

LAW & RELIGION SPEAKER SERIES

Islamic Challenges to the Universality of International Law

Prof. Ebrahim Afsah
University of Copenhagen

Chairperson: Prof. Jaclyn Neo, NUS Law

DATE: 17 July 2018, Tuesday

TIME: 12.30pm to 2.00pm

VENUE: Lee Sheridan Conference Room
Eu Tong Sen Building, Level 1, NUS (Bukit Timah Campus)

The universality and coherence of modern international law is increasingly challenged by technical fragmentation and identity-driven claims to particularity. This talk critically examines both the historical contribution of Islamic law to the regulation of international relations and whether relations with and between Islamic nations are in fact different. How to meet the justified demand for greater recognition of diversity, with an intellectually honest critical engagement with non-Western cultural and legal traditions has become one of the defining challenges of the discipline of international law. Accepting facile claims derived from a selective and highly idealised reading of dogmatic texts cannot do justice to our understanding of the actual operation of pre-modern, non-Western international legal relations, nor of the proper functional role and logic of modern international law. A selective, idealised, often hortatory reading of the dogmatic and historical record of non-Western societies does not prepare us to evaluate the possibility, indeed desirability of alternative systems of international law, as claimed for instance by an alleged 'Islamic law of nations', *siyar*.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER



Born in Iran and raised in Germany, Professor Ebrahim Afsah commenced his undergraduate law degree at the School of Oriental & African Studies, London, followed by graduate work at Trinity College Dublin, the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and the Max Planck Institute for Public International Law in Heidelberg. Having set up the Institute's legal transfer programme in Afghanistan, he continued for a decade as a legal and public administration reform expert in the region, working for a large number of national and international organisations, including the German government, the EU, USAID, UNDP, UNODC and the Worldbank. He returned to academia in 2012 as an associate professor of international law at the University of Copenhagen and is currently professor of Islamic law and ethics at the University of Vienna. His research interests include the history of international law, law of armed conflict, international relations theory, comparative government and state-building and Islamic public law.

REGISTRATION

There is no registration fee for this seminar, but seats are limited.
Light refreshments will be provided on a first-come, first-served basis.
Please register by **13 July 2018, Friday**.
For enquiries, please contact Alexandria at cals@nus.edu.sg

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