

## Summary of Keynote Presentations at Recent Events

### Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms while Countering Terrorism, Ben Saul

On **6 August 2024**, the Special Rapporteur delivered a lecture at Macquarie University, Sydney, **on the risks of radicalization and terrorism arising from the conflict in Israel/Palestine** since 7 October 2023, including in respect of: the conditions conducive to terrorism under the United Nations Global Counter-terrorism Strategy; perceptions of the role of Hamas; Israel’s response since 7 October; the positions taken by other states since 7 October; the proliferation of “terrorist” content online and its uneven moderation; and ideologies that drive unlawful violence against civilians, including anti-semitism. He also discussed the extent to which the conflict has contributed to terrorist attacks outside the region, including in relation to Al Qaeda and ISIL and associated groups, “lone wolf” attacks, and far-right violence.

On **15 August 2023**, the Special Rapporteur presented in dialogue at The University of Sydney with the Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy, Ms. Ana Brian Nougères, when she was in Australia on an official country visit. He discussed **the links between new technologies used in countering terrorism and violations of the right to privacy**, including: counter-terrorism measures as a exceptionalist laboratory for new technologies, which later spread to other contexts; the authoritarian misuse of new technologies against dissidents and civil society; the problem of regulation playing “catch up” after new technologies are developed, with a lack of human rights due diligence in their development and sale; how technology shifts the goalposts on privacy, by normalizing interferences, such as mass surveillance, that were previously unacceptable; and the challenges of cross-border regulation of, and accountability for, new technologies, including in relation to corporations. He focused on the privacy risks resulting from biometric facial recognition technology and the sharing of international traveller data, including through the United Nations’ Counter-terrorism Travel program. He also identified artificial intelligence, and geopolitical division, as contemporary challenges in global regulation of new technologies.

On **12 September 2024**, the Special Rapporteur delivered the Sir Frank Kitto Annual Lecture at the University of New England, Australia, on the topic “**International Law after Ukraine and Gaza**”. He discussed the capacity and limits of international law to prevent and remedy violations of its most sacrosanct rules, including the prohibitions on the use of military force and the acquisition of foreign territory by force, the right of self-determination of peoples, international humanitarian law and international human rights law. He examined the range of legal mechanisms and procedures have been mobilized to enforce international law, including the International Court of Justice, International Criminal Court, General Assembly, Security Council, Human Rights Council, regional courts, and bilateral measures such as sanctions. He called for stronger collective action and less political selectivity in enforcing international law, to hold all states to account for violating rules they themselves created and pledged to respect.

On **24 September 2024**, the Special Rapporteur addressed the Australian Refugee Advice and Casework Service in Sydney on the internal and cross-border **displacement resulting from the conflict in Gaza**, including the causes of displacement; the barriers to moving to safety, including the nature of the hostilities in Gaza and the role of the occupying power, border closures by Egypt and Israel, the legal question of when protection by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees ceases under Article 1D of the Refugee Convention, thus activating protection under the Convention, and migration policies and security screening by third states. He called for stronger collective action to assist and protect Palestinian refugees.

Also on **24 September 2024**, the Special Rapporteur presented a seminar at Sydney Law School on **the role of United Nations Special Procedures** in promoting and protecting human rights, including their development over time, legal basis, strengths and weaknesses, effectiveness, and contemporary challenges.