

Good morning, good afternoon and good evening.

Welcome to Seminar I of the Monique & Roland Weyl People's Academy of International Law. I am Marjorie Cohn, Dean of the People's Academy, and a member of the Bureau of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers.

Our topic for today is "HOW TO RESIST IMPERIALIST ATTACKS ON INTERNATIONAL LAW."

Our distinguished faculty for this course is *Edre Olalia*, *Camilo Eduardo Umaña Hernández*, and *Phyllis Bennis*. Each of them will speak for 25-30 minutes, followed by Q&A.

We have Spanish, French, and English translation. You can select your language at the bottom of your screen. Please put your questions in the Q&A box for our discussion. We will soon post on our website, peoplesacademy.net, the faculty presentations in English, Spanish, and French, along with written presentations and links to relevant articles. You will receive an email when the program is posted.

In their war of aggression, the US and Israeli militaries have killed at least 1,348 people in Iran, forced over 3.2 million Iranians from their homes, targeted schools and hospitals, and bombed oil facilities, producing toxic black rain. The Israeli military has killed at least 773 people in Lebanon, forced over 800,000 from their homes, targeted apartment buildings and public shelters, carpet-bombed entire villages, and deployed white phosphorous, that burns to the bone, in residential areas.

But the UN Security Council refuses to take steps to stop this illegal war.

Less than a month ago, the US imposed an illegal naval blockade on Cuba, which is considered an act of war. The US military seizes oil tankers attempting to deliver fuel to Cuba. Yesterday, Cuba's electric grid collapsed, leaving 10 million Cubans with no power. In October, for the 33rd consecutive year, the UN General Assembly overwhelmingly adopted a resolution calling for an end to the U.S. economic, commercial, and financial embargo of Cuba. Yet it still persists after 67 years.

Meanwhile, Israel's genocide, aided and abetted by the US, against the people of Gaza continues unabated. In two and a half years, the Israeli government has killed at least 70,000 Palestinians, displaced nearly 2 million people, assassinated journalists and medical workers, targeted schools, hospitals and tents, manufactured a famine and aid crisis, and decimated over 80% of the infrastructure in Gaza. The Security Council has refused to act to stop this barbarism. The General Assembly, however, acted under Uniting for Peace, which Phyllis will discuss. In November 2024, the International Criminal Court charged Benjamin Netanyahu with war crimes and crimes against humanity. Yet he continues to evade arrest.

This seminar is for lawyers and human rights activists who seek to build a peaceful and just world through the **use of** international law to stop the commission of atrocity crimes, ensure accountability for perpetrators and redress for victims. Despite the attempts by the US, Israel,

and other countries to avoid compliance with existing law, successful strategies for enforcing international law are being used in domestic, regional and international courts and tribunals to oppose and remedy unlawful aggression and atrocity crimes. This seminar will identify and explain some legal means of seeking justice through law enforcement, accountability and redress.

Edre U. Olalia is a lawyer in the Philippines. He is serving as President of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL) from 2025 to 2029. He is the recently re-elected Chairperson of the National Union of Peoples' Lawyers (NUPL), a nationwide private organization of pro bono human rights activist lawyers.

As an activist and people's lawyer, Edre has practiced pro bono or pro deo human rights and public interest law for 35 years. He served as lead private counsel who led the successful last-ditch private efforts that proved crucial to the last-minute reprieve from execution of Mary Jane Veloso, a trafficked Filipina domestic helper in Indonesia framed as a drug mule by an international drug syndicate. He is the recipient of the recent 1st ever Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) Human Rights Award (for Luzon).

Edre provides legal consultancy to the Peace Negotiating Panel of the national liberation movement represented by the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). He is a member of NUPL legal team representing some named victims before the International Criminal Court in the case against former Philippine President Duterte for crimes against humanity related to the thousands of extrajudicial killings in the "drug war."

Edre will discuss, "Resisting Attacks on Rights and International Law Using International Remedies and Through International Work (The Duterte ICC Case)."

Camilo Umaña is a Colombian socio-legal scholar and public policy practitioner working at the intersection of research, human rights, and institutional reform. He currently serves as Scientific Director (2025–2027) of the International Institute for the Sociology of Law (IISL) in Oñati, Spain, where he promotes global socio-legal research and interdisciplinary dialogue on justice, power, and social transformation.

He holds two PhDs—in Criminology (University of Ottawa) and Sociology of Law (University of the Basque Country)—and his research focuses on state violence, impunity, criminal justice institutions, and transitional justice.

Before returning to academia, Camilo served as Deputy Minister of Justice of Colombia (2022–2024), leading reforms on drug policy, prison humanization, and restorative justice. He was also lead researcher for Colombia's Truth Commission and collaboration with international organizations such as the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNDP. Across his academic and policy roles, his work seeks to bridge critical socio-legal scholarship with practical efforts to advance more humane and democratic justice systems.

Camilo will analyze *"New Dynamics in the War on Drugs"*

Phyllis Bennis co-directs the New Internationalism Project at the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington DC, and she is a fellow of the Transnational Institute in Amsterdam. She helped create the Iraq-era United for Peace and Justice Coalition, and co-founded the US Campaign for Palestinian Rights. For six years, Phyllis served on the board of Jewish Voice for Peace, where she now serves as international adviser. She has addressed the UN General Assembly, worked as an informal adviser to several top UN officials on Palestine and other Middle East issues, and was twice short-listed as Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. She has written 12 books, the most recent of which is *Understanding Palestine and Israel in 2025*, and she has lectured at universities across the US and around the world. Phyllis writes and speaks widely on Palestine and the broader Middle East, US foreign policy, and UN issues, appearing regularly on al Jazeera, Democracy Now, BBC, C-Span, MSNBC, PBS and other venues, and she writes in a wide range of US-based and international mainstream and progressive media.

Phyllis will discuss *Uniting For Peace Resolutions for Movement Activists: Possibilities & Limitations*