



CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF HUMAN RIGHTS (CSHR)  
UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO

PRESENTS

## **Beyond Geneva: Human Rights, Politics and Culture**

A Lecture by



**Dr. Kiran Grewal**

**Institute of Social Justice, Australian Catholic University**

Dr Kiran Grewal is a human rights scholar and lawyer from Australia. Kiran has worked as an academic, practitioner and activist in a number of parts of the world and most recently was the Research Manager on a three-year project entitled, 'Enhancing Human Rights Protection in the Context of Law Enforcement and Security' in Sri Lanka and Nepal. Kiran's research interests include postcolonial, subaltern and feminist approaches to international law, transitional justice, women's rights, sexual and gender-based violence and torture.

Since their formal inception in the United Nations system post World War II, human rights have continued to trigger intense debates: about their universal or culturally relative nature, their emancipatory potential or their collusion with forms of economic and political domination. While advocates and critics alike present important perspectives, they frequently base their arguments more on ideological claims than empirical evidence. As a result debates often remain at the level of abstract theory or political rhetoric. Is there a way we can better evaluate whether human rights truly operate as a tool for social justice or another form of oppression? In seeking to answer this question, in this paper I present some of the key arguments from my new book, *The Socio-Political Practice of Human Rights*. By examining how human rights discourses and mechanisms have operated in practice in three post-conflict locations - Kosovo, Sierra Leone and Sri Lanka - I identify both the limitations of existing human rights approaches and possible sites of potential.

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**Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2015 at 4.00 p.m.**  
**at the CSHR Lecture Room**

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**Please RSVP by 13<sup>th</sup> October 2015**