Embracing concurrent realities: Revisiting the relationship between human rights and conflict resolution

Parlevliet, M.B.

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This study focuses on the interplay of human rights and conflict resolution in the practice of civil society organisations and independent state institutions, so as to enhance understanding of the relationship between these fields and contribute to improved practice. It has been recognised that human rights, justice, conflict and peace are closely linked. Yet for many years these bodies of theory and practice have remained surprisingly separate in conceptual and practical terms. Those working on these issues have been known to strongly disagree about the most suitable response in specific instances. At times they may even perceive one another’s actions as hampering their own.

By considering the practical experiences of specific non-governmental organisations and state institutions in South Africa, Northern Ireland, Nepal and Zimbabwe, the study deviates from much of the existing literature; that focuses extensively on the so-called ‘peace versus justice’ debate. As such, it recognises that ‘conflict resolution’ entails more than reaching a settlement to end violence or repression. It also appreciates that efforts to advance ‘human rights’ go beyond pursuing individual criminal accountability for serious abuses. The study is based on some eighteen years of personal practical experience, a review of relevant literature and key informant interviews.

Michelle Parlevliet (MA Political Science, MA International Peace Studies) has worked on the nexus of human rights and conflict resolution in various capacities since 1997. She has published widely on this theme and related topics, and has provided facilitation, training, research and technical assistance to multiple organisations and networks at grassroots and senior policy-making level in Africa, Asia, and Europe. Between 2010 and 2015, she pursued her PhD at the Faculty of Law at the University of Amsterdam.
Embracing Concurrent Realities

Revisiting the Relationship between Human Rights and Conflict Resolution
Embracing Concurrent Realities
Revisiting the Relationship between Human Rights and Conflict Resolution
PhD thesis, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands

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Embracing Concurrent Realities

Revisiting the Relationship between Human Rights and Conflict Resolution
### Promotiecommissie

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<td>Prof. C.L. Sriram</td>
<td>University of East London</td>
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**Faculteit:** Faculteit der Rechtsgeleerdheid
The single story creates stereotypes. And the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the whole story.

The danger of a single story
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
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There is a Chinese saying “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step”. It is also rarely walked alone, one may add. Anyone embarking on a long journey is likely to meet others along the way who enrich the path travelled. Some people travel along for short or longer periods of time, while others provide directions, explain the landscape, offer refreshments or a place to rest, challenge the traveller’s beliefs, provoke their curiosity, or uplift the spirit when the going gets tough. Pinpointing the single step that set off my journey of preparing this dissertation is pretty much impossible. That also applies to acknowledging all those from whose insights and support I have benefitted over the years; there are simply too many to list here and some persons cannot be named. Nevertheless, what follows is an effort to express my gratitude to several people who contributed to my journey in some way or another.

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<td>Alternative dispute resolution</td>
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<tr>
<td>AI</td>
<td>Amnesty International</td>
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<td>AOs</td>
<td>Authorised Officers (Northern Ireland Parades Commission)</td>
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<td>AGM</td>
<td>Annual General Meeting</td>
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<td>CAJ</td>
<td>Committee for the Administration of Justice (Northern Ireland)</td>
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<td>CDA</td>
<td>Collaborative for Development Action</td>
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<td>CiM</td>
<td>Churches in Manicaland (Zimbabwe)</td>
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<td>CCMA</td>
<td>Council for Conciliation, Mediation, and Arbitration (South Africa)</td>
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<td>CHRCR</td>
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<td>CPS</td>
<td>Civil peace service (Germany)</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil society organisation</td>
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<td>DPA</td>
<td>Department of Political Affairs (United Nations)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESTA</td>
<td>Extension of Security of Tenure Act (South Africa)</td>
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<td>FIDH</td>
<td>International Federation for Human Rights</td>
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<td>FMLN</td>
<td>Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (El Salvador)</td>
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<td>HRCMP</td>
<td>Human Rights and Conflict Management Programme (CCR, South Africa)</td>
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<td>HRW</td>
<td>Human Rights Watch</td>
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<td>ICC</td>
<td>International Criminal Court</td>
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<td>International Commission of Jurists</td>
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<td>ICR</td>
<td>Institute for Conflict Research (Northern Ireland)</td>
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<td>IEC</td>
<td>Independent Electoral Commission (South Africa)</td>
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<td>INSEC</td>
<td>Informal Sector Service Centre (Nepal)</td>
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<td>INGO</td>
<td>International non-governmental organisation</td>
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<td>IRA</td>
<td>Irish Republican Army (Northern Ireland)</td>
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<td>KOFF</td>
<td>Centre for peacebuilding (peacebuilding network, Switzerland)</td>
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<td>LTA</td>
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<td>LTTE</td>
<td>Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (Sri Lanka)</td>
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<td>MDC</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
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<td>NHRI</td>
<td>National human rights institution</td>
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<td>Northern Ireland Parades Commission</td>
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<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
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<td>OECD-DAC</td>
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<td>OHCHR</td>
<td>Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (United Nations)</td>
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<td>OPP</td>
<td>Office of the Public Protector (South Africa)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>RPP</td>
<td>Reflecting on Peace Practices Program</td>
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<td>SAHRC</td>
<td>South African Human Rights Commission</td>
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<td>SFP</td>
<td>Security of Farmworkers Project (LHR, South Africa)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZANU-PF</td>
<td>Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (Zimbabwe)</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commission for Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNOHCHR</td>
<td>United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (also OHCHR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Programme (United Nations)</td>
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