



Invitation to the annual **Christof Heyns Human Rights Memorial Lecture**

*Under the theme: Contemporary
Human Rights Challenges*

Thursday 24 July 2025 | 1700 – 18:30 GMT
Oxford, United Kingdom
Bonavero Institute
Mansfield College

The Christof Heyns Lecture: An Annual Tribute to International Human Rights Discourse

The Christof Heyns Lecture is an annual event that serves as a platform for engaging with critical issues in international human rights discourse. Established in honor of Professor Christoffel Hendrik (Christof) Heyns, the lecture brings together scholars, activists, and practitioners to reflect on contemporary human rights challenges.

Professor Heyns was an internationally renowned human rights lawyer, legal educator, and activist, whose profound impact continues to resonate. He was one of the founding members and the former director of the Centre for Human Rights. A visionary, he conceptualized the Centre's logo—a butterfly with Africa as its wings—symbolizing the idea that even the smallest change or action can have momentous consequences.

To Professor Heyns, a single, seemingly insignificant change could set off a transformative cycle, similar the metamorphosis of a butterfly.

Professor Heyns also initiated the master's Programme in Human Rights and Democratisation in Africa (HRDA), which continues to operate under the auspices of the Centre.

His dedication to the advancement of human rights and legal education remains central to the programme's mission.

Sadly, Professor Heyns passed away in **March 2021**. His sudden death left a significant void, yet his legacy endures. He served as the Director of the Centre for Human Rights from 1996 and as the Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Pretoria from 2007 to 2010. After stepping down as Dean, he became the founding Co-Director of the Institute for International and Comparative Law in Africa (ICLA) at the University of Pretoria.

He also held the position of United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary, or Arbitrary Executions from 2010 to 2016 and was a member of the UN Human Rights Committee from 2017 to 2020. Through these roles, he made lasting contributions to human rights worldwide.

While we mourn his untimely passing, the Christof Heyns Lecture is a tribute to his unwavering passion, dedication, and the unforgettable mark he left on the field of human rights.



2024 Memorial Lecture considers complete abolition of the death penalty in Africa



2023 Inaugural 'Christof Heyns Human Rights Memorial Lecture'

