

**Asser Institute Doctoral Seminar Series on
International Arms Control Law**

**Seminar Three
Chemical and Biological Weapons: International Investigative Mechanisms
19 December 2022**

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

The Asser Institute Doctoral Seminar Series on International Arms Control Law provides a select number of early career researchers with insights into the current and future issues raised by International Arms Control Law with perspectives from international law and related disciplines. At each seminar, academics and practitioners deliver several expert lectures on the international legal framework of arms control, geo-political perspectives on arms control, institutional and procedural frameworks for control and disarmament, as well as emerging issues and trends. Additionally, the seminar provides an opportunity for doctoral and postdoctoral researchers to discuss their research in the field of International Arms Control to foster interdisciplinary exchange among peers in a low-stakes environment.

Topic of the Seminar

The third 2022 arms control seminar features the topic of 'Chemical and Biological Weapons: International Investigative Mechanisms'. International investigative mechanisms serve an important role in international law. This includes elements of dispute settlement and accountability. Firstly, by establishing an independent record of events, allowing for the peaceful settlement of related disputes; secondly, by alerting the international community of the need to take corrective action in the light of violations of international human rights law, international humanitarian law or international criminal law; and, finally, by recording, analyzing and presenting evidence in line with applicable legal frameworks for use in future international or domestic accountability processes. This seminar explores the role of international investigative mechanisms in investigating chemical weapon attacks, as well as disinformation about the use of chemical and biological weapons.

Seminar Programme

Location: Asser Institute (Mancini Room)
Date: Monday 19 December 2022
Organizers: Professor Thilo Marauhn; Thea Coventry

The seminar is structured around three lectures on the topics of: 1) the role of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team in identifying individuals or entities directly or indirectly involved in chemical weapons use falling outside the remit of OPCW-UN Joint Investigative

Mechanism; 2) the frameworks and processes developed by the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to collect and consolidate evidence in its central repository of crimes and violations of international law committed in Syria since 2011; 3) the phenomena of unsubstantiated allegations of chemical and biological weapons use in armed conflicts as well as the deployment of disinformation campaigns to evade attribution and accountability for actions that breach global nonproliferation treaty obligations. After the lectures, the participants will engage in a roundtable discussion of their research topics, guided by Asser Institute researchers.

Participation in the workshop is extended to approximately 10 doctoral candidates and postdoctoral researchers who are currently conducting research in arms control, whether from legal, historical, political or theoretical perspectives. Please email Thea Coventry (t.coventry@asser.nl) to apply for the event by Monday 5 December, including your position, university affiliation and area of research. Additionally, participants need to submit a short abstract on their research topic by email to Thea Coventry by Monday 12 December, which will be circulated in advance to the other participants. Acceptance will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Attendance is in-person.

Timeline

5 December 2022	Deadline for registration
12 December 2022	Submission of abstracts for roundtable
19 December 2022	Chemical and Biological Weapons Seminar

Preliminary Schedule

Monday 19 December 2022

9.30-10.00 **Words of Welcome**
Opening and round of introductions

Morning Session 10.00 to 13.00

10.00-11:15 **Disinformation and Unsubstantiated Allegations of Chemical and Biological Weapons Use**

Dr Alexander Kelle (*Senior Researcher, IFSH, Hamburg University*)

11.15-12.00 Coffee/Tea Break

12.00-13.15 **Investigating Chemical Weapons Use: The work of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team (IIT)**

Santiago Oñate (*Coordinator of the Investigation and Identification Team, OPCW*)

13.15-14.15 Lunch

Afternoon Session 14.15 to 17.15

14.15-15.30 **Collecting, Preserving and Assessing Evidence: The Central Repository of the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism – Syria (IIIM)**

Professor Thilo Marauhn (*Special Chair Arms Control Law, Asser Institute; Professor of Public Law and International Law, Justus Liebig University Giessen*)

15.30-15.45 Coffee/Tea Break

16:00-17:15 **Early Career Researcher Roundtable**

Peer-to-peer review of research topics by participants

Evening Session 17:15 to 18.15

17.15-18.15 **Closing Reception**