



Conference

Access to Justice for Victims of Human Rights Abuses by Transnational Corporations

Tuesday, October 27, 2015 - 1 – 7 PM

Berlin, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Hiroshimastraße 17

Corporations have the responsibility to honor human rights – they should take appropriate measures to recognize human rights violations, prevent them, and potentially rectify and remedy them. For that purpose, it does not matter in which country an injustice occurs because those affected should have access to justice everywhere.

Operations by transnational corporations (TCs) cause human rights violations worldwide. While trade and investment contracts provide corporations with extensive rights for their operations, victims of their human rights abuses do not have effective access to binding legal processes.

Corporate responsibility is based on voluntary remedy and complaint mechanisms. However, it will often constitute a comparative disadvantage for corporations to observe human rights standards voluntarily – especially when the competition does not.

Therefore, governments must prescribe due diligence obligations by law so that they are legally enforceable by those affected. The German government too should spring into action and allow redress for victims that have suffered human rights abuses through the actions of German corporations abroad.

Together with guests from the Philippines and Colombia, we want to scrutinise different pathways to justice and remedies for victims. This will also include the discussion of various processes on the UN-level, as well as the introduction of a German criminal law for corporations.

The conference will take place in German, Spanish and English. Simultaneous interpretation will be provided for.

The session is organized by FDCL e.V., philippinenbüro e.V. im Asienhaus and the Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation and will take place in the course of the 2nd Alternative Resource Week from the 19th to the 27th of October.



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PROGRAM

Dienstag, 27. Oktober 2015

1:00 PM: Registration

1:15 PM: Welcome Reception

Frederike Boll, Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation
Thorsten Schulz, FDCL e.V.
Jan Pingel, philippinenbüro e.V. im Asienhaus

1:30 PM: Introduction: Access to Justice

Introduction into the topic

Christopher Schuller, German Institute for Human Rights

The power of TCs in the EU's Trade and Investment Regime

Florian Moritz, DGB Federal Board

Case Study: Violations by TCs against human rights and environmental standards are not isolated incidents.

Joseph Alan Purugganan, Focus on the Global South, Philippines
Reinaldo Villalba Vargas, CCAJAR, Columbia

3:15 PM: Coffee Break

3:45 PM: Holding Transnational Corporations liable – Current Processes and Initiatives

How transnational corporations can be (bindingly) held liable is currently the focus of many national and international discussions and processes. How binding and effective can instruments be? What risks and opportunities do they offer?

The UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights – Opportunities and Risks

Julia Otten, Germanwatch

The UN Treaty – A legally binding instrument?

Dora Lucy Arias, CCAJAR, Colombia

Is a German Criminal Law possible?

Sven Wolf, Legal policy speaker of the SPD parliamentary fraction in North Rhine - Westphalia

5:00 PM: Coffee Break

5:30 PM: Panel Discussion: How do Instruments complement each other?

After different approaches and initiatives have been introduced in the previous lectures, the final panel discussion will be about the pros and cons of the various instruments. What tensions arise between the UN Guiding Principles, the UN Treaty and criminal laws for corporations? What political recommendations can be drawn from them? We want to discuss these issues with national and international experts from the Global South and North.

Dora Lucy Arias, CCAJAR, Colombia

Joseph Alan Purugganan, Focus on the Global South, Philippines

Julia Otten, Germanwatch

Sven Wolf, Legal policy speaker of the SPD parliamentary fraction in North Rhine - Westphalia

Moderation : Christopher Schuller, German Institute for Human Rights

7:00 PM: Conclusion and Refreshments

Venue:

Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation Berlin, House 2 // Hiroshimastraße 28 // 10785 Berlin

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Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation // Global Policy and Development // Hiroshimastraße 28 // 10785 Berlin // www.fes.de/GPol

Organisation: Please register via email with Susanne Böhme for the event.
Susanne.Boehme@fes.de. She is also available by phone for any inquiries: 030/26935-7416
Please contact us if you have any questions regarding the barrier free implementation of this event.

With Bus oder Train

You can reach us with the bus line 100 (Stop: Lützowplatz). From there the walk is approximately 10 minutes. You can also reach us with the bus line 200 (Stop: Tiergarten). From there the walk is approximately 5 minutes. We are also reachable with the bus line M 29 (Stop: Hiroshimasteg). From there the walk is approximately 3 minutes. All three bus lines are barrier free (see <http://www.visitberlin.de/en/article/public-transport-barrier-free>).

Barrier free Routes

For barrier free travel routes we recommend consulting the BVG Journey Planner at <http://fahinfo.bvg.de/Fahinfo/bin/query.bin/en?>

Car

Unfortunately there is no parking availability. For disabled people, one barrier free parking spot is available (House 1). To make use of this spot, please register beforehand. Please use the detailed map with a description of the route for directions. We recommend coming by bus or train.

From Berlin Tegel Airport

Take the bus X9 to "Bahnhof Zoo". From there take the bus line 200 (towards Michelangelostrasse) to "Tiergarten".