

International Progress Organization



Organisation internationale pour le progrès



«THE FULLERTON ROUNDTABLE»

International Roundtable Consultation

IDEA AND POLITICS OF GLOBAL JUSTICE

The Fullerton Hotel Singapore

10 September 2026

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On September 10th, 2026, the International Progress Organization (I.P.O.) continued its tradition of tackling crucial issues in international affairs by hosting scholars, legal experts, and practitioners from Asia, the Middle East, the Americas, and Europe at the Fullerton Hotel in Singapore for an international roundtable consultation on “Idea and Politics of Global Justice.” Building on earlier consultations held in Vienna (“Responsibility in International Relations,” 2023), Istanbul (“Sovereignty and Coercion: The United Nations in the Web of Power Politics,” 2024), and Malta (“Maritime Order in the Global Era,” 2025), the discussions were chaired by Hans Köchler, President of the I.P.O., and structured around four sessions featuring presentations by experts from Australia, Austria, Germany, Iceland, India, Israel, Singapore, Türkiye, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, alongside contributions from scholars representing China, Denmark and Kazakhstan. Following the roundtable, **Professor Walter Woon**, former Attorney-General of Singapore, addressed attendees and distinguished guests at a gala dinner at the Raffles Hotel, speaking on “Remembrance and Reconciliation: The Danger of Historical Amnesia.”

1. Overview and Core Problematic

The roundtable addresses the acute crisis confronting international criminal justice and the rule of law amid systemic geopolitical realignments. The introductory remarks of Hans Köchler frame the modern condition not merely as part of an ongoing cycle of idealistic proclamations and political betrayals – seen from Westphalia to the UN Charter – but as an outright *paradigm shift*. The international order has increasingly abandoned universalist legal justifications in favor of raw transactional power, Carl Schmitt-style assertions of the “state of exception,” and unvarnished *realpolitik*. This tension between normative ideals and executive power serves as the analytical foundation across all contributions.

2. Key Thematic Pillars

A. Geopolitical Paradigm Shifts and Civilizational Contestations

- *Unilateralism and the Demise of Legal Pretenses:* **Hans Köchler** highlights how contemporary superpower conduct – exemplified by aggressive unilateralism, threats against foreign leaders, the dismissal of international humanitarian law, and overt hostility toward the International Criminal Court (ICC) – marks a regress toward pre-Enlightenment statecraft governed purely by force.
- *Civilizational State Narratives:* **Valur Ingimundarson** examines how powers like Russia and China – and increasingly the United States – reframe legitimacy

around deep-seated civilizational continuity and cultural specificity rather than Western liberal universalism, eroding multilateral institutions (UN, NATO) and replacing a rules-based order with competing civilizational spheres of interest.

B. Institutional Asymmetries, Legitimacy Crises, and Weaponized Procedures

- *North–South Structural Imbalance*: **Aniruddha Rajput** details how the contemporary architecture of international criminal justice remains structurally biased against the Global South – apparent in prosecutorial selection, Security Council referral mechanisms, and the application of complementarity. He questions whether the respective institutions can survive the decline of their founders' hegemony.
- *The Security Council's Ambiguous Role*: **Stefan Talmon** interrogates the UN Security Council's assumption of "quasi-judicial" functions (such as declaring state conduct unlawful or fixing borders), while Köchler notes the structural paradox of a Council whose permanent members are insulated from accountability yet delegate coercive authority to unilateral mechanisms.
- *Disciplinary Frameworks as Geopolitical Weapons*: **Magda Karagiannakis** illustrates how states weaponize the Rome Statute's broad conduct and disciplinary provisions (independence, impartiality, misconduct) using sanctions, threats of national prosecution, and procedural challenges to constrain ICC judges and prosecutors.
- *Expressive Justice vs. Due Process*: **Yahli Shereshevsky** demonstrates how the ICC's reliance on arrest warrants as symbolic, expressive substitutes for trial (when state obstruction prevents custody) strains the procedural rights of the accused, calling for adjusted evidentiary standards and adversarial protections.

C. Adaptive Models, Pragmatism, and New Frontiers

- *Multipolar Resilience and Hybridization*: **Margaret deGuzman** argues that while enforcement remains uneven, global justice norms are deeply entrenched. The multipolar diffusion of power is yielding decentralized, context-sensitive models – such as universal jurisdiction in the Global South, crowd-sourced evidence, and hybrid domestic/international transitional justice bodies (e.g., Colombia's *Special Jurisdiction for Peace*).
- *Pragmatic Political Engagement*: **Steven Roach** posits that the ICC cannot preserve its legitimacy through an artificial posture of apolitical detachment;

instead, it must adopt a politically attuned, pragmatic prosecutorial strategy to navigate great-power hostility and avoid alienating affected populations.

- *Philosophical and Technical Evolutions:*
 - o *From Idealism to Education:* **Anthony Lang** draws on Plato's late transition from *The Republic* (Πολιτεία) to *The Laws* (Νόμοι), arguing that global justice must move from utopian institutional design to sustained public education and consensus-building. He refers to the role of the *Nocturnal Council* (νυκτερινός σύλλογος) as example.
 - o *Cross-Border Hybrid Accountability:* **Mahdev Mohan** applies the structural lessons of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) – particularly public-private collaboration and victim integration – to the digital sphere, presenting a blueprint for tracing decentralized cross-border digital financial crimes and blockchain-based asset recovery.
 - o *Historical Trajectory:* **Rauf Versan** outlines the historical arc of how states dealt with individual criminal responsibility – from Versailles, Nuremberg, and Tokyo to the ad hoc tribunals and the Rome Statute – underscoring the enduring impact on domestic legal systems despite recurring jurisdictional dilemmas.

3. Conclusion & Outlook

The roundtable reveals that while international criminal institutions face existential headwinds – driven by great-power contempt, structural inequality, and institutional politicization – the global demand for accountability persists. The survival and efficacy of global justice in a multipolar era depend on moving away from exclusive great-power dominance and selective enforcement toward decentralized, pragmatic, and hybrid frameworks that balance universal norms with local and transnational realities.
