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WEBINAR

# POLISH CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL LAW

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Tuesday, March 3, 2026 | 1:30 p.m. (NYC) / 19:30 (Warsaw)

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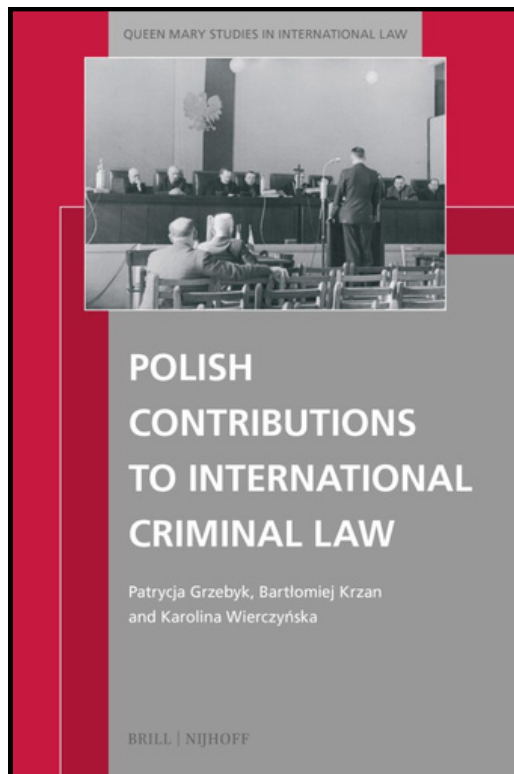
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# POLISH CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL LAW



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Polish contributions to international law are both historically and substantively important. In fact, the early articulation of the *ius gentium* doctrine dates back to Paweł Włodkowic and Stanisław from Skarbimierz in the 16th century.

Poland has also helped shape key modern international legal norms and institutions. This webinar will focus primarily on the input of Polish lawyers, judges, and Polish institutions into the practice and theory of modern international criminal law.

The prevalent view in the West has been that international criminal law is a creation solely of the Great Powers, who imposed the Nuremberg Principles after World War II. The recently published monograph,

***Polish Contributions to International Criminal Law***, authored by

**Patrycja Grzebyk, Bartłomiej Krzan,** and **Karolina Wierczyńska**, breaks with this simplistic perspective. We are fortunate to host the authors of this recent book -- namely, Professors Patrycja Grzebyk, Bartłomiej Krzan, and Karolina Wierczyńska. Dr. Elizabeth M. Zechenter will moderate the webinar.



# POLISH CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERNATIONAL LAW

The webinar will focus primarily on three pillars of the modern Polish contributions to the international criminal law: diplomacy, legislation and courts, and legal theory.

First, we will present how the Polish engagement was critical in formulating the first concrete legal demands for individual prosecution during the negotiations on the Versailles Treaty. We will also describe - as an example - the Polish contribution to the creation of the 1948 Genocide Convention.

Second, we will examine the adoption of various innovative legislative acts by Polish authorities, which introduced definitions of international crimes. We will examine Polish judicial practice, demonstrating how Polish courts have tried and, indeed, influenced the development of international criminal law. We will also show that Polish courts were the first to judge genocide, crimes against humanity, and the crime of aggression, even before the announcement of the Nuremberg judgment by the International Military Tribunal.

Finally, the panel will discuss the role of academia and various publications by Polish authors in shaping principles of international criminal responsibility for individual persons. It will explain the role Polish scholars played in the development of international criminal law and the main centers of international criminal law debates in Poland during the first century of the Polish state, from the moment of regaining independence in 1918.

# SPEAKERS



**KAROLINA  
WIERCZYŃSKA,  
DR. HABIL. IUR.**



**PATRYCJA  
GRZEBYK,  
DR. HABIL. IUR.**



**BARTŁOMIEJ  
KRZAN,  
DR. HABIL. IUR.**

# PANEL MODERATOR



**ELIZABETH M.  
ZECHENTER,  
PH.D., J.D.**

**The Jagiellonian Law Society (JLS)** is a voluntary legal association of a diverse group of professionals (lawyers, judges, law faculty, and law students) who are interested in, or have roots in Polish and Central/Eastern European (CEE) cultures. Membership in the JLS is open to any legal professional of any country who shares our interests and goals.

Our members are committed to fostering understanding and respect between different countries, cultures, institutions, and legal systems, to eliminating bias and enhancing tolerance in the United States, Poland, CEE, Europe and around the world. We would like to deepen the understanding of Polish and CEE cultures and history in the United States. JLS also aims to strengthen the ties between legal professionals and legal organizations in the US, Poland, and CEE.

We are nonsectarian and nonpartisan. As an organization with many multicultural, bicultural, and bilingual members, JLS strives to advance the rule of law and to protect human rights for all people. We affirm the dignity of every individual and stand against prejudice and stereotyping of any group through promoting the rule of law, open access to courts, international cooperation, and fair, independent, and equitable legal institutions.

We aim to become a go-to forum for issues of legal importance for the American, Polish, Polish American, and other CEE legal communities in the United States and Poland.

Through pro bono work, educational programs, scholarships, and various social activities, we engage our members from throughout the entire legal community in the US, Poland and in CEE. We cooperate with various legal and professional and academic organizations to further our goals. We sponsor CLE events, lectures, fundraisers and social gatherings and we offer scholarships and merit-based grants. We celebrate the depth and richness of Polish culture as well as that of other CEE countries and we support various cultural and artistic events. We provide referral services to our members and to a larger community.

# THE KOSCIUSZKO FOUNDATION

THE AMERICAN CENTER  
OF POLISH CULTURE

the **KF**

Founded in 1925, **the Kosciuszko Foundation** promotes closer ties between Poland and the United States through educational, scientific and cultural exchanges. It awards over \$1 million annually in fellowships and grants to graduate students, scholars, scientists, professionals, and artists, and promotes Polish culture in America. The Foundation has awarded scholarships and provided a forum to Poles who have changed history.

In the 18th century, Tadeusz Kosciuszko said, "By nature, we are all equals - virtue, riches, and knowledge constitute the only difference." Education is the key to success, and Kosciuszko dedicated his life to the liberation and education of the underprivileged. In his will from 1798, he stipulated that the entire proceeds of his American estate be spent on freeing and educating African-American slaves, including those of his friend Thomas Jefferson, whom he named as the will's executor. In the 20th century, another virtuous Pole, Harvard graduate, Professor Stephen Mizwa, followed his example and established the Kosciuszko Foundation whose primary mission is to promote education and Polish culture.

As the years rolled on and the challenges facing Poland changed with the times, the Foundation's work has evolved to meet those challenges. Professor Mizwa started the Foundation after Poland's rebirth, but his mission took on new meaning during the years of Nazism, Communism, and the Cold War. Today, Poland is once again free and part of NATO and the European Union. Many Kosciuszko Foundation alumni have taken part in that transformation.

These days, young Poles and Polish-Americans are uniquely poised to change the world, not just through humanities and the arts, but through the sciences, technology, and business as well. But it takes money to finance their dreams through education. With scholarships, they can become the leaders of tomorrow. For the 21st century, the Kosciuszko Foundation wants to build on the examples set by Kosciuszko and Professor Mizwa, but we need your help to do it.

The Kosciuszko Foundation can only continue its activities supporting Polish culture and awarding scholarships if we receive support from people like you. To donate, please visit [www.thekf.org](http://www.thekf.org).



# KAROLINA WIERCZYŃSKA, DR. HABIL. IUR.

FEATURED SPEAKER

**Karolina Wierczyńska, Dr. habil. iur.**, is an Associate Professor at the Institute of Law Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences, where she also serves as Director of the Center for Research on International Criminal Law.

She is a member of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs' advisory board on international law and Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the *Polish Yearbook of International Law*.

Her research focuses on international criminal law, the International Criminal Court, and the challenges facing the multilateral legal order.

She has published extensively with leading international publishers and journals, has been a visiting professor at institutions including the University of Koln and the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law in Cambridge, and regularly participates in international academic and policy-oriented forums.

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS:

*Polish Contributions to International Criminal Law*, co-authors: Patrycja Grzebyk, Bartłomiej Krzan, Brill 2025 (forthcoming)

*Illegality of Sanctions (or Coercive Measures) Against the International Criminal Court*, in: Pavel Sturma (ed.), *International Sanctions and Human Rights*, DOI 10.1007/978-3-031-69019-8\_8, Springer 2024,

*International Prosecutors Acting before National Courts?: The Rome Statute System and the Ultimate Approach to Positive Complementarity*, *Chinese Journal of International Law* 2022, June

*The Crisis of Multilateralism Through the Prism of the Experience of the International Criminal Court*, co-author Patrycja Grzebyk, in: V. Bilkova et al., (eds), *The Crisis of Multilateral Legal Order*, Routledge 2023.

## OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS:

A participant in numerous international and domestic conferences

Visiting professor at several prestigious research institutions:

- University of Koln (Germany),
- Czech Academy of Sciences,
- Lauterpacht Centre on International Law, Cambridge, UK



# PATRYCJA GRZEBYK, DR. HABIL. IUR.

FEATURED SPEAKER

**Patrycja Grzebyk, Dr. habil. iur.**, is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Political Science and International Studies, University of Warsaw, specializing in international humanitarian law, international criminal law, the use of force, and international courts.

She serves on the advisory board of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is a member of the Board of the European Society of International Law, and is President of the Network on Humanitarian Action (NOHA).

She is Editor-in-Chief of ESIL Reflections and the Journal of International Humanitarian Action.

Prof. Grzebyk has acted as legal adviser to Poland before the International Court of Justice and authored expert analyses for state institutions.

She has published widely with leading academic presses and is a frequent visiting scholar and international speaker.

## **MONOGRAPHS:**

*Polish Contributions to International Criminal Law*, Brill 2025, ISBN: 978-90-04-71268-3, e-book pdf ISBN: 978-90-04-71269-0, 2025

*Human and Non-Human Targets in International Armed Conflicts*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2022 ISBN 978-11-0898-027-2, pp. 280.

*Criminal Responsibility for the Crime of Aggression*, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, Routledge Research in International Law, London and New York 2013.

## **EDITED BOOKS:**

*The Russian-Ukrainian Conflict and War Crimes. Challenges for Documentation and International Prosecution*, Routledge, London and New York 2025, pp. 352, ISBN 9781032797694.

## **SELECTED RECENT ARTICLES/CHAPTERS:**

*Crime of Aggression against Ukraine: The Role of Regional Customary Law. The Role of Regional Customary Law*, Journal of International Criminal Justice 2023, vol. 21(3), 435-459, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jicj/mqad035>

*Escalation of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine in 2022 in light of the law on use of force and international humanitarian law*, Polish Yearbook of International Law 2022, vol. XLI, p. 145-162.

## **OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS:**

Over 100 conference presentations in/for various institutions of Austria, China, Czechia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Ukraine.

Visiting scholar at University of Tokyo (July 2025); University of Bologna, Italy (September-December 2020), National Taiwan University, Taiwan (February 2023, July 2019), University of Cambridge, UK (July-August 2015), University of Geneva, Switzerland (April 2013, November 2014, June 2014, June/July 2015, October 2015) and short sojourns at numerous other universities (Barcelona, Beijing, Kiev, Madrid, Munich, Zagreb).



# BARTŁOMIEJ KRZAN, DR. HABIL. IUR.

## FEATURED SPEAKER

**Bartłomiej Krzan, Dr. habil. iur.**, is a University Professor at the Department of International and European Law and Vice-Dean for Research and International Cooperation at the Faculty of Law, Administration and Economics, University of Wrocław.

Prof. Krzan is a Board Member of the ILA Polish Branch and a member of the Committee of Legal Sciences, Polish Academy of Sciences. He has been appointed to the Advisory Legal Committee to the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, offering expertise in international and European law.

His academic work focuses on international criminal law, EU law, international dispute settlement, and other aspects of the international legal order, with numerous monographs and other publications in respected journals and edited volumes.

He has been the editor of i.a. 'Jurisdictional Competition of International Courts and Tribunals' (UWr Press 2012), and 'Prosecuting International Crimes: A Multidisciplinary Approach' (Brill 2016).

### **OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS:**

Various research stays abroad including at the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law, Cambridge (2010) and Walther Schücking Institut für Internationales Recht, Kiel (2011-2012); visiting professor at the University of Regensburg (2013); guest lectureships in Austria, Germany, Lithuania, The Netherlands, UK.



## ELIZABETH M. ZECHENTER, PH.D., J.D. PANEL MODERATOR

**Elizabeth M. Zechenter, Ph.D., J.D.** is a U.S.-educated international attorney, social scientist, published author, and public speaker with extensive experience in international law, human rights, and the rule of law.

Born in Poland and educated in the United States, she practiced law at Hogan & Hartson (now Hogan Lovells), Morgan Lewis, and GlaxoSmithKline, where she served as Assistant General Counsel in international legal leadership roles.

Admitted in Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C., she speaks five languages.

In addition to Juris Doctor (JD) degree, Dr. Zechenter holds an M.A. from Emory University and a Ph.D. from UCLA, where her research focused on social complexity and cultural evolution.

She has led major international research projects, taught at leading universities, and remains actively engaged in global human rights and legal advocacy.



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