit from globalization embraced populist movements and political parties that challenge globalization. Somewhat unexpectedly, a process of economic globalization has been accompanied by a shift from the global to the local that is a process of political localisation rather than political integration.

Adopting a legal and, where necessary, multidisciplinary perspective, the Forum would like to try to join the dots between these different phenomena, and reflect on their meaning and consequences for the application and effectiveness of human rights law.

In view of the foregoing, some of the questions that may be addressed include:

1. Do economic globalization and populism, alone or jointly, have an impact on inequality and human rights protection?
2. What does economic inequality (within nations) mean from a human rights perspective? Is there a normative framework regimenting it?
3. What is the relationship between populism and human rights?
4. Is the process of deconsolidation of liberal democracies a threat to human rights? If so, how?
5. What role - if any - should, from a theoretical perspective, legal scholars play in the context of, and in response to, such sweeping economic and political processes?

One reference point to inspire the Forum is the article of Professor Philip Alston 'Populist Challenge to Human Rights' published in 2017 in the *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, Volume 9, Issue 1, pages 1–15. This article captures some key questions and issues (ranging from human rights practice to growing inequality within nations, the vulnerability of democracy and the role of scholars in response to populist claims and others) that, in the view of the editors of the Forum, deserve further attention and reflection.