

Expanding Horizons of Restorative Justice and Restorative Peacemaking Research

John Braithwaite

2024 Balzan Prize for Restorative Justice

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Duration: 2025-2029

John Braithwaite is Professor Emeritus at Australian National University. With Valerie Braithwaite, he founded the School of Regulation and Global Governance (RegNet) at ANU.

PROJECT PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The Balzan Prize Project, led by Professor John Braithwaite, supports emerging scholars working in war-affected African countries to conduct field research, contribute to long-term peacebuilding, and strengthen local research capacity and networks.

In 2025, these objectives were met:

- The award of Balzan Prizes to nine PhD Fellows, providing vital financial support for their research and improving access to essential academic resources.
- A connected and active fellowship, with bimonthly Zoom meetings bringing all PhD fellows together and providing regular opportunities for research exchange.
- Advanced planning for a Balzan Workshop on the project theme, to be held in Addis Ababa in 2026.
- Progress toward a major scholarly output, with a complete draft of a book, *Principles of Organised Crime Prevention*, planned for submission in 2026, with publication anticipated in 2027.
- Strengthened academic partnerships through Professor John Braithwaite's appointment as Adjunct Professor at Mekelle University, with teaching to continue in 2026.
- Early financial support for Mekelle University's PhD program in 2025, assisting researchers working in restorative justice and the Commission of Enquiry into the Genocide in Tigray, and supporting the University's recovery following conflict.
- Additional support leveraged through collaboration with Oxfam, extending the reach and impact of the Balzan Prize Project.

REPORTS FROM INDIVIDUAL FELLOWS

Charles Emmanuel Ekpo, Balzan PhD fellow at the University of Calabar, Nigeria

The Balzan Prize has provided access to ANU's library and essential support for Ekpo's fieldwork, recognising the potential of his research and strengthening the quality of his data and dissertation, while also enabling him to engage with the wider scholarly community through conferences to present his work and receive valuable feedback. Above all, this award positions him to become a leading voice

in indigenous approaches to restorative justice and peacebuilding in Nigeria, helping him develop as an emerging scholar in indigenous approaches to restorative justice and peacebuilding in Nigeria and strengthening his prospects for future research funding.

In the four months since receiving the award, Ekpo has already made meaningful progress, using resources at ANU's library to revise his dissertation proposal to engage with current debates previously beyond his reach. He has also drawn on these resources to support additional research that has been accepted for publication and is now in production with *Oxford Intersections: Gender Justice*.

Ekpo is now preparing for fieldwork, with research instruments and equipment in place to collect rich ethnographic data. This work will contribute new insights into restorative justice by deepening understanding of the relationship between ritual, controlled conflict, and restorative outcomes.

Alam Talib, Balzan PhD Fellow at the Australian National University (ANU)

Currently a PhD Candidate in Political Science at the Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies at the Australian National University (ANU), Talib's research, titled *The Failure of Political Islam in Sudan (1989-2019)*, investigates the rise, governance, and eventual collapse of Sudan's Islamist regime. This study explores the interplay between ideological commitments and political realities, governance shortcomings, and the erosion of regime legitimacy. Motivated by both academic inquiry and the lived experiences of communities affected by conflict and displacement, his work builds on previous scholarship on Islamist state formation and seeks to provide a nuanced understanding of the factors contributing to the failure of political Islam as a governing project in Sudan.

For Talib, the Balzan PhD Fellowship in Restorative Justice and Peacemaking, funded by Braithwaite's 2019 Balzan Prize, represents recognition of the scholarly and policy relevance of his research, while also providing institutional encouragement at a critical stage of doctoral development. Importantly, it has enabled him to strengthen the conceptual linkage between his work on ideological governance failure and wider theoretical and practical debates on restorative justice, post-conflict reconstruction, and sustainable peacebuilding. The Fellowship enhances the visibility and publication potential of his research, positioning it for broader academic and policy engagement beyond the university.

Over the past year, Talib has made significant progress in establishing a rigorous research foundation, including the refinement of his theoretical framework, the enhancement of his research design, and the development of a clear plan for Confirmation of Candidature and fieldwork preparation. These accomplishments have been essential in transforming his research into a structured academic project. The next steps are to finalise the literature review chapter, further develop his methodological approach, and advance toward obtaining ethical clearance and initiating data collection through interviews and archival research. Talib is particularly committed to ensuring that the perspectives and experiences of Sudanese communities – especially those impacted by conflict and political change – are represented responsibly and respectfully in his research.