

Announcement: Third International and Comparative Disaster Law Essay Contest, 2020

Call for Abstracts

Introduction

This announcement calls for **the submission of abstracts not exceeding 500 words** for consideration for the third “**International and Comparative Disaster Law Essay Contest**”. This contest is co-sponsored by the [International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies](#) (IFRC), the American Society of International Law [Disaster Law Interest Group](#) (ASIL DLIG), the Jean Monnet Project ‘Disseminating Disaster Law for Europe’ at Roma Tre University and the [International Disaster Law Project](#) (IDL) of the Universities of Bologna, Roma Tre, Scuola Superiore Sant’Anna, and Uninettuno.

The contest, open to current university students and recent graduates, aims to stimulate creative thinking and **analysis about disaster law, from an international or comparative perspective.**

Background

Over the last decade, natural and technological disasters, such as floods, earthquakes, droughts and oils spills, killed around 700.000 people and 2 billions of individuals have been affected worldwide. In response to related challenges, there have been several legal and policy global initiatives which are aimed at addressing these issues. These include the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Sustainable Development Goals 2015, the Paris Agreement on climate change, the adoption of the Draft Articles on the ‘protection of persons in the event of disasters’ by the UN International Law Commission, and technical assistance provided by the IFRC and its partners to implement tools such as the [IDRL Guidelines](#), the [Checklist for Law and DRR](#) and the [Checklist on Law and disaster preparedness and response](#) at the domestic level.

Scholarship about legal and regulatory frameworks for reducing disaster risks, responding to disasters and recovering from them, is however still in its infancy. Yet states are increasingly turning to legal tools to fight disasters, at the national, regional and international levels. Are they learning from each other about what works well and what does not? Are international instruments meeting their potential to increase cooperation in disaster risk management and humanitarian response? Are international legal tools being translated effectively to the national level in terms of implementation and enforcement?

This essay contest reserved to university students aims to stimulate creative thinking and analysis about disaster law, in relation to these and other questions, from an international or comparative perspective. The first contest, held in 2015, drew submissions from 12 countries. The winning essay was: Giovanni Sciacaluga, whose paper was entitled [Climate change related disasters and human displacement: towards an effective management system](#) (2015). More than 50 candidates participated in the second essay contest (2017) which was won by Miki Ishimori, whose paper was entitled [Right to housing after Fukushima nuclear disaster: through a lens of international human rights perspective.](#)

The contest will be managed according to a two-part process:

Step 1): Participants are requested to submit an abstract not exceeding 500 words dealing with disaster law, analysed from an international or comparative law perspective. **Abstracts should be received no later than 15 February 2020.**

Step 2): After the abstracts have been reviewed, the judge's committee will invite the contributors of the most promising five abstracts to submit full essays of no more than 6,000 words (including a 150 word (maximum) abstract and including all footnotes) by **15 June 2020.**

Eligibility and requirements:

- The contest is open only to (1) students enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate degree program (as master or PhD students) at any university (anywhere in the world) at the time of submission; or (2) to students who have graduated from such programmes within 12 months of the final date of their registration period. Those whose abstracts are selected for essay submission will be required to produce documentary evidence of their registration as students.
- Essays may examine any issue related to law and disasters, but must do so either from an international or comparative law perspective. Comparative essays should examine laws or legal issues from no less than two countries.
- Abstract submissions must not exceed **500 words**. Abstracts (and the essays) must be written solely by the candidate(s), in English, and may not have been submitted for publication elsewhere. This restriction will be lifted after the contest is completed, and, for the winners and "honourable mention" papers, after publication as IFRC Working Papers. Papers may have more than one author, so long as all authors meet all the criteria listed here.

Deadlines and method of submission

- The deadline for the submission of the abstract is **11:59 p.m. Central European Time, 15 February 2020. Please refer to subsequent information on the 'Competition procedures' for further details.** Participants will be notified if their abstract has been selected by mid-March 2020.
- The deadline for the submission of the essay for those abstracts that have been selected is 11:59 p.m. Central European Time, **15 June 2020.**
- Abstracts and essays shall be submitted to disaster.law@ifrc.org as Microsoft Word attachments. In the subject line, please state "Submission: International and Comparative Disaster Law Essay Contest". Questions may be directed to the same email address.
- By submitting papers, candidates represent that they fulfil the eligibility requirements of the competition.

Award and announcement of the winning essay

- The winner of the contest will receive:
 - A monetary prize in the amount of Euro 500.
 - A free annual membership in the American Society of International Law.
- The winner will also have his or her paper published as a "Working Paper" of the IFRC's Disaster Law Programme. They will retain copyright of their papers and may subsequently publish them elsewhere, according to the terms of the Working Papers series.

- Other “honourable mention” papers, as selected by the final jury and if of appropriate quality, may be published as a “Working Paper” of the IFRC’s Disaster Law Programme. They will retain copyright of their papers and may subsequently publish them elsewhere, according to the terms of the Working Papers series.
- A message announcing the name of the winner and runners up of the contest will be sent to all members of the ASIL DLIG, as well as to the co-sponsors and made public on the ASIL website. An e-mail with the final outcome will also be sent to all who submitted papers.

Competition procedures and selection criteria

- The file containing the abstract shall not include personal information on the candidate in order to keep a blind review process. On a separate attachment (or in the email accompanying the abstract), each candidate should include: the title, author’s name, author’s mailing address, email address, and phone number, university name and address, and academic year of enrolment (or the day of the graduation). In addition, contestants should include the following sentence: “[Name of author(s)] is the sole author(s) of this paper and complies with all requirements of this contest. This abstract has not been submitted for publication elsewhere.”
- Personal data provided by the candidates may be shared between the IFRC, ASIL and Roma Tre University and shall be handled in accordance with applicable data protection laws and policies.
- A submitted essay will be regarded as ‘published’ and therefore not eligible if it has been accepted for publication by a journal or book. Students are welcome to submit essays based on coursework that was undertaken during their degree programs so long as they meet all of the other eligibility requirements.
- Reviewers and judges will be selected by agreement of the co-sponsors of the contest among renowned experts.
- The assessment of the papers will be based on the following criteria:
 - quality of the paper’s scholarship;
 - originality of the paper’s research; and
 - relevance of the paper to this area of research.