

Outstanding Women
of International, European
and Constitutional Law



2025



Universität Hamburg

DER FORSCHUNG | DER LEHRE | DER BILDUNG

FAKULTÄT
FÜR RECHTSWISSENSCHAFT

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The project *Outstanding Women of International, European and Constitutional Law* is an initiative of students and young researchers. It emerged from a seminar held by Verena Kahl (Ass. iur., M.A.) and Prof. Dr. Markus Kotzur, LL.M. (Duke Univ.) at the University of Hamburg in 2021. The aim is to make distinguished women, and their contributions to the development of the national and international legal order, visible and more widely known.



To achieve this, a first pocket calendar consisting of twelve short portraits of outstanding women in the fields of International, European and Constitutional Law was published in 2022. Ever since, annual pocket calendars showcase twelve women, their achievements and challenges throughout the course of their career path, which may not be free of critique, of course. Each calendar edition aims to feature women of different eras and distinct backgrounds, following an intersectional approach.

Since 2024, the collaboration *Verfassungsblog x Outstanding Women* has been in place, with an amplified blogpost for each portrait being published every month. For 2025, there is a small but significant innovation: Readers find a QR code on each page directing them to the blogpost on the *Verfassungsblog* website. Please note that the blogpost will only show starting from that month.

For more information, please visit the project's UHH website (<https://uhh.de/rw-womencaender>) and Instagram (@outstanding_women_jura_uhh).

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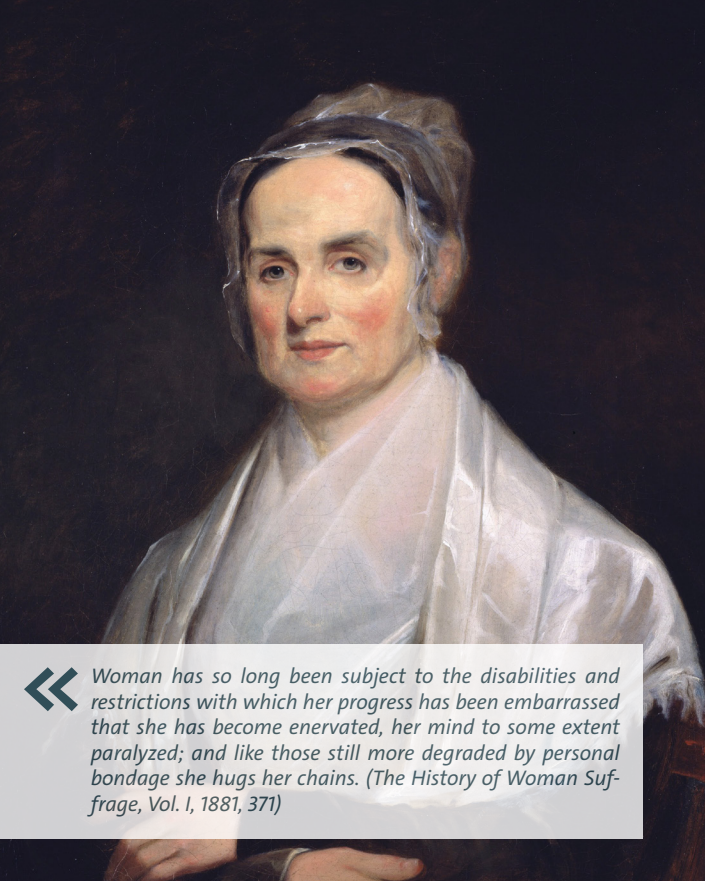
01/01 Neujahr
New Year's Day
18/04 Karfreitag
Good Friday
21/04 Ostermontag
Easter Monday

01/05 Tag der Arbeit
Labour Day
29/05 Christi Himmelfahrt
Ascension Day
09/06 Pfingstmontag
Pentacost

03/10 Tag der Deutschen Einheit
Day of German Unity
31/10 Reformationstag
Reformation Day
25/12 - 26/12 1. und 2. Weihnachtsfeiertag
1st and 2nd Day of Christmas

FEIERTAGE*
HOLIDAYS*
2025

* public holidays for Hamburg



Lucretia Mott

3 January 1793

Once a Quaker preacher, Mott dedicated much of her life to advocacy - especially for women's rights, gender equality, peace, and the emancipation of enslaved people. Despite facing resistance and discrimination, Mott maintained an unapologetic approach to her activism, continually calling for social reforms. She played a key role in organizing the first women's rights convention and founded the *Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society*. She traveled the country to raise awareness and funds for the abolitionist movement and delivered impactful speeches.



Woman has so long been subject to the disabilities and restrictions with which her progress has been embarrassed that she has become enervated, her mind to some extent paralyzed; and like those still more degraded by personal bondage she hugs her chains. (The History of Woman Suffrage, Vol. I, 1881, 371)

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Author: Ann-Sophie Hartmann

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2W 3W 4W 5W

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2025



Lucy Thoumaian

28 October 1858

Lucy Thoumaian (née Rossier de Visme) was a peace and women's rights activist. Born into a Swiss family, she married the Armenian professor Garabed Thoumaian. Following the Hamidian massacres, the couple moved to England. They attended the 1911 *First Universal Races Congress* where they formally embraced a delegate for the Ottoman Empire to emphasize the need for solidarity and cooperation. Soon after the outbreak of WWI, Lucy Thoumaian issued a manifesto promoting, *i.a.*, arbitration. She represented Armenia at the 1915 *International Congress of Women* in The Hague and was an initial member of the later *Women's International League for Peace and Freedom*.



We women cannot afford to allow this madness of war to go on, neither now nor at any future time; we have had enough of it! (A Manifesto to Women of Every Land, in: Jus Suffragii, 1914, Vol. 8, No. 13, 170)



Author: Franziska Bachmann

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2025



Ángela de Oliveira Cézar de Costa

1860

Known for her devotion and tenacity, Argentinian pacifist Ángela de Oliveira Cézar de Costa's legacy went beyond state borders. She was the first Latin American woman to ever be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize and set important milestones for peace in Latin America and the world. She mediated the peace treaty between Argentina and Chile concerning the conflict on the Argentine Chilean naval arms race, was founder of the *Asociación Sud-Americana de Paz Universal* (1908) and member of the Commission of the *Bureau International Permanent de la Paix*.

« The idea of the statue of Cristo Redentor, to commemorate the definitive peace [of Argentina] with Chile, [...] is a work of art [...], [whose] placement on one of the highest peaks of the Andes [serves] to tell the world that these two nations have forever forgotten their disputes and returned to the old and glorious friendship. (English tr)

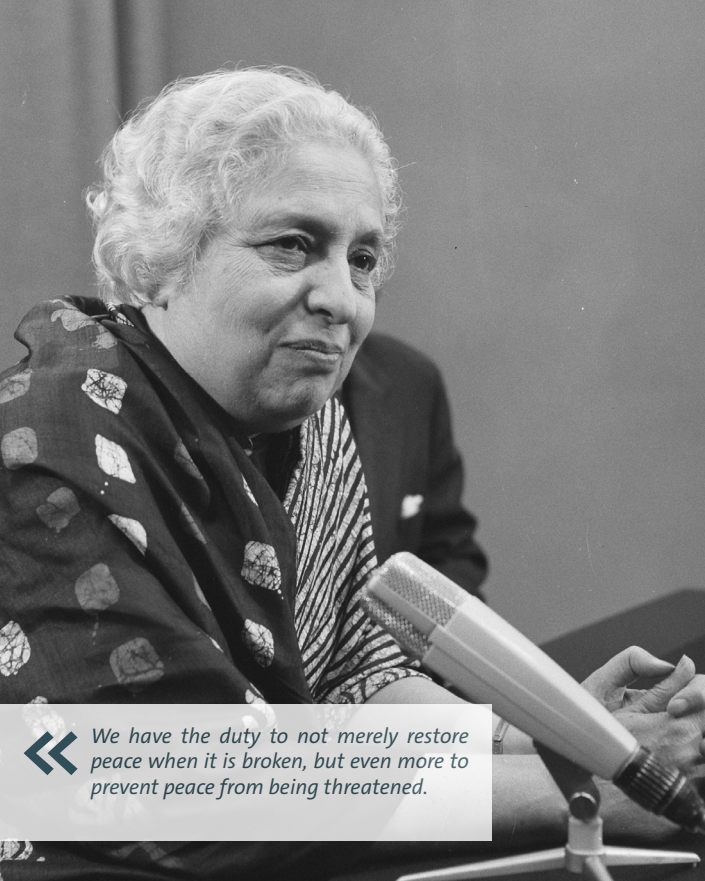
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Author: Vanessa Domingues

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Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit

18 August 1900

Diplomat and politician Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit (née Swarup Kumari Nehru) challenged British colonial rule and championed Indian independence. Following the death of her husband, she fought against discriminatory inheritance laws in India, which left Hindu widows with no claim to their deceased husband's estate. In 1953, Pandit became the first woman to serve as President of the UN General Assembly and advocated for peace, equality and women's rights.



We have the duty to not merely restore peace when it is broken, but even more to prevent peace from being threatened.

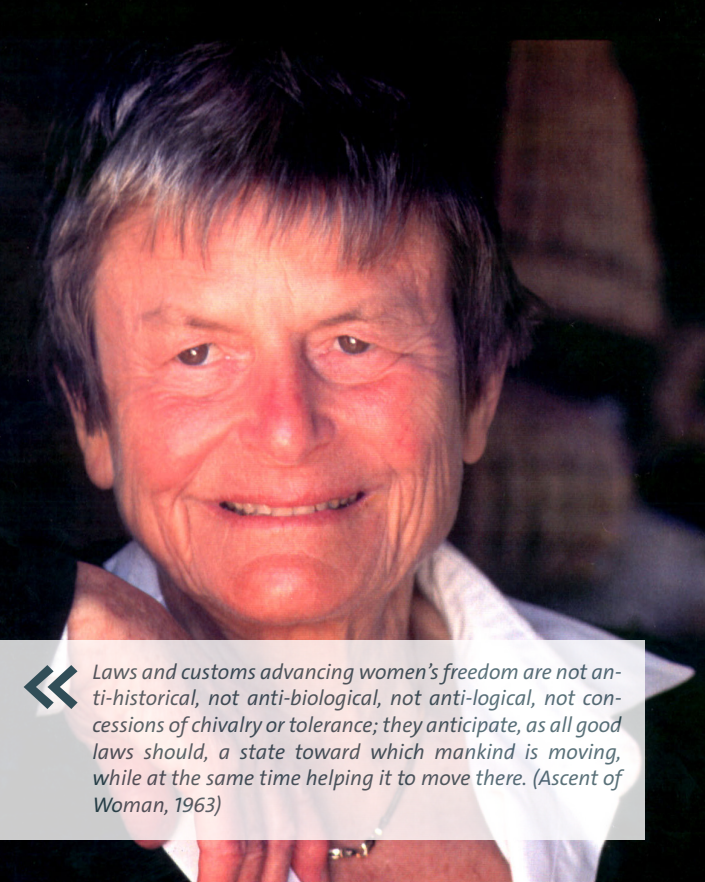
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Author: Julia Clara Lips

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« *Laws and customs advancing women's freedom are not anti-historical, not anti-biological, not anti-logical, not concessions of chivalry or tolerance; they anticipate, as all good laws should, a state toward which mankind is moving, while at the same time helping it to move there. (Ascent of Woman, 1963)*

© International Ocean Institute (IOI)

Elisabeth Mann Borgese

24 April 1918

Elisabeth Mann Borgese („Mother of the Oceans“) is probably best known for her pioneering work on the UNCLOS, focused on social justice, equitable access to resources, and environmental protection. However, her legacy also contains a feminist agenda: She held lectures on “Women and the Future” and published a book entitled *Ascent of Woman* (1963). In her book, she argues that, over time, “natural trends of individuation and socialization will change the sex balance and produce superior women, men’s true equals.”



Author: Sara Wissmann

Simone Rozès

29 March 1920

Simone Rozès is a pioneer in the French justice system. She was the first female president of the *Tribunal de Grande Instance* and the first female president of the *Cour de cassation*. She also was the first woman to be appointed Advocate General at the *Court of Justice of the European Communities*. She achieved all this as one of the first women ever to be allowed to take the examination to become a judge in France.



“As a colleague it would suit me very well.”
- Simone Rozès after a prosecutor told her
he would not treat her like a woman.

© Musée du Barreau de Paris



Author: Clara Stryck

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« Whenever a lawyer reads a legal provision, the first thing she says when asked about its meaning is „It depends.“ Often, the reader makes the law more than the law makes the reader. Therefore, if we read the law with women’s eyes, we probably will be able to go a long way into incorporating economic, social, and cultural rights into civil and political rights, which are much better protected at the international level.

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Cecilia Medina Quiroga

17 November 1935

Chilean human rights professor Cecilia Medina Quiroga grew up and studied law in Santiago. Even though she had to live in exile during the Pinochet regime from 1973–1990, she was able to advance her academic career and obtain a doctorate in law from the University of Utrecht. After her return to Chile, she served on the UN Human Rights Committee for eight years. In 2003, she was elected to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights where she presided over milestone decisions such as the “Cotton Field” femicide case.



Author: Alena Schröder

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Mia Yamamoto

September 1943

Born at Poston internment camp, where the US detained citizens of Japanese descent after Pearl Harbor, Mia Yamamoto's early experiences with racial injustice shaped her career. After serving in Vietnam, she attended UCLA Law School and founded the *Asian/Pacific Islander Law Students Association*. At the age of 60, she publicly came out as transgender and has since advocated for trans rights both in court and society, receiving numerous awards, such as Criminal Defense Attorney of the Years 2002 and 2006.

« *Every trans person should aspire to everything. Be [...] the best politician, be the greatest lawyer you can be. All those things are going to be available because people fought for us, people advocated for us, people opened doors and made space for us. [...] This is one movement that you have to get active in, not just for yourself, but for the world—for us to experience a measure of justice, equality, inclusion.*

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Author: Marie Siegemund

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8 2025



Hanan Ashrawi

8 October 1946

Hanan Ashrawi was displaced in the Nakba and later denied re-entry to the Westbank by Israel. She studied literature in Beirut and played a major role in the Palestinian peace process as spokesperson of Palestine's delegation to the Madrid Conference. She held high functions in the PLO, e.g. as Education Minister, but resigned in protest against corruption. From the start, Ashrawi criticized the Oslo Process as an instrument to solidify the Israeli occupation. She remains a strong and resolute voice for the cause of the Palestinian people for self-determination.

« Where are you going to have Palestinian state? [...] We have a right to self-determination ... But I do not want sovereignty over five percent or 15 percent of historical Palestine. This is not a state, it is not even a mini-state; this is a caricature of a state. What we need is to maintain our ability to stay, our resilience, and our relationship with the rest of the world. There is a rising and growing solidarity movement.

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Authors: Yasmin Khuder & Ammar Bustami

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It is vitally important to recognize that human rights must begin by ensuring that all women, in all stages of life and diversity of races, are included in every discourse, policy making, and the amending and framing of the law. We must demand this as a right.

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Margarette May Macaulay

20th century

Margarette May Macaulay is a Jamaican lawyer who is known for her dedication for women's and children's rights. From 2007 to 2012, she was a Judge at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. She then served as Commissioner and President of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, where she was the Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons of African Descent and against Racial Discrimination as well as on the Rights of Women. She continues to be a strong voice for human rights, internationally as well as in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean.



Author: Lilian Langer

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Valmaine Toki

1963

Valmaine Toki is an indigenous barrister, researcher and Māori rights advocate of Ngāti Rehua, Ngāti Wai, Ngāpuhi descent. Toki, currently law professor at the Te Piringa of Waikato University, challenged Maori underrepresentation in Auckland's governance. She was both the first New Zealander and Māori to be appointed to the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the United Nations Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which she chairs since July 2024.



All bodies of water, such as a spring (puna wai), wetland (repo), river (awa), lake (roto), underground water (waitomo), or lagoon (muriwai) have their own mauri or life force. The nature of the animals that either lived in the water body or depended on the water body was usually a reflection of its health.

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Author: Verena Kahl



Amal Clooney

3 February 1978

Being known for representing victims of mass atrocities and political prisoners, Amal Clooney is considered one of the leading barristers specializing in *PIL*, *ICL*, and *IHRL*. Before becoming a barrister, Clooney *i.a.* worked as a UN investigator in Lebanon, where she was born, for the first UN terrorism tribunal and as a senior advisor to *Kofi Annan*. She co-founded the *Clooney Foundation for Justice* and, in 2024, served on the advisory panel that reviewed the investigation by the ICC's Prosecutor into potentially committed war crimes in the Hamas-Israel conflict.



As a human rights lawyer, I will never accept that one child's life has less value than another's. I do not accept that any conflict should be beyond the reach of the law, nor that any perpetrator should be above the law.



Author: Christian Raby

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