

Human Rights Paper Session

Human Rights Cities Against Authoritarianism and Populism

Organizers: The *Raoul Wallenberg Institute of Human Rights and Humanitarian Law*, the *International Centre for the Promotion of Human Rights at the Local and Regional Levels under the auspices of UNESCO*, the *UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Human Security, University of Graz*, *The May 18 Institute Chonnam National University*, the *Institute of Human Rights and Peace Studies, Mahidol University*, and *Gwangju International Center*

The Human Rights Paper Session provides a platform for students, academics, and practitioners to share their research and experiences, focusing on the role of cities and local governments in taking action against authoritarianism and populism, while strengthening democratic institutions and civic participation.

This session recognizes that human rights cities serve as democratic laboratories and frontline defenders against the erosion of human rights, civic freedoms, and pluralistic values. In an era marked by the global spread of authoritarian governance and populist politics, human rights cities must demonstrate how local action can protect and promote democratic principles, counter exclusionary narratives, and build resilient communities grounded in human rights. Therefore, the session invites papers that explore how cities and local governments respond to authoritarianism and populism through research and practice by analyzing threats and evaluating the impact at the local level, as well as examining democratic responses and delving into ways of building solidarity while protecting the vulnerable and nurturing international cooperation.

