# INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS: LAW, POLICY, AND PROCESS

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# INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS: LAW, POLICY, AND PROCESS

# Fourth Edition

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This book provides an introduction to international human rights law, policy, and process. The book is written at a point of great human rights challenge as the events and experiences of September 11, 2001, in New York; March 11, 2004, in Madrid; and July 7, 2005, in London affect the manner in which states and international institutions recalibrate the legal relationship between human rights and security. Human Rights norms and institutions manifest an unusual combination of great strength and significant external stress in the contemporary moment.

In this context, students may ask why they should study international human rights? Moreover, readers who are familiar with our first three editions may inquire why a fourth edition was needed. This preface responds to those two questions and also charts the structure of the book in a way which we hope is helpful to both instructors and students.

#### The Importance of Studying Human Rights

This book operates from the premise that the study of human rights should be an integral component of a fully rounded legal education for every student. Human rights study also makes a valuable contribution to a variety of disciplines including anthropology, gender studies, sociology, political science, and medical fields generally defined.

*First*, knowledge of human rights principles, norms, and institutions is an indispensable aspect of understanding the inter-relationship between states, as well as between states and those persons within their territory and under their control.

Second, this book can help train human rights professionals and assist readers to be more effective human rights advocates and volunteers. Lawyers, law students, and others can help victims and benefit from international human rights law in many ways. They can assist clients affected by human rights abuses. They may also work as government officials, members of human rights organizations, judges, staff of national human rights institutions, participants in informal groups, and sometimes as individuals working alone. They litigate, prosecute, defend accused, advocate in non-adjudicative forums, negotiate, draft, write letters and emails, send text messages, post websites and blogs, give advice, and participate in investigations throughout the world. As individuals, they petition, protest, speak, and write. This book considers all those functions and evaluates their contribution to law and society.

Third, the subject of human rights deals with many concerns that also are the focus of national civil liberties and civil rights law. People whose liberties and rights are violated (or threatened) at the national level often can benefit from international legal assistance. Readers of this book should expect to learn about a system of laws, policies, and procedures that have been designed to protect people from torture, other inhuman treatment, arbitrary killing, unjustified discrimination, forced eviction, child labor, and countless other abuses — wherever they may occur. That knowledge has useful application to the domestic legal system within which the advocate or lawyer is working.

Fourth, lawyers and law students who expect to practice civil liberties or civil rights law should know that if they do not prevail in national fora — legislative, executive, or judicial — there may be international tribunals or other bodies to which they can take their case. Because previous editions of this book have been widely used in the United States, it is especially important to note for U.S. students that the Supreme Court is not

the last resort for advocates working to protect human rights. Advocates should also be aware that there are arguments based on international law that clearly can and should be raised in U.S. federal and state courts, as well as in legislatures, administrative agencies, and military commissions. For lawyers in many other countries there are even more opportunities to raise issues based on international human rights law. Civil liberties and civil rights attorneys arguably breach their professional responsibilities if they represent clients and remain ignorant of international laws and procedures. We stress the importance of understanding and using international legal principles and remedies to provide the most zealous and competent representation possible.

Fifth, as with any course about a legal system different from one's own, this book provides insights that often encourage a renewed understanding of one's own legal system. Accordingly, this book is written to be accessible to teachers and students in multiple jurisdictions, on the premise that the issues addressed are universal in their importance and transferable in learning content from one domestic legal system to another. Central to this task is understanding and learning about enforcement and remedies at both the international and domestic levels. International human rights law, like international law generally, is not very different from other kinds of law, such as torts and constitutional law. The main focus of human rights law is not, however, on appellate court opinions, as are many other courses. Instead, the course in international human rights law focuses on constitutive instruments such as the U.N. Charter, the International Bill of Human Rights, the Charter of the Organization of American States, and many related documents. The student will learn to apply these sources of law to various fact situations, much as in other law courses, and will learn how to advocate effectively for compliance with the human rights norms contained in those instruments.

In conclusion, a course in international human rights law covers one aspect of public international law and deals with several of the same issues: the nature of international law; drafting, ratification, adjudication, interpretation, and implementation of treaties; customary international law; intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations; the protection of non-citizens; international fact-finding; etc. Therefore, this book will be useful to students and teachers seeking a preliminary introduction to international law. The first, introductory chapter discusses how international human rights law fits into the larger domain of international law.

#### Why a fourth edition?

This fourth edition reflects many significant developments that have occurred since publication of the first edition in 1990, the second edition in 1996, and the third edition in mid-2001:

Soon after the third edition of this book was published, the attacks of September 11, 2001, on New York, Washington, D.C., and Pennsylvania occurred. The attacks precipitated a series of state responses which have been characterized as the "war on terror." These events were followed by terrorist violence in London and Madrid, again precipitating counter-terrorism measures indicating a widespread and multi-jurisdictional context in which the "war on terror" was to be waged. From all these events followed the detention of thousands of suspected terrorists, a resurgence in the use of torture and ill-treatment, governmental kidnappings euphemistically labeled "extraordinary rendition," significant changes to domestic asylum policy in many countries, criminal prosecutions, military actions in Afghanistan and Iraq, and pervasive invasions of the privacy of electronic communications. It has taken several years to begin to understand and grapple with the legal, policy, and practical implications of these events which are reflected throughout the book, but particularly in chapters 1, 8, 12, and 13. This book comes at an

appropriate point to capture the human rights dilemmas posed by the events following September 11th, as well as to expose the tremendous violations of fundamental human rights norms that have taken place in their aftermath. The book also robustly defends the capacity of international human rights norms and institutions to respond to the challenges posed by terrorism and emphasizes the comparative and historical resources available to states in the contemporary moment.

The robustness of international human rights law is demonstrated in the emergence, since the end of the Cold War, of international criminal law as a response to war crimes, genocide, and other crimes against humanity. In 1993, the U.N. Security Council established the Tribunal for the prosecution of persons responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia since 1991. In November 1994 the Security Council authorized a similar Tribunal for the prosecution of persons responsible for genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of Rwanda and Rwandan citizens responsible for genocide and other such violations committed in the territory of neighboring States, between 1 January and 31 December 1994. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia began to issue indictments in 1994 and initiated its first trial in 1996. During 1995 the Rwanda Tribunal began indicting persons responsible for the April-June 1994 genocide in Rwanda and it initiated trials in 1997. The advent of two ad hoc criminal tribunals encouraged adoption in July 1998 of the Statue for the International Criminal Court. The Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) came into force 2002 and has been ratified by 108 nations. The ICC has begun to function with initial prosecutions arising from events in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, and Uganda. In a parallel development General Augusto Pinochet was detained in London during October 1998 and the House of Lords authorized his extradition to Spain for trial in connection with torture committed during his rule in Chile (1973–1990). Eventually Pinochet was permitted for health reasons to return to Chile where he was subjected to criminal proceedings for his role in the killing or "disappearance" of political detainees. At the time of his death in December 2006 Pinochet faced several hundred criminal charges for human rights abuses perpetrated during his rule. The Pinochet case brought public attention to a number of trials particularly in Europe and Latin America — against persons responsible for crimes against humanity and genocide in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Argentina, and elsewhere. These developments, which are discussed more fully in chapter 8, infra, have inspired far greater attention to the possibility of criminal sanctions as a response to grave human rights abuses in many countries.

A related development tracked by this book has been increased attention to compensation, restitution, rehabilitation, and reparation, and other remedies for victims of violations of international human rights and humanitarian law. The Statute of the International Criminal Court not only provides for imposing prison sentences, but the ICC may also order a convicted person to make reparations to, or in respect of, victims, including compensation and restitution. In 1991 the U.N. Security Council established the U.N. Compensation Commission to process thousands of claims deriving from Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and the Commission has distributed hundreds of millions of dollars to satisfy successful claims. Human rights courts, including the European Court of Human Rights and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, have increasingly awarded damages and litigation costs to victims. National courts have also awarded damages or fostered settlements for victims of the Holocaust as well as survivors or families of victims of forced labor, torture, arbitrary killings, and other serious human rights abuses. Increasing attention has focused on the possible liability of corporations for such abuses.

These developments are discussed more fully in chapters 2, 8, 12, and 14, *infra*. The book also outlines the importance and growth of truth commissions and truth and reconciliation processes as part of a growing "victim centered" culture in domestic and international law. All these developments are dimensions of transitional justice discourse and mechanisms, aiming to address the long-term consequences of repressive regimes as well as the experiences of victims in post-conflict societies. These developments are signposted throughout this book, as they have a cross-cutting effect on a large number of issues.

Another significant expansion in the protection of human rights has been the emergence of the U.N. Security Council as a principal actor in the human rights field during the post Cold War era, not only in regard to the establishment of criminal tribunals, but also in authorizing military action and field operations to deal with emergency situations. In parallel, however, the NATO military action in Kosovo during 1999 was justified by grave humanitarian concerns, but did not seek U.N. Security Council authorization pursuant to the United Nations Charter. At the same time the Security Council has been unable to take effective international action against crimes against humanity and possibly genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan. The International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant against Sudanese President Omar Al Bashir based on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Darfur. These developments are discussed more fully in chapters 7, 8, and 10, infra. The broader context within which this assessment of the Security Council is located in the fundamental reform process which has been underway at the United Nations, most recently creating the United Nations Human Rights Council. This book pays considerable attention to the implications of these institutional developments, particularly in chapter 6.

An important advancement during the past decade has been a substantial increase in the acceptance of international human rights treaties. When the first edition of this book was published in 1990 only 93 nations had ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and 88 nations had ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as compared with 160 members of the United Nations. By 2001 there were 189 member states of the United Nations of which a large number (145) had ratified the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and 147 nations had accepted the Civil and Political Rights Covenant. As of 2009 the two covenants have been ratified by 160 and 164 states respectively. The Convention on the Rights of the Child has now been ratified by 193 nations — more than the 192 current members of the United Nations. The United States has partially joined this movement toward universal adoption of human rights standards by ratifying the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; and the Convention against Torture, and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Those three ratifications were, however, limited by extensive reservations and the U.S. has not ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights nor the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. This edition keenly examines continuing concern over state adherence to human rights obligations. The codification and ratification of human rights treaties (as well as adherence) are discussed more fully in chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, infra.

Another continuing concern in this edition is the increased tension between the developed nations of the North and the less developed nations of the South. The North-South division has raised questions about the consequences of globalization and trade liberalization and has focused attention on the need to protect economic, social, and cultural rights. Some countries of the South have intensified their arguments that human

rights must be interpreted in the cultural context of each region and that Western European definitions of human rights should not be rigidly imposed. The South has also shown growing concern about the increased activity of the U.N. Security Council, the capacity of the United States to influence U.N. actions and to act unilaterally, and a decreased respect for national sovereignty. *See* chapters 2, 4, 5, 7, 10, 15, and 16, *infra*.

In recent years ethnic hatred, intercommunal strife, and strident nationalism in many parts of the Middle and Near East (Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Israel/Palestine) as well as Central and Eastern Europe have increased in recent years. Parallel with this development has been the rising importance of peace agreements negotiated and/or supported by the international community, with varying degrees of success in many of these contexts. Transitional justice has become an important area of human rights practice, as states struggle with the political and legal transitions that follow the end of violent conflict or the establishment of successor regimes in previously repressive states. There has also been a disturbing increase in racism and xenophobia in Western Europe, North America, and elsewhere. During most of the post-World War II era, the Soviet Union suppressed the ethnic divisions in Central and Eastern Europe, which have now resurfaced most visibly in the territory of the former Yugoslavia (including Bosnia and Kosovo), Chechnya, Ngorno-Karabagh, Georgia, and the Baltic States. Those conflicts and tensions have led to an increase in the number of refugees and internally displaced persons, placing increased burdens on countries that had previously welcomed or at least accepted people fleeing from repression. In Germany, France, and elsewhere in Western Europe there is a general perception that foreigners are far less welcome and racist incidents have become more frequent. The United States has adopted new measures to restrict asylum seekers (such as detaining asylum seekers as they arrive in the country and requiring a waiting period before work authorization) and has seen a rise in xenophobia. See chapters 7, 8, 12, and 15, infra.

The book identifies areas of change and growth since the last edition. For example, the ongoing establishment of thousands of nongovernmental human rights organizations in many parts of the world where no popular forces for human rights had previously been able to operate remains a positive trend. With the convening of the World Conference on Human Rights in June 1993 and the World Conference against Racism in August-September 2001, it became evident that a worldwide human rights movement had become a transnational constituency for mutual support when abuses are threatened or perpetrated. *See* chapter 3, 6, 9, 13–14, and 17, *infra*.

Those major developments have required rewriting of many chapters and a rethinking of many key areas where human rights law, policy and institutions have dramatically changed or shifted in recent years. The challenges posed by the "war on terror" have made it necessary to focus specific attention on these areas of human rights that have experienced greatest challenge in the past six years. The book also has a cross-cutting approach to the issue of gender-based human rights violations, which integrates the experiences of women in every chapter of the book, but also contains a specific chapter examining the individual complaint system with a particular aspect of women's human rights violations in chapter 5. Further, the fourth edition incorporates a few additional improvements in how the book presents international human rights. For example, chapter 2 focuses much more attention on drafting treaties and non-treaty instruments that have played such an important role in the codification of human rights law. To highlight the importance of this technical process chapters 2 and 14 focus attention on the human rights responsibilities of non-state actors, including particularly transnational corporations and other business enterprises.

How the book is organized?

This section provides a quick guide to instructors in planning their use of the book and gives an easy reference point on the management and relationship between various chapters.

The book is divided into seven parts: (A) this preface and an introduction (chapter 1), (B) human rights treaties (drafting and ratification — chapters 2–3), (C) procedures for monitoring compliance and responding to violations (chapters 4–10), (D) regional and national implementation procedures (chapters 11–14), (E) refugee and international labor law (chapters 15–16), (F) causes of human rights violations (chapter 17), and (G) a supplement with the principal human rights instruments and a research bibliography. Accordingly, the book begins with a brief introduction (chapter 1) to the history of international human rights law and how human rights fit within the domain of international law. The rest of the book is organized around several problems or factual situations that can inspire discussion and opportunities for role playing in the classroom.

Since chapter 1 points to the primary importance of treaties in codifying international human rights law. Chapter 2 provides a roleplaying exercise in drafting human rights treaties. Chapter 3 provides another opportunity for a roleplaying exercise in which students participate in a United States Senate hearing to consider ratification of a human rights treaty. Accordingly, chapter 3 focuses upon the acceptance of the principal sources of human rights law through the ratification of treaties. Chapter 4 introduces the main obligation that governments undertake in ratifying major human rights treaties, that is, periodic state reporting and review. Chapter 4 also uses the procedural context of state reporting and review to consider the jurisprudential sources of human rights law and cultural differences. Chapter 5 looks at another important treaty-based procedure available for individual complaints of violations with particular attention to women's human rights.

Having dealt with the principal treaty-based procedures, chapter 6 explains the mechanisms for responding to consistent patterns of gross violations under the U.N. Charter-based procedures of the U.N. Human Rights Council and its Advisory Committee as they have developed from their predecessor institutions — the Commission on Human Rights and its Sub-Commission. Chapters 7, 8, and 9 look at the ways the U.N. Security Council and General Assembly have handled human rights emergencies through humanitarian intervention and humanitarian law (chapter 7); criminal sanctions, civil remedies, and advisory services (chapter 8); and on-site observation (chapter 9). Chapter 10 examines the way individual governments can influence the human rights practices of other countries where gross violations are occurring.

Chapter 11 considers the contribution of the Inter-American human rights system and other regional mechanisms for protecting human rights — principally through adjudicative remedies. Chapter 12 describes the European human rights structure and how its extensive jurisprudence might be useful to lawyers and decisionmakers. This chapter highlights the response of the regional human rights systems to the challenges of terrorism, using the right to life as a case study. Chapter 13 considers how U.S. courts can provide relief for human rights violations inside the United States and/or by the U.S. government. Chapter 14 explores the use of courts inside the U.S. to influence violations of human rights and humanitarian law through the Alien Tort Statute.

Chapter 15 examines the use of refugee and asylum law to protect human rights; it also explores more fully the jurisprudential sources of human rights law and the issue of cultural relativism. Chapter 16 considers the role of the International Labor Organization in protecting labor rights and particularly in stopping child labor. Chapter 17 provides an

insight into the extremely difficult question of what causes human rights violations and how such an inquiry can assist in improving techniques for preventing or responding to violations.

The supplement contains Selected International Human Rights Instruments and the Bibliography for Research on International Human Rights Law. The Selected International Human Rights Instruments contains several major international human rights treaties and other instruments. Several new treaties and other instruments have been added since prior editions. Readers may also find the bibliography in the supplement useful — particularly if research papers are assigned as part of the course.

The problems presented draw on five different aspects of the study of international human rights to provide a representative sampling of the subject: (1) various procedural settings (2) diverse institutional settings, (3) a geographical spread of countries and forms of human rights violations, (4) the application of several substantive human rights norms to the problem at hand, and (5) a variety of approaches to learning.

The problems touch on each of the major procedural channels for implementing international human rights: state reporting to treaty bodies (chapters 3.4); individual complaints to treaty bodies (chapters 5, 11); individual complaints to regional human rights bodies (chapters 11, 12); thematic, public discourse, and other U.N. emergency procedures for dealing with gross violations (chapters 6, 7); humanitarian intervention for dealing with human rights emergencies (chapter 7); criminal prosecution and procedures for compensating victims (chapters 8, 12, 13, 14); on-site observation and fact-finding (chapters 9, 11); legislative hearings and diplomatic intervention (chapter 10); inter-state complaints (chapter 12); litigation in domestic courts (chapters 13,14); and the work of nongovernmental organizations (chapters 3, 5, 9, 17).

The problems are set in most of the major international institutions, and include procedures of the human rights treaty bodies — Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (chapter 3); Human Rights Committee (chapter 4); and Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (chapter 5); the U.N. Human Rights Council and its Advisory Committee (chapter 6); the U.N. Security Council (chapter 7); international criminal tribunals (chapter 8); U.N. field operations authorized by the U.N. Security Council or under the authority of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights (chapter 9); the Inter-American Commission on and Court of Human Rights (chapter 11); the European Court of Human Rights and other parts of the European human rights system (chapter 12); the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (chapter 15); and the International Labor Organization (chapter 16).

The chapters deal with human rights problems in diverse national contexts: abuses by transnational corporations and other businesses throughout the world (chapter 2), economic rights in the United States and other countries (chapter 3), Iran (chapter 4), Norway (chapter 5), Burma/Myanmar (chapter 6), Sudan (chapter 7), Cambodia and former Yugoslavia (chapter 8), the Democratic Republic of Congo (chapter 9), the United States (chapter 11, 12, 13), Europe (chapter 12), Sudan (chapter 14), Ghana (chapter 15), and India (chapter 16).

The chapters deal with diverse substantive human rights problems related to: abuses by businesses and other non-state actors (chapter 2); economic rights and the right to development (chapter 3); torture and other ill-treatment (chapter 4); discrimination, women's human rights, and the right of participation in public life (chapter 5); minority rights and the right to a free and fair elections (chapter 6); human rights in armed conflict (chapter 7); crimes against humanity and impunity (chapter 8); arbitrary killing (chapter 9), the relationship between foreign aid/foreign policy and human rights violations

(chapter 10); indigenous rights, minority rights, self-determination, and discrimination against women (chapter 11); the right to life and the protection of human rights in the context of the war on terror (chapter 12); labor rights for undocumented workers (chapter 13); arbitrary detention, torture, forced labor, and corporate responsibility for human rights abuses (chapter 14); spousal abuse, female genital mutilation, and the rights of refugees (chapter 15); child labor (chapter 16); and the causes of human rights violations (chapter 17).

The format also calls for diversity in teaching style. Some overview lectures will be appropriate. Other classes can involve advising a client, several role-playing exercises, the dialogue method, drafting, preparation of congressional testimony, and advocacy in litigation. A central goal had been to involve the student as fully as possible in the learning process and to encourage active participation in the learning process. We believe that this kind of teaching methodology encourages a life-long praxis between one's professional life and public service, including service in the human rights field.

All problems include assigned readings and questions that may serve as a basis for student preparation and class discussion. Each chapter begins with an introduction, to establish the setting and suggest major questions for discussion. The chapters also contain materials with information students will need to deal with the problems. Further questions are occasionally posed to indicate the material's relevance and to focus attention on particular issues.

The materials for the book were initially used for a two-hour weekly law school seminar meeting weekly for a semester. The book has also been used for courses meeting three hours per week during a semester. In any case, the chapters are generally designed so readers would expect to cover one chapter for each week of the course.

Some instructors may wish to assign chapters in an order different from their placement in the book. For example, teachers who have a civil rights and civil liberties orientation may want to start with chapters 13 and 14 on the use of U.S. courts to protect human rights outside and inside this country. Other teachers may find chapter 17 on the causes of human rights violations a challenging place to begin.

While the book was designed for use in law schools, prior editions have also been used in political science and international relations courses for undergraduate and graduate students. Indeed, chapter 17 particularly focuses on political science, epidemiology, and other social science perspectives on human rights.

In sum, the fourth edition has been designed to provide an innovative and stimulating textbook for thinking about and teaching human rights, and that its contemporary framework and ideas provoke valuable teaching and learning experiences.

This book was inspired and begun by Professor Frank Newman of the University of California at Berkeley, who died on February 18, 1996, just after he had completed editing the second edition. It was a privilege to be Frank's student, co-author, and colleague. The third edition benefited immeasurably from the insights, intelligence, and energetic engagement of Professor Joan Fitzpatrick of the University of Washington, whose untimely death occurred on May 16, 2003. We hope that the fourth edition will be a tribute to both Professors Newman and Fitzpatrick and to the generations of human rights teachers, scholars, and advocates they enthusiastically encouraged and supported.

We trace the origins of this book to the first seminar on international human rights offered at the University of California Law School, Berkeley, during the summer of 1968. Thomas Buergenthal, Frank Newman, Egon Schwelb, and Karel Vasak co-taught the course. Several of the participants became law teachers — including Dinah Shelton, Jon van Dyke.

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David Weissbrodt and Fionnuala Ní Aoláin March 2009

#### CONTRIBUTIONS

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