Explosive violence against civilian in the shadow of international law: causes and consequences.

The Department of Government at the University of Essex invites applications for a PhD scholarship with Partnership. The successful candidate will work in the project “Explosive violence against civilians in the shadow of international law: causes and consequences” led by Prof Ismene Gizelis and Dr Sara Polo in partnership with Dr Iain Overton, CEO of the NGO Action on Armed Violence (AOAV).

**Project details**

Many contemporary conflicts feature the widespread use of explosive weapons (EW) such as IEDs, bombs, landmines, and airstrikes. Such weapons are increasingly deployed in populated areas with a large presence of women and children and in clear violation of international law. This PhD scholarship is tied to a larger research project examining what leads state and non-state actors to employ such extreme weapons and their consequences for conflict dynamics, population displacements, international responses, and post-conflict recovery. The project is embedded in a systematic study of armed conflict and will create a new geocoded dataset on the use of explosive weapons linked with administrative data across and within countries.

Action On Armed Violence is a London-based NGO, with a mission to end the use of explosive weapons against civilians through research and advocacy. AOAV has created the Explosive Weapons Monitoring Project and carries out advocacy at the House of Commons and United Nations. Gizelis and Polo have conducted research with AOAV data and Gizelis sits on its board of trustees. The collaborative project will develop new insights into how explosive weapons are used and impact local populations and broader audiences. It will also involve a case-study on the use of EW in Ukraine, a country where AOAV has been operating. AOAV will contribute office space, IT support to collect and access datasets on explosive weapons and their impact on civilians, and support travel costs to events with policymakers and stakeholders.

**Deadline to apply:** 26 May 2023

**Start of PhD:** 1 October 2023
Duration of PhD: 3 years

Funding arrangements: International/Domestic tuition + stipend at 2023 UKRI approved rates

Location of PhD: University of Essex Colchester campus and London (Mile End) at AOAV

PhD responsibilities:

- write a PhD thesis in collaboration with Prof Gizelis, and Drs Polo and Overton
- collect and access rare datasets on the use of explosive weapons
- conduct analyses on the impact of explosive weapons on civilian populations
- collaborate with AOAV to conduct research on the use of explosive weapons in Ukraine
- contribute and co-author academic and non-academic outputs
- present research outputs and disseminate research findings at international conferences
- present research outputs to non-academic audiences and policy makers

PhD profile:

- MA/MSc degree in political science, economics, international relations, or a related discipline
- strong interest in academic research and motivation to pursue an academic career
- interest in data collection (previous experience with data collection is desirable)
- knowledge of advanced quantitative methods, data analysis, and interest in developing further methodological skills
- knowledge of international and intrastate conflict literature
- excellent written and oral English
- knowledge of Ukrainian and/or Russian is desirable
- interest in communicating and working with diverse stakeholders in academia and beyond
- ability to communicate complex information clearly

What we offer:

- an exciting opportunity for a university graduate to gain research experience, working with senior colleagues in a partnership with an NGO in conflict research
- a chance to get involved in an empirically and theoretically ambitious research project
- a chance to be in a vibrant PhD community at a top research-oriented Political Science department in Europe
- an opportunity to meet, engage, and co-author with senior researchers and academics
- an inspiring research environment and opportunities to develop collaborations with non-academic partners
- funds for additional training, meetings with non-academic stakeholders and conference participation

**How to apply:**

Please send your applications electronically to govpgquery@essex.ac.uk by **26 May 2023 at midnight GMT** and include the following documents in a **single** PDF file entitled **Surname_AOAVPartnership_PhD**:

- Motivation letter explaining how you fit the PhD profile, including information on your academic career as well as any relevant work experience
- Curriculum vitae and copies of relevant documents, including academic transcripts and, if applicable, certificate of English language proficiency
- A two-page research statement outlining the research questions you would be interested in, the methods you would like to use as well as the literature you wish to speak to
- Contact details of 2 referees
- A writing sample - either an MA/MSc dissertation or a research paper submitted as part of MA/MSC/postgraduate coursework

Interviews will most likely take place between 10-20 June 2023.

We value diversity and welcome all applications – irrespective of gender, nationality, ethnic or social origin, religion, disability, age, or sexual orientation.

For inquiries about the application, please contact Prof Ismene Gizelis, tig@essex.ac.uk, or Dr Sara Polo, sara.polo@Essex.ac.uk.