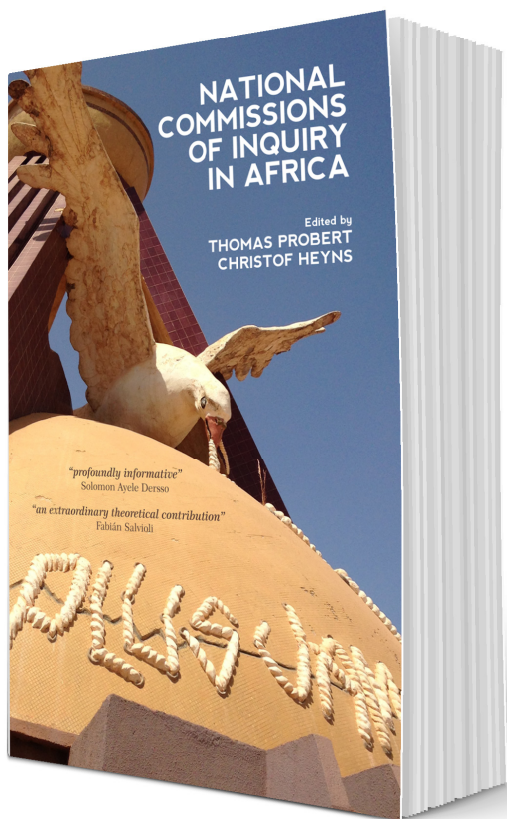


# VIRTUAL BOOK LAUNCH

"The insights it offers on why, how and when Commissions of Inquiry in Africa facilitate accountability are profoundly informative, not only for scholars but also for policy makers and practitioners." - *Solomon Ayele Dersso*



THURSDAY  
**29**  
JUNE  
2021  
ON ZOOM  
16:00  
SAST

Pretoria University Law Press  
**PULP**

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register on Zoom

The Pretoria University Law Press (PULP) invites you to the virtual book launch of ***National Commissions of Inquiry in Africa: Vehicles to pursue accountability for violations of the right to life?***, edited by Thomas Probert and Christof Heyns (2020).

DOWNLOAD THIS BOOK  
(OPEN ACCESS)

## EVENT DETAILS

**Tuesday 29 June 2021**

**16:00 – 17:30 (SAST/ CET)**

**Online (Zoom)**

**[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER ON ZOOM](#)**

National commissions of inquiry in the aftermath of violations of human rights are a common feature of the African legal and political landscape. There is often a fair measure of scepticism or caution about their use, and often with good reason. However, very little hard evidence is available about their performance.

For the purposes of this book, researchers went to six countries in Africa—Chad, Burkina Faso, Kenya, Malawi, South Africa and Nigeria—and conducted in-depth investigations of commissions of inquiry that have been held there. Drawing on this research, the book argues that commissions of inquiry should not be contrasted criminal trials but rather with earlier stages of the investigative process. Rather than replacing criminal processes, commissions might guide whether and how they should take place. Moreover commissions can be cathartic events for victims; can lay foundations for the rule of law; and can make systemic recommendations. In short, in certain circumstances, they can serve to enable a broader concept of accountability.

*The event will be live streamed on social media and the recording will be available on YouTube.*

*A podcast of the launch will be available after the event.*

*A post-launch release sharing the highlights of the event.*

## EVENT PROGRAMME

### Chair

- **Dr Marthie Bradley (PULP board member)**  
She is a board member of PULP and frequently teaches at international level on topics of international humanitarian law, in general, and, more specifically, conflict classification. These universities and institutes include Palacký University in Olomouc, Faculty of Law, Department of International and European Law, Czech Republic; the NUST Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (NIPCONS); Centre for International Peace and Stability (CIPS), Islamabad; and as of 2021 the prestigious International Institute for International Humanitarian Law in San Remo, Italy.

### WELCOMING REMARKS AND TRIBUTE TO PROF CHRISTOF HEYNS

#### Speakers

- **Thomas Probert (Co-editor)**  
A discussion of the background to the book, including the context of Prof. Heyns' UN mandate focused on accountability for violations of the right to life.
- **Meetal Jain (Contributing author)**  
An introduction to the longer history of the use of Commissions of Inquiry during colonial administrations, in Africa and elsewhere.
- **Yvonne Oyieke (Contributing author)**  
An example of one of the six detailed case-studies presented in the book, in this case the challenging example of the Zaria Commission of Inquiry in Kaduna State, Nigeria.
- **Kate O'Regan**  
Justice Kate O'Regan served as one of the founding judges of the Constitutional Court of South Africa from 1994-2009, writing several of the Court's most influential decisions. From 2013-2014, she served as a commissioner of the Khayelitsha Commission of Inquiry into policing, one of the case studies reviewed in the book. She is now the inaugural director of the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights at the University of Oxford. Justice O'Regan will offer some wider reflections upon good and bad practice with respect to commissions of inquiry and upon the role they can play within systems of accountability.

### Q&A SESSION

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### CONCLUDING REMARKS

## PRAISE FOR THIS PUBLICATION

"A rich collection of well-researched chapters made up of normative analysis and case studies, which presents a much-needed scholarly contribution to the question of accountability for violations of human rights—particularly the right to life—through a means other than a routine criminal process, a question with which the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights wrestled in its Study on Transitional Justice that was the basis for the African Union Transitional Justice Policy. The insights it offers on why, how and when Commissions of Inquiry in Africa facilitate accountability are profoundly informative not only for scholars but also for policy makers and practitioners."

– **Solomon Ayele Dersso**

*Chairperson, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights*

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"This book covers new ground, with six rich case studies drawing from on-the-ground research across the African continent. It demonstrates that while independent mechanisms can all face significant challenges in the aftermath of grave violations of human rights, properly-mandated, adequately-empowered and well-supported commissions of inquiry can in some cases play a valuable role within broader processes of accountability. The authors rightly focus on the complementarity of the different elements that a transitional justice process must have in order to be compatible with human rights standards, making an extraordinary theoretical contribution to debates about how to guarantee human rights in the face of atrocious facts."

– **Fabián Salvioli**

*UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence*

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