



# ASEAN Forum 2021: ASEAN and Human Rights

Friday 27 August 2021

Online event via Zoom and livestreamed on [Facebook](#)



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**

—  
Sydney Southeast  
Asia Centre

## **Sydney Southeast Asia Centre**

*The Sydney Southeast Asia Centre is forging Australia's relationship with one of the world's fastest growing regions by educating students and building new partnerships with academics and governments based on research excellence.*

*With more than 400 academics across five faculties and three schools working on and in Southeast Asia, the University of Sydney has one of the highest concentrations of regional expertise in the world.*

# Overview

## ASEAN and Human Rights



**Now in its ninth iteration, this year's ASEAN Forum focuses on human rights in ASEAN.**

It has been just under a decade since ASEAN promulgated its ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, marking a rhetorical shift in its approach to human rights in the region. Across the region, its member countries have vastly different approaches to and experiences with human rights.

In this event, we offer a snapshot of the current human rights situation in ASEAN, the approach ASEAN is taking and how human rights is faring in the context of increasing geopolitical power struggles across the region.

## ASEAN Forum 2021 Schedule: Friday 27 August 2021

Event	Speakers	Time (ICT)	Time (SGT)	Time (AET)	Link
<hr/>					
<b>Keynote Address:</b>					
Southeast Asia and the Future of Human Rights	Prof Catherine Renshaw Chair: Dr Susan Banki	11:00	12:00	14:00	<a href="https://bit.ly/SSEACkeynote21">https://bit.ly/SSEACkeynote21</a>
<hr/>					
<b>Panel Discussion:</b>	Mr Ben Bland				
Human Rights in ASEAN in the Context of US/China Tensions	Ms Elaine Pearson A/Prof James Reilly Chair: Dr Elisabeth Kramer	12:00	13:00	15:00	<a href="https://bit.ly/SSEACpanel21">https://bit.ly/SSEACpanel21</a>
<hr/>					

## Keynote Address:

### Southeast Asia and the Future of Human Rights

There have been increasingly clear signs that the international human rights system will be unable to address the human rights challenges of the 21st century. The transboundary human rights implications of climate change, China's decreasing willingness to accept the human rights priorities and methods of Western states, the growth of ethno-nationalist extremism and the patent failure of existing global bodies to prevent atrocities in countries like Myanmar, all loom large on the global human rights stage. Even before Covid-19 wreaked devastation across the world and threatened the human rights of millions of people, these issues presented real and substantial challenges to the existing human rights order.

Against this backdrop, what does the future of human rights look like from the perspective of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations? Professor Catherine Renshaw argues that ASEAN will be central to a new system for the promotion and protection of human rights that will include (i) a move towards regionalism in the governance of human rights; (ii) a new human rights architecture composed of a network of civil society and state-based human rights institutions, and (iii) the emergence of a new order of Asian Values, centred on principles of solidarity, dignity, decency and good governance.



## Keynote Speaker



**Prof Catherine Renshaw**  
Western Sydney University

Dr Catherine Renshaw is Professor in the School of Law at Western Sydney University. She has written widely about the theory, policy and practice of human rights in Southeast Asia. Some of her recent publications include *Human Rights and Participatory Politics in Southeast Asia* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 'Myanmar's Genocide and the Legacy of Forgetting' (*Georgia Journal of International and Comparative Law*, 2020) and 'Southeast Asia's human rights institutions and the inconsistent power of human rights' (*Journal of Human Rights*, 2021). Her research has been funded by the Community of Democracies, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Rotary International.

**Twitter:**      [@RenshawCat](https://twitter.com/RenshawCat)

---

## Keynote Address Chair



**Dr Susan Banki**  
The University of Sydney

Dr Susan Banki's research interests lie in the political, institutional, and legal contexts that explain the roots of and solutions to international human rights violations. In particular, she is interested in the ways that questions of sovereignty, citizenship/membership and humanitarian principles have shaped our understanding of and reactions to various transnational phenomena, such as the international human rights regime, international migration and the provision of international aid. Susan's focus is in the Asia-Pacific region, where she has conducted extensive field research in Thailand, Nepal, Bangladesh and Japan on refugee/migrant protection, statelessness and border control.

**Twitter:**      [@susanbanki](https://twitter.com/susanbanki)



## Panel Discussion:

# Human Rights in ASEAN in the Context of US/China Tensions

The issue of human rights has been a point of difference between the United States (US) and China for decades. As China has steadily strengthened its influence over the Southeast Asia region and as the tensions between the US and China grow, the countries of ASEAN have found themselves in an increasingly complex position.

In this online panel discussion, experts on human rights, foreign policy, Southeast Asia and China engage in a discussion about ASEAN and its member countries' response to the US/China tensions specifically in relation to human rights issues.



## Panel Discussion Chair



**Dr Elisabeth Kramer**  
The University of Sydney

Dr Elisabeth Kramer is deputy director at the Sydney Southeast Asia Centre and Honorary Associate at the School of Languages and Culture at the University of Sydney. Her dissertation research focused on corruption and elections in Indonesia but her interests now broadly look at politics, policy and discourse in Indonesia. Current research topics include the tobacco industry and political empowerment for people with disabilities. Her book *The Candidate's Dilemma: Anticorruptionism and Money Politics in Indonesian Elections* is currently under contract with Cornell University Press.

**Twitter:**      [@liskramer](#)

---

## Panel Discussion Speaker



**Mr Ben Bland**  
The Lowy Institute

Ben Bland is the Director of the Southeast Asia Program at the Lowy Institute in Sydney, and the author of two critically acclaimed books on Asian politics. His most recent publication is *Man of Contradictions: Joko Widodo and the Struggle to Remake Indonesia* (2020), the first English language political biography of Indonesia's president. His first book, *Generation HK: Seeking Identity in China's Shadow* (2017), examined the motivations of young people in pushing back against Beijing's pressures on Hong Kong. Ben is currently pursuing research projects on internet governance in Southeast Asia, Indonesian attitudes to foreign policy, and future development models for the region.

**Twitter:**      [@benjaminbland](#)



## Panel Discussion Speaker



**Ms Elaine Pearson**  
Human Rights Watch  
Australia

Elaine Pearson is the Australia Director at Human Rights Watch, based in Sydney. She established Human Rights Watch's Australia office in 2013 and works to influence Australian foreign and domestic policies in order to give them a human rights dimension. From 2007 to 2012 she was the Deputy Director of Human Rights Watch's Asia Division based in New York. She has conducted numerous human rights investigations in Australia and around the world. She is an adjunct lecturer in law at the University of New South Wales, on the advisory committee of UNSW's Australian Human Rights Institute and on the board of the Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women.

**Twitter:**      [@PearsonElaine](https://twitter.com/PearsonElaine)

---

## Panel Discussion Speaker



**A/Prof James Reilly**  
The University of Sydney

Jamie Reilly is an Associate Professor in Northeast Asian Politics in the Department of Government and International Relations at the University of Sydney. His research and teaching are in the areas of Chinese foreign policy, East Asian politics, and international relations. Prior to joining the University of Sydney, he was a post-doctoral research fellow at the University of Oxford (2008-09), and a Jean Monnet Fellow at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy (2015-16). He is the author of *Orchestration: China's Economic Statecraft across Asia and Europe* (Oxford University Press, 2021), *Strong Society, Smart State: The Rise of Public Opinion in China's Japan Policy* (Columbia University Press, 2012), and the co-editor of *Australia and China at 40* (UNSW Press, 2012).



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**

—  
**Sydney Southeast  
Asia Centre**

## **Sydney Southeast Asia Centre**

T +61 2 9114 0953 | E [sseac@sydney.edu.au](mailto:sseac@sydney.edu.au)

[sydney.edu.au/southeast-asia-centre](https://sydney.edu.au/southeast-asia-centre)

 Facebook ([@sydneyseasouthasiacentre](https://www.facebook.com/sydneyseasouthasiacentre))

 Twitter ([@seacsydney](https://twitter.com/seacsydney))

 Instagram ([@seacsydney](https://www.instagram.com/seacsydney))

 YouTube ([Sydney Southeast Asia Centre](https://www.youtube.com/SydneySoutheastAsiaCentre))

 Spotify ([SSEAC Stories](#))

 Apple Podcast ([SSEAC Stories](#))

Follow **#sseac** and **#ASEANForum21**

**Thank you for attending a Sydney Southeast Asia Centre event.**

*To be involved and stay up-to-date with our latest research, events and activities, and  
[become a member today.](#)*