

### **3. Project Title: Superfluous Injury and Unnecessary Suffering: Charting the Genealogy of a Legal Concept in the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons of 1980**

**Area: Politics and International Relations**

**Project Supervisor: Dr. Thomas Gregory**

#### **Project Description:**

On 10 April 1981, the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects opened for signatures. The Convention reaffirmed the principle that neither the methods nor the means of warfare should be unlimited, and that certain weapons or practices ought to be restricted on the grounds they cause unnecessary suffering or superfluous injuries. There were three initial protocols: one prohibited the use of weapons whose primary effect is to injure with fragments that cannot be detected by X-ray; the second prohibited and restricted the use of mines, booby-traps and other devices; and the third prohibited and restricted the use of incendiary weapons. In doing so, these protocols helped to renegotiate the distinction between acceptable and unacceptable practices of wounding, whilst producing a specific understanding of what constitutes unnecessary suffering or superfluous injury.

#### **Researcher's Work**

The successful scholar will review UN transcripts related to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the first three protocols to examine how delegates sought to differentiate between necessary and unnecessary suffering, and why the injuries inflicted by these specific weapons were considered to be superfluous (or not). They will consider debates outside the UN, including expert panels commissioned by the International Committee of the Red Cross. The scholar will also examine how these debates were represented in the English-speaking press, conducting a review of media articles in British and American newspapers.

The project will have three separate outputs.

1. The scholar will compile an annotated research database of documents, identifying speeches, commentaries and articles that seem to be particularly significant.
2. The scholar will create a bibliography of the key secondary texts, identifying those that have particular significance.
3. The scholar will write a 3,000-word research essay based on their research. A specific question will be developed in consultation between the scholar and supervisor.

#### **Required Skills/Pre-requisites**

The ideal candidate will have a background in Politics and International Relations, History or Law.