



Edge Hill  
University

Centre for  
International Justice  
and Human Rights

## The Law and Reality of the Responsibility to Maintain International Peace and Security

### Initial scoping Workshop

12<sup>th</sup> November 2025  
Edge Hill University

You are warmly invited to participate in an initial scoping workshop for the research project seeking to understand the law and reality of the responsibility to maintain international peace and security at the United Nations. **More information and context about this project is set out in Annex 1 of this document.**

### Aims of the Workshop

The workshop is designed to achieve three primary objectives.

1. First, it seeks to assemble a network of experts, practitioners, policymakers, and United Nations (UN) colleagues to discuss the core question of the project: "What is the legal nature of the international obligation to maintain peace and security?".
2. Second, the workshop will serve as a forum to build the research framework for a detailed mapping exercise of this responsibility.
3. Finally, to identify and establish a collection of authors who will contribute to an edited publication for Strand 1 of the project, which focuses on identifying and defining the conceptual framework for the responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

## Format

The workshop is designed to facilitate a focused discussion and outline next steps for the project. The day will include a series of presentations and collaborative sessions.

- **Session 1**

- **Project Overview**
- Dr. Patrick Butchard will provide an introduction to the aims and scope of the "Responsibility for Peace and Security Project," which seeks to establish a network of experts to address the legal and political nature of the obligation to maintain international peace and security, its sources, and how it is viewed and practically implemented at the United Nations.
- **The Need for the Project**
- Dr. Ben Murphy will discuss the theoretical underpinnings and highlight the importance of the project, which aims to provide a dedicated and detailed investigation into the sources, legal nature, and implementation of this core responsibility.

### **Session 2**

- **Brainstorming Panel**
- This session invites potential authors to share initial ideas for a paper or chapter to be included in the project's edited collection. The goal is to build a robust research framework and foundation for future fieldwork.
- **Next Steps and Steering Committee**
- The final session will focus on practical action items, including strategies for securing funding, publishing the research, and establishing a steering committee to guide the project. This is also where the group will identify key stakeholders to invite for future participation.

## Call for contributions

We invite you to submit a short proposal for our initial brainstorming panel. We are seeking authors to contribute papers or chapters to an edited collection that will form the conceptual framework for **Strand 1** of the project.

Please send an expression of interest, with a short outline of your proposed contribution, to Dr Patrick Butchard by **15<sup>th</sup> October 2025**.

**Contact:** [butcharp@edgehill.ac.uk](mailto:butcharp@edgehill.ac.uk)

## Identifying key stakeholders

Identifying key stakeholders is a critical component of the workshop. The project aims to bridge the gap between academic legal and theoretical expertise and the practical policy work at the UN. Therefore, key stakeholders include a network of experts, practitioners, policymakers, and UN colleagues. The workshop will focus on pinpointing individuals and groups to invite to participate in the project's steering committee and future events. The ultimate goal is to connect the legal and theoretical concepts to the real-world work of these stakeholders, making the project's findings accessible beyond academia to better inform policymakers and the public.

## Practical arrangements

The workshop **will take place in-person at Edge Hill University, Ormskirk, UK on the 12<sup>th</sup> November 2025**. Further information on timings and venue will be available soon.

Unfortunately, we are unable to support any travel or accommodation at this point – but it is an aim to secure funds to support this for future workshops.

If you are unable to attend in person, we will consider participation online for those needing to travel internationally. It is a preference that we participate in-person to facilitate idea sharing and discussion throughout the day.

## Future Workshops – Potential Dates

This initial workshop is the first in a series of events planned for the 2025-2026 academic year. Future workshops will be held to discuss Strands 1 and 2 of the project in greater detail. Strand 1 focuses on the conceptual framework, while Strand 2 maps the legal and non-legal sources of the responsibility. Those who have expressed interest in being involved will receive invitations to these upcoming events.

- **Workshop 2 – University of Liverpool, February / March 2026**
  - Updated presentations from contributors on chapters proposed for an edited collection.
  - Update on proposal to publisher
  - Refinement of research questions of the wider project, a detailed consideration of the best approach to producing the mapping exercise. Potentially identifying additional partners.
  
- **Workshop 3 – Edge Hill University, UK, June 2026**
  - Detailed mapping exercise of the responsibility and the legal and non-legal framework.
  - Identifying the most suitable funding opportunities for future work.

- Further presentations from contributors seeking feedback or review.

- **Workshop 4 – (TBC) August, 2026**

- Publication development focused on the edited collection.
- Comprehensive bid-writing workshop to draft a future substantial application for additional funding for **Strands 2 and 3**.

# Annex 1 – The Law and Reality Project – mapping the responsibility to maintain international peace and security at the United Nations

## The law of the responsibility to maintain international peace and security

This research project seeks to establish a network of experts, practitioners, policy stakeholders, and UN colleagues to address a core question: **What is the legal nature of the international obligation to maintain peace and security?** We will investigate this by exploring two key issues:

- The legal nature of the responsibility to maintain international peace and security, as recognised in Article 24(1) of the United Nations Charter
- The **reality** of how this responsibility is perceived, implemented, and actioned **within** the United Nations itself

The powers of the United Nations and the options available to the UN Security Council for maintaining international peace and security have been widely studied. However, the legal and political nature of this responsibility has not been explored in the depth proposed by this research project. The core members of this project have been at the forefront of developing the study of this responsibility, and intend to expand our network of expertise, to allow us to delve further into this issue with greater depth and a robust approach.

This project proposes to be the first part of a dedicated study of **the legal origins, existing obligations, and policy practices that directly address or influence the responsibility to maintain international peace and security.**

## Mapping the legal framework

While existing academic research covers various aspects of how the UN functions and how international peace and security can be achieved, this project is unique in its core focus. We will specifically **map the responsibility to maintain international peace and security** to the UN's existing legal and political structures. This dedicated study will provide a clear and detailed overview of the responsibility, its legal sources, and the political frameworks that impact its implementation. Ultimately, we hope this will help us to understand how the responsibility is viewed in **both law and the practical reality** at the UN.

The project commits to a dedicated study to provide a clear and detailed overview of the responsibility, its sources, and the policy / political frameworks that impact its implementation.

The legal framework will detail the relevant legal obligations that uphold or support the implementation of the maintenance of international peace and security, such as:

- The legal status of the responsibility in the UN Charter, (starting with Article 24(1));
- Any subsequent agreement and practice of states relating to the responsibility;
- Obligations from other treaties or customary sources;
- Overlaps with positive human rights obligations.

The framework would also set out non-legal sources of responsibilities, guidance, and policy that complement the maintenance of international peace and security. This will include an investigation into whether and how:

- the responsibility is supported by other responsibilities, such as the 'Responsibility to Protect';
- the responsibility is supported by the mandates of organisations, or organisational policies and procedures;
- the responsibility is influenced by more informal frameworks between states, such as sanctions coordination, or the agreed outcomes of state groupings (e.g. G7, G20, BRICS).

**The aim is to produce a detailed, accessible resource for academics, policymakers, and other relevant actors.**

### **Building on previous research and expertise**

Building on research undertaken members of the team, this project seeks to bring together an extensive collection of expertise to consider the viability of such a mapping exercise, build the research framework for producing this, and ultimately prepare a collection of research papers to provide the foundation for future fieldwork to confirm the real-world application and implementation of these findings. While there are numerous existing studies into the operation of the UN (e.g. Hans Kelsen, Simma's Commentaries on the UN Charter, Butchard's [Responsibility to Protect and the Failures of the UN Security Council](#), and recent articles by [Murphy](#) and [Pezzano](#)), there has not yet been such a dedicated and detailed investigation into the sources, legal nature, and implementation of the responsibility to maintain international peace and security. **This project builds on those existing contributions to develop a broader understanding of the legal framework underpinning this core responsibility for peace and security.**

### **Connecting academia and policy**

The project will bridge the gaps between the academic legal and theoretical expertise on this subject and the actual practice and policy of those at the UN – connecting the concepts of the law to the work of stakeholders. This will illuminate important, but unexplored, practices at the UN, and offer an opportunity for understanding areas of best practice when responding to threats to international peace and security.

At a time where states are seeking clarity on how the UN can be more effective in its work, this project will produce knowledge that will enable policymakers to better navigate the political challenges required to discharge the responsibility to maintain international peace and security.

With this in mind, this project aims to reach beyond academia, making its findings accessible to stakeholders and the public. We aim to produce condensed briefings and multimedia outputs for policymakers, states, and UN stakeholders, in addition to robust academic publications.

[Get in touch – connect with the Project](#)

## Project Strands

- **Strand 1 – Concept:** Identifying and defining the conceptual framework for the responsibility to maintain international peace and security.
- **Strand 2 – Law:** Mapping the legal framework of the responsibility to maintain international peace and security to legal and non-legal sources.
- **Strand 3 – Reality:** mapping the reality – the real-world implementation of the responsibility to maintain international peace and security at the UN.

## Latest news

The team will be convening a series of workshops over the 2025-2026 academic year to discuss Strands 1 and 2 of the project. If you have expressed interest in being involved, you will receive invitations to these workshops in the coming months. To express your interest, or stay in touch, please contact Dr Patrick Butchard at [butchart@edgehill.ac.uk](mailto:butchart@edgehill.ac.uk)