CALL FOR PAPERS AND PANEL PROPOSALS

The first TWAIL conference in the global South will be held in Cairo from 22 to 24 February 2015. In the context of the ongoing revolutionary processes across the Middle East and North Africa, the thematic focus of the conference is that of the intellectual as a political actor: the animation of praxis, broadly conceived as reflection, agitation, and transformative action.

The theme necessitates self-reflection as TWAIL has sought to distinguish itself from other critical legal approaches through its political and transformative commitments. We invite presentations and panels that seek to engage with these issues. For instance, how do we understand and interrogate our roles as intellectuals in political life? What is the relationship between our scholarly endeavors and societal structures; whether preserving the status quo, shaping reform, or advocating for radical change? What are the various conduits that link our work as intellectuals with politicians, activists, advocates, revolutionaries, civil servants, soldiers, artists, writers, union representatives, civil society leaders, peasant movements, and so on? How does the idea of TWAIL as praxis relate to TWAIL as theory and/or method? How does it differ from other notions of praxis?

As with previous TWAIL conferences, this is an opportunity for us to take stock and look to the future. It provides a forum for the TWAIL community to reconnect – this time in the global South. At the same time, the conference seeks to deepen and re-imagine engagement with underexplored alliances such as with indigenous movements, environmental issues, and transnational intellectual and political actors in the Middle East and North Africa. To this end, the conference also seeks to pursue relationships with potential interdisciplinary allies, whether scholars or practitioners, in cognate fields.

We welcome submissions of proposed presentations or panels (composed of three speakers) relating to the above themes. Applications should include:

- An abstract of your proposed presentation (300 words maximum) or panel (900 words maximum).
- Your name(s), institutional affiliation(s), and contact information.

Applications should be emailed to twailcairo@gmail.com by 15 July 2014.

The conference will be hosted by the Department of Law at the American University in Cairo, with the support of the National University of Ireland Maynooth, the University of Windsor, and Osgoode Hall Law School at York University. Limited ground transportation and all conference catering, materials, and activities will be covered by the host organizations. A limited amount of funding for travel costs and accommodation will be available to assist presenters based in the global South on the basis of financial need. Please indicate at the time of submission if you will need such assistance.

We look forward to seeing you in Cairo.
About TWAIL

Third World Approaches to International Law (TWAIL) is a movement encompassing scholars and practitioners of international law and policy who are concerned with issues related to the global South. The scholarly agendas associated with TWAIL are diverse but the general theme of its interventions is to unpack and deconstruct the colonial legacies of international law and engage in decolonizing efforts. The term was coined in the 1990s through an alliance of scholars committed to critically investigating the mutually constitutive relationship between international law and the third world/global South. For legal projects operating at the margins of the mainstream discipline, the TWAIL network enables solidarity and mutual support through a shared political commitment to advocating for the interests of the global South. It endeavors to give voice to viewpoints systemically underrepresented or silenced. The group first met at Harvard Law School in 1997 and has grown rapidly since then, with conferences at Osgoode Hall Law School in 2001, Albany Law School in 2007, and Oregon Law School in 2011. This conference brings together the first major gathering of TWAIL scholars in the global South. Building upon past TWAIL events, and with praxis in mind, the conference aims to provide the space for scholars to continue to collaborate and conspire.

TWAIL in the Middle East & North Africa

International law has played a pivotal role in shaping the Middle East and North African region, from its borders and its politics to its economics and its natural environment. Changing regional dynamics in recent years highlight the critical space that the region continues to occupy in international affairs. Young Arab and African scholars, practitioners and activists persistently interrogate and productively engage with an international system that has played a complex and often detrimental role in local struggles for equality and social justice. As the region evolves through a time of change, TWAIL can shed light on the conservative, transformative, and radical potential of international law and policy. Additionally, while Arab scholars and jurists such as Mohammed Bedjaoui and Georges Abi-Saab were integral to the underpinnings of TWAIL, voices from the region remain relatively under-represented in contemporary TWAIL scholarship. This conference aims to encourage and highlight the work of young Arab and African scholars of international law, linking them with each other and with existing global networks of research and support. The hope is to connect, in a mutually beneficial fashion, innovative thinking and critical practice on international law and policy from the Middle East and North Africa with that in the rest of the world.