



**CITY UNIVERSITY  
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**International Legal Affairs Group (ILAG) Seminar**

**Holy Land tourism and international law – mapping a ‘real world’ clash of perspectives**

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**Abstract**

This paper compares two modes of ordering relevant to occupied Palestinian territory: the “Holy Land” tourism itinerary developed for international visitors and the template for regulating an occupying power envisaged in international humanitarian law. From a sociological perspective each is mobilised and manifested through different material actors and activities. Through characterising these pathways a strategy for reform of the tourism industry in Palestine, in a manner consistent with international law, is proposed. From the nineteenth century a lucrative heritage tourism industry emerged around historical Palestine, also known as the “Holy Land”, which continues to this day. In recent decades the experience of the tourist has been transformed by civil development and political realities on the ground. A significant portion of this region, including the Old City of Jerusalem, remains under Israeli control since the conquest of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967. Despite some significant disruptions tourism has continued in and around the fault-lines of military occupation and conflict. This paper introduces the origins of the modern day tourism industry and how it has actively shaped practices in occupied Palestinian territory. This mainstream touristic landscape is contrasted with the template provided for in international humanitarian law, applicable whenever territory comes under the effective control of hostile foreign armed forces. Using an approach derived from Actor Network Theory the material and human actors involved in mobilising the idea of the “Holy Land” amongst European consumers are described revealing where and when laws of occupation have influenced the translation of a package holiday into reality and where they have not.

**Biography**

Dr. Gearóid Ó Cuinn is an Academic Fellow at Lancaster University Law School. His research focuses on the governance of infectious disease and new technologies and has a strong interest in the sociology of human rights law and practice. Gearóid is also co-director of Ceartas, Irish Lawyers for Human Rights, a non-profit organisation that develops innovative legal actions to protect and promote human rights internationally.