

EDITORIAL

EMERGING VOICES: INCREASING THE DIVERSITY OF VOICES FEATURED IN THE *INTERNATIONAL REVIEW OF THE RED CROSS*

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Since starting as the seventeenth Editor-in-Chief of the *International Review of the Red Cross* in July 2020, increasing the diversity of voices featured in the *Review* has ranked high among my strategic priorities. For far too long, conversations about international humanitarian law, policy and action have been dominated predominantly, if not exclusively, by elite academics, scholars and practitioners – predominantly male – based in the global North, often writing about conflicts and other situations of violence taking place in the global South.

It has been argued that:

[t]alent – for math, science, music, sports, finance, you name it – is evenly distributed around the world, even at its most rarefied levels. Opportunity, however, is not. This leaves a significant space to engage underutilized talent if we can make opportunity portable and match it with talent in ways that are less random.¹

Personally persuaded by this noted gap between talent and opportunity, under my leadership, the *Review* has taken active strides in pursuit of its unwavering commitment to achieve gender parity and genuine geographic representation. The *Review* also has been increasing its efforts to provide a platform to underrepresented groups – including persons affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence.²

But talk is cheap if it is not followed by action. So, as a first step to demonstrate the *Review*'s commitment to “walk the talk”, I invite you to have a look at the composition of its new Editorial Board for 2021–2026, whose members bring unique and complementary skills and perspectives, with a wide variety of qualifications and experiences. The new Board's eleven women and eight men, with nineteen different nationalities, will guide the *Review* in the coming years to deliver on the promise of increasing the diversity of voices to which we offer a platform, while remaining uncompromising on the quality of the contributions we select for publication.³ The Editorial Board's diversity of expertise will guide the *Review*, across all topics, to help this journal act as a bridge between theory and practice.

The *Review* is strategically positioned to not only shape, but also create high-level debates on topics of interest to the worldwide audience this journal

enjoys. It is exactly this unique position which may make it appear daunting – impossible? – in the eyes of younger and less established authors to try to get their publication accepted in this journal.

In December 2020, in an attempt to shift this perspective, the *Review* launched a global call for papers for “emerging voices” – a term deliberately left undefined. Addressed to “anyone aspiring to become a respected voice in the fields of international humanitarian law, humanitarian policy and action”, the opportunity was offered to “kick off your CV’s list of publications with an article ... that contributes to shaping the debate in these fields in the years to come”. In particular, the call emphasized, the *Review* values “innovative and creative arguments that may have an impact on future legal and policy debates”.

What resulted? An avalanche of 152 abstracts – quite fitting since the *Review* celebrates its 152nd birthday this year! With the help of a jury of six experts – three International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) staff members and three individuals outside the organization, including two Editorial Board members⁴ – some forty abstracts were given the green light to proceed to drafting an article.

All articles subsequently received were submitted, after a detailed assessment by the *Review* team, to our regular process of “double-blind” peer review. For this particular edition, so as not to bias their assessment either way, peer reviewers were not told in advance that the papers they reviewed were part of this ongoing competition. Throughout the selection process, the *Review* team and the jury were led only by the quality of the article at hand, including the persuasiveness of its argumentation. Nobody’s paper was rejected or accepted on the basis of considerations to artificially seek to achieve the above-mentioned diversity of voices.

Today, the *Review* is proud to present the final result of this competition: exactly twenty papers have been selected, with – coincidentally – perfect gender parity among authors. Out of considerations of fairness, we publish them in alphabetical order by family name.

As a result of the open-ended nature of this call for papers in terms of topics that could be written on, there is no unifying substantive theme binding them

- 1 Igor Tulchinsky, “Talent is Worldwide. Opportunity is Not. How Can we Redistribute It?”, World Economic Forum, 17 January 2019, available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/01/talent-is-worldwide-opportunity-is-not-can-we-redistribute-it> (all internet references were accessed in November 2021).
- 2 Similarly, see Saman Rejali and Yannick Heiniger, “The Role of Digital Technologies in Humanitarian Law, Policy and Action: Charting a Path Forward”, *International Review of the Red Cross*, Vol. 102, No. 913, March 2021, pp. 20–1.
- 3 Editorial Board of the *International Review of the Red Cross*, available at: <https://international-review.icrc.org/about/editorial-board>.
- 4 Jury members were: (i) Monia Ammar, Magistrate Counselor at the Cassation Court of Tunisia; (ii) Bruno Demeyere, Editor-in-Chief of the *International Review of the Red Cross*; (iii) Cordula Droege, Chief Legal Officer and Head of the Legal Division of the ICRC; (iv) Juana Acosta López, Associate Professor, Director Public Interest/Human Rights Clinic, University of La Sabana, Colombia; (v) Robert McLaughlin, Professor at the Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources & Security; (vi) Mamadou Sow, ICRC, Head of Regional Delegation, Southern Africa.

together. Each paper stands on its own merit, with its noted potential to resonate and to shape debate in the years ahead. What these twenty papers do have in common, though, is that their selection for publication stands as a recognition of their quality – and that we can collectively look forward to hearing and reading more from these authors in the years to come.

At the end of this competitive process, I wish to thank all 152 authors who submitted abstracts, and all forty who submitted a paper. Non-selection for publication this time is not a negative assessment of any author’s potential, and simply reflects the intensely competitive nature of this process. Equally, I wish to thank all jury members for volunteering their time and efforts, as well as Mr Ash Stanley-Ryan, who served with rigour as this edition’s Thematic Editor.

Finally, an announcement! Both encouraged and humbled by the enthusiasm that this call for papers unleashed, and convinced of the clear benefits that “emerging voices” bring to the places where cutting-edge topics on international humanitarian law, humanitarian policy and action are debated, the *Review* has decided that this shall not be a “one-off”. Instead, as of now, this becomes a standing call for papers. Abstracts may be submitted, and will be reviewed, on a rolling basis. As of 2022, each edition of the *Review* intends to publish two articles as part of a new “emerging voices” subsection.⁵

For now, the *Review* invites you to discover the fascinating topics dealt with in each of the papers selected for publication!

5 For more information about the process going forward, see <https://international-review.icrc.org/standing-call-for-papers-emerging-voices>.