



*UNGA 79 High-Level Side Event*

# Accountability for Environmental Violations and Crimes: Advancing a More Global and Inclusive Approach to International Environmental Law

Friday, 27 September 2024 | 1:15 – 2:45 pm ET  
Conference Room 5, UNHQ



**CATHERINE AMIRFAR**

*Co-Chair, International Dispute Resolution Group and Public International Law Group, Debevoise & Plimpton LLP  
Member, COSIS Committee of Legal Experts*



**LEILA SADAT**

*James Carr Professor of International Criminal Law  
Washington University School of Law*



**MAKANE MOÏSE MBENGUE**

*Professor of International Law & Director of the Department of International Law and International Organization, University of Geneva  
Member, COSIS Committee of Legal Experts*

This UNGA 79 High-Level Side Event explores opportunities for the **progressive development of international environmental law**, including through a more inclusive approach. The panel discussion will address linkages between recent and pending international **climate justice proceedings** and ongoing legal discussions around **environmental violations** and **core international crimes** before the General Assembly.

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**CATHERINE AMIRFAR** is Co-Chair of the International Dispute Resolution Group and the Public International Law Group at Debevoise & Plimpton LLP. Her practice focuses on international commercial and treaty arbitration, international litigation and public international law. She regularly appears before international courts and arbitration tribunals, including the International Court of Justice. Ms. Amirfar is the Past President of the American Society of International Law (ASIL) and is a member of the American Law Institute, the Council on Foreign Relations,

the U.S. State Department's Advisory Council on International Law, and the Court of Arbitration of the Singapore International Arbitration Centre. She is a member of the Governing Board of the International Council for Commercial Arbitration (ICCA) and also serves as Co-Chair of the ICCA Panel of Experts to Develop a Paris Agreement Conciliation Annex, which was awarded the 2024 Global Arbitration Review Sustainable Behavior Award. Since 2022, Ms. Amirfar has served as Chair of the Subcommittee on Litigation Management of the Committee of Legal Experts to the Commission of Small Island States (COSIS) and Co-Representative of COSIS in the landmark case before the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea requesting an advisory opinion in relation to the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and climate change. From 2014-2016, she served as the Counselor on International Law in the U.S. State Department in the Obama administration, for which she received the Department's Superior Honor Award in recognition of her contribution.



**LEILA SADAT** is an award-winning U.S. academic specializing in international law, international criminal law, and human rights. She is the James Carr Professor of International Criminal Law at Washington University in St. Louis and recently completed a stint as a Visiting Fellow at the Schell Center for Human Rights at Yale Law School. She served as the Special Adviser on Crimes Against Humanity to the ICC Prosecutor from 2013-2023 and has published more than 170 articles and books in leading journals, academic presses, and media outlets throughout the

world, including *Forging a Convention for Crimes Against Humanity*, *Seeking Accountability for the Unlawful Use of Force*, and, most recently, the *International Criminal Court in a Nutshell*. She is the founder and director of the [Crimes Against Humanity Initiative](#), which authored the world's first global model treaty on crimes against humanity, and continues to spearhead the negotiation of a new treaty on crimes against humanity at the United Nations.

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**MAKANE MOÏSE MBENGUE** is Professor of International Law at the Faculty of Law of the University of Geneva and Director of the Department of International Law and International Organisation. He is also an Affiliate Professor at Sciences Po Paris (School of Law). He is a Member of the Curatorium of The Hague Academy of International Law and an Associate Member of the Institut de droit international. Since 2017, he has been the President of the African Society of International Law (AfSIL). Makane

Mbengue acts as counsel in disputes before international courts and tribunals (in particular, before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), arbitrator (in investment cases) and as advisor for governments across the world. He has also advised many governments and international organizations) in relation to international environmental law. He is the author of several publications in the field of international environmental law, the international law of sustainable development, international water law and general international law.



**Akila Radhakrishnan** is an international human rights lawyer and a globally recognized expert in justice and accountability, sexual and gender-based violence, gender equality, and reproductive rights. Akila is currently the Strategic Legal Advisor for Gender Justice for the Atlantic Council's Strategic Litigation Project. She previously served as the President and Legal Director of the Global Justice Center. A prominent voice on gender issues globally, her unique expertise as a feminist

international lawyer and strategist is sought by policymakers, academics, media, and grassroots actors around the world. She has briefed the United Nations Security Council, presented at the International Criminal Court, and regularly advises governments and multilateral institutions on issues of gender equality and human rights. Her expert analysis can also be seen across popular media, including in The New York Times, The Washington Post, BBC, The Atlantic, Foreign Policy, CNN, and The Nation. Akila has been the recipient of multiple awards and honors, including the Women's Media Center's Progressive Women's Voices IMPACT Award, the Her Hero award from the New York City Bar Association, and has been named as one of the 100 Most Influential People in Gender Policy by APolitical.

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