Lesson One: Concepts and Principles

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

• Understand the function of international law and that international human rights law is one of the many fields within international law

• Have a broad understanding of some of the subject matters and situations that international law deals with

• Have a general understanding of the role of international courts in resolving international law disputes

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

• Be able to explain what international law is and how it is formed

• Be able to give examples of situations regulated by international law

• Be able to explain generally how international law is enforced and some of the challenges in enforcement

SKILLS:

• Assimilating and articulating new concepts, expressing points of view, debating conflicting points of view, forming reasoned conclusions
1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 STARTER ACTIVITY - Video introducing the international law and human rights framework

The video addresses the following questions.

What is international law? What’s the point of it?
How is international law made and where can you find what it says?
What are human rights?
Does everyone have the same rights?
What can people do if their rights have been violated?

1.1.2 STARTER ACTIVITY - Video introducing the international law and human rights framework - Instructions for teachers

Play the video on international law and human rights and ask students to consider all or a selection of the following questions to make sure that students have understood the video. Students may request that you replay the video or certain sections of it.

bit.ly/humanrightsintro

1. What is the purpose of international law?
2. Give examples of some of the areas that are covered by international law.
3. Explain what treaties are and what customary law is.
4. Explain international law is enforced.
5. Name the four categories of human rights mentioned in the video.
6. Why does Professor McCorquodale say that there is no hierarchy of rights?
7. Outline some of the examples that Professor McCorquodale gives of cultural relativism.
8. Under international human rights law, what sorts of legal resolution can people get when their rights have been violated?
1. **What is the purpose of international law?**

   - International law forms a set of rules that states and other actors have to adhere to. It tells them what conduct is lawful and what is not.
   - The primary purpose is to govern and regulate the relationships between states, but also other international bodies such as international organisations, armed groups and corporations. It sets out the obligations and the entitlements of states and other organisations.
   - In the same way that national law seeks to regulate the conduct and relationships of its citizens, international law aims to regulate the conduct and relationships of states.
   - International human rights law is a branch of international law concerned with people and their rights. It gives individuals and groups of individuals rights against states, making it unique within international law.

2. **Give examples of some of the areas that international law covers.**

   - Armed conflict, environmental law, human rights, investment and trade law, *intellectual property* (trademarks and copyrights), commercial law.
   - Other examples not in the video: International crime, migration, *sustainable development*, finance, labour, seas and oceans, and maritime boundaries, cultural heritage and refugees and displaced people.

3. **Explain what treaties are and what customary international law is.**

   - Treaties are agreements between states setting out what they can or cannot do in a particular situation. Treaties can be bilateral or multilateral. Bilateral treaties are agreements between two states. Multilateral treaties are agreements between several states. Professor McCorquodale compares treaties with contracts which are *binding* agreements between two parties such as individuals (for example if you hire a painter) or between other entities such as companies (for example when one company buys out another). Treaties are similar to contracts but are usually much
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more complex.

• Customary international law is the law that develops from states carrying out a particular practice over and over again with the sense that they are obliged to do this because this is the law. The more it is repeated, the more it becomes entrenched as international law.

• An example of customary international law is the principle that a visiting Head of State is immune from being prosecuted in the country that he or she is visiting, regardless of what he or she may be accused of or may have done.

4. Explain how international law is enforced.

• Enforcement is the process of making sure that states comply with their obligations under international law — that they do what they are supposed to do.

• Where there is a dispute or where a state has been accused of wrongdoing under international law, international courts and tribunals such as the International Court of Justice (ICJ), and tribunals on trade and investment, hand down judgments that states are required to comply with.

• One difficulty is that a state has to agree that it will accept the rulings of a particular court, otherwise it cannot be forced to appear before this court.

• Even where a state appears before a court and the court delivers a ruling, enforcement of international law is problematic, as the judicial and penal systems in place don’t have a robust system of forcing states to comply with rulings.

• For example, international human rights committees (an example of an international body with a court-like function) may deliver a judgment saying that a state must stop violating a particular human right or that it must change its laws to comply with international human rights standards. However it is difficult to force states to comply with the ruling as there is not much that can be done if the state continues to violate the right and does not change its laws.

5. Name the four categories of human rights mentioned in the video.

• Civil and political rights — examples include the right to life, right to freedom of expression, right to freedom from slavery, right to freedom of assembly.

• Economic, social and cultural rights — examples include the right to access to healthcare, right to education, right to safe conditions of work, right to cultural life.

• Collective rights - examples include the right to self-determination (right of people to decide on matters of their own political future) and right to freedom from genocide.
• Cross-cutting rights – these are rights which apply to the enjoyment of all other rights, such as the right to equality and freedom from discrimination. This means that all people should enjoy all human rights equally and without discrimination.

6. What does Professor McCorquodale mean when he says that there is no hierarchy of rights?

• Professor McCorquodale says that there is no hierarchy of rights, because each individual has a different background in terms of culture, ethnicity, religion and a different set of beliefs and value systems at each stage of their lives. As a result, every human may have a different prioritization of rights and there is no generally applicable hierarchy. Furthermore, many rights are linked and the enjoyment of one right might depend on being able to exercise another right.

• For example the right to freedom of speech is directly linked to the right to freedom of assembly. The right to take part in political activities is often linked with the right to education, as education may improve the ability of individuals to participate in political activities. The right to work is often linked with the right to education as education enhances work opportunities.

7. What is cultural relativism? Outline some of the examples that Professor McCorquodale gives of cultural relativism.

• Cultural relativism is closely connected to the discussion in the previous question. Different historical, cultural, religious, ethnic and developmental backgrounds mean that the governments of different countries may not only prioritise different rights, but may regard human rights in different ways. Even though there is a set of rights that all states are supposed to adhere to, there are variations in the ways these rights are interpreted and understood.

• Some would go as far as to say that cultural relativism means that there is no objective standard of rights to which all countries must adhere, and that the individual circumstances of the state in question should determine how it protects the rights of its citizens.

• Professor McCorquodale gives various examples of how cultural relativism can result in different interpretations and enjoyment of rights. He explains that in some countries, laws that require certain sectors of the population to act and dress in a particular way can be seen as protective rather than a discrimination issue. In other words, by imposing a restrictive requirement on some people in a country (but not on all people), the government may argue that it is not discriminating against those people but that it is instead acting to protect that sector of the population. Another example might be a government agreeing with rights advocates that all people should have access to healthcare, but then making the decision that some people may not have access to a medical centre near to them (for example, for religious reasons). Lastly, there might, for example, be general agreement by a government
that people should have freedom of expression, but that government may try to restrict this freedom in particular situations by, for example, limiting the rights of the media to publish criticism of the government; sometimes a government may say that restrictions are required for security and stability needs particular to that country.

• There are some rights that must be protected absolutely whatever the cultural, historical, or political situation of a country. For example there are absolute prohibitions on torture and slavery. These rights are so fundamental that there is no room for interpretation on their absolute prohibition and it is illegal for anyone to be tortured or enslaved at any time under any circumstances. Unfortunately this does not prevent violations of these rights; torture and slavery still happen.

8. Under international human rights law, what sorts of remedies can people get when their rights have been violated?

• Gaining a remedy in this context means gaining redress or relief from a violation of your rights. There are different remedies available. Victims of human rights violations may go to courts to seek compensation, to have the violation stopped or to somehow change the position they are in.

• There are remedies available in national, regional and international courts.

• In this country, there are national laws that protect human rights. The main piece of national law governing human rights in this country is the Human Rights Act 1998 (although at the time of writing, there is ongoing discussion on whether to repeal this Act and instead to have a British Bill of Rights).

• If individuals are unable to obtain remedies in national courts, they may seek to bring their claims to regional or international bodies (provided their country has accepted the authority of that regional or international body).

• Regional bodies where individuals may seek relief include the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights and the European Court of Human Rights.20

• International bodies that hear individual complaints include the United Nations Committees that monitor state implementation of the treaties — (such as the Committee against Torture and the Committee on the Rights of the Child).21

• It can be difficult to take a case to regional or international bodies. For example, a UN Committee will only hear a complaint by an individual, if, the state being complained about is a party to the relevant human rights treaty and the state must have agreed to allow the Committee monitoring the relevant treaty to receive and consider complaints from individuals.

• Another difficulty with accessing regional and international human rights bodies is that they require the individual to first try to get a remedy through national courts. However, where the national justice system is not functioning well then that may be difficult of even impossible.
### 1.2.1 ACTIVITY 1 - The Many Faces of International Law - Printouts for students

Match the areas of activity and situations in the boxes on the left-hand side with the areas of law that you think might be involved in regulating those activities. There may be more than one area of law that is relevant, and in each case, explain at which point in the process or activity the area of law might be relevant, and how you think that area of law is relevant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Areas of Law</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A banana is sold in your local corner shop.</td>
<td>Humanitarian law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The government of an imaginary country, Olympus, claims that fishermen from a neighbouring country, Atlantis, have strayed into Olympus’ waters. Government forces from Olympus abduct the fishermen and keep them in prison without food or water. The government of Atlantis sends troops to rescue its fishermen.</td>
<td>Trade Law, Refugee Law, The Law on the use of force, Environmental Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>War breaks out between two imaginary countries (Atlantis and Olympus) and both governments are attacking civilians in the enemy country. Many people from both Atlantis and Olympus flee to other countries in the surrounding region hoping that they will receive protection.</td>
<td>The law of the sea, International human rights law, Labour law</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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Divide the class into 3 groups, giving them each a situation to consider. Ask each group to present its answer to the class, being careful to explain at which point in the situation each area of law engages. The point of the exercise is to give students an idea of the wide issues covered by international law and the fact that international law may touch their daily lives for example through the simple act of buying foreign goods in a UK shop.

### 1.2.2 ACTIVITY 1 - The Many Faces of International Law - Instructions for teachers

A banana is sold in your corner shop.

The growing of the bananas would have been regulated by international environmental law which governs for example issues such as the release of chemicals from industrial processes into water systems. Working conditions in growing the bananas may also be regulated by international labour law, for example through Conventions set by the International Labour Organisation, once ratified by a country. As bananas do not grow in the UK, the importing of the bananas into the UK would have been regulated by international trade law. For example it would probably have been subject to a tax imposed on imported goods based on trade agreements between the country of origin and the country of destination.

The government of a country claims that fishermen from a neighbouring country have strayed into their waters. They abduct them and keep them in prison without food or water. The government of the fishermen’s country sends troops to rescue the fishermen.

Whether the fishermen did stray into the waters of another country requires consideration of maritime boundaries. The law of the sea governs maritime boundaries, the main piece of law being the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. The ill-treatment of the fishermen by the government engages international human rights law. This could include treaty law, (including the Convention Against Torture...
and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights), and customary law (that applies to all states) on the prohibition of torture and inhuman and degrading treatment. The rescuing of the fishermen by troops will engage the law on the use of force, where sending troops into another state’s territory without permission is prohibited except as an act of self-defence or with UN authorisation. (Some argue that there is another limited exception for the rescue of one’s nationals in another state, but this is controversial.)

**War breaks out between two countries and both governments are attacking civilians in the enemy country. Many people flee to countries in the surrounding region hoping that they will receive protection.**

The targeting of civilians is illegal under international humanitarian law, which protects those who are not actively involved in hostilities through the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the 1977 Additional Protocols. The protection that those fleeing from their country for personal security reasons may have in other countries is governed by international refugee law. This includes the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and/or the 1967 Protocol as well as a number of regional treaties.
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What is child labour?

Not all work done by children is considered child labour. Work that does not affect children’s health and development or interfere with their schooling is generally regarded as positive, giving children new skills and building experience. The International Labour Organisation (ILO), which is a specialized agency of the United Nations, defines child labour as “work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development”.

What does the law say?

Under international law, child labour is defined by reference to two key treaties:

- ILO Convention No. 138 Concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment (1973) (ILO C.138)

ILO C. 138 sets the ages at which children can legally be employed, which is an important way of making sure that children do not begin work at too young an age. It sets different standards for developed and developing countries. The Convention states that:

- Work likely to threaten children’s physical, mental or moral health should not be carried out by anyone under the age of 18. There is an exception for developing countries, where the age limit is 16, as long as there are safeguards in place.
- The minimum age for work should not be below the age for finishing compulsory schooling, and it should not be less than the age of 15. In developing countries, children should not work below the age of 14.
• ‘Light work’ may be done by children between the ages of 13 and 15 as long as it does not threaten their health and safety, or hinder their education or vocational training. For developing countries, the age is slightly lower at 12 to 14.

What do states have to do to protect children?

ILO C.182 places a duty on states to take immediate and effective measures to prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of child labour. It lists the worst forms of child labour as:

• Slavery or similar practices, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage, and forced or compulsory labour; including the forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict;

• Child prostitution or pornography;

• Illicit activities, such as the production and trafficking of drugs;

• Hazardous work, including night work/long hours of work; work underground, under water, at dangerous heights or in confined spaces; work with dangerous machinery, equipment and tools, or which involves handling or transport of heavy loads; and work in an unhealthy environment involving hazardous substances, or exposure to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging their health.

All countries that are members of the ILO are required to respect and work towards the standards within these treaties. However, although a majority of countries have passed laws to prohibit or regulate the work and employment of children, child labour remains a serious global problem. It is estimated that approximately 168 million children worldwide are in child labour: 85 million of those are in hazardous work. Of those involved in child labour, 58.6% are involved in agriculture, 25.4% in services, such as restaurants and hotels, 7.2% in industry, such as mining and construction and 6.9% in domestic work.

Consider the questions below:

Do you think it is wrong for children to work for a living in all cases?

What do you think children involved in illegal child labour can do about their situation?
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1.3.2 ACTIVITY 2 - Case Study on Children’s Rights and Child Labour - Instructions for teachers

Give students time to read their printouts on child labour and ask them to consider the questions at the end of the printout. You may wish to prompt students to think about situations where it may be acceptable for children to work for a living. In considering what children can do to gain a remedy, you may wish to refer students to what they have heard and discussed in the Starter Activity video.

1.3.3 ACTIVITY 2 - Case Study on Children’s Rights and Child Labour - Background for teachers

Case study on child labour

Do you think there are circumstances where it is acceptable for children to work for a living?

Almost all countries agree that the worst forms of child labour should be abolished under ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour. International attention is concentrated on the creation of laws and programmes that aim to bring these to an end.

As to less damaging forms of child labour, there are difficult moral questions around whether preventing children from working is simply a Western ambition. In some countries, the difficulty with a Western insistence on prohibiting child labour is that many families depend on some or all of their children working in order to survive. Without this income, some families simply would not manage to get by. Education may be costly and poor families cannot afford it. To help the family, children therefore work rather than attend school.

Where a country’s government is unlikely to intervene to provide the family with social support as an alternative to children working, or to use law and policy to increase adult wages so that children do not have to contribute to the family income, stopping children from working could mean that some families do not manage
to get by. Therefore, there is an argument that prohibiting child labour in those circumstances is worse than allowing limited child labour (presuming that the worst forms of child labour are avoided). United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) have drawn attention to the need to ensure that children do not end up worse off as a result of campaigns to end child labour. This has sometimes been the case where children are simply dismissed to avoid legal proceedings or negative publicity. In recent years, some countries, particularly in Latin America, seem to be moving away from abolition towards regulation and the empowerment of child workers.

This means that in a small number of situations, child labour is legalised, but governments implement rules determining when it may take place and create structures controlling how it may take place to protect children undertaking such work.

What do you think children involved in illegal child labour can do about their situation?

Although a majority of countries have now enacted laws that regulate and/or prohibit child labour, there is rarely an opportunity to enforce this through the courts. In many parts of the world, where legal systems are underdeveloped and underfunded, pursuing those who use child labour is simply not a priority.

There are technical difficulties with bringing cases concerning child labour. For example, there is not always a system of birth registration and so even when cases are taken to court it can be extremely difficult to prove the child’s age and thus difficult to prove that they fall outside the legal parameters.

In addition, among non-governmental organisations (NGOs) there seems to be a consensus that legal frameworks cannot be the sole solution to child labour as children and families are worse off if they are simply sacked to avoid negative publicity. Thus, the provision of alternatives, particularly educational initiatives, has become a focus among the national and international NGOs that do most of the work on this issue.
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1.4.1 PLENARY - Bringing Human Rights Violators to Justice - Video Case Study on Child Soldiers

Play the video which discusses the trial of Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, warlord from the Democratic Republic of Congo in the International Criminal Court in 2012: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zsy_2rH2TY0

The previous case study highlighted the difficulty in gaining a remedy through courts for certain human rights abuses. The present case study is an example of extreme human rights abuses being successfully addressed through international courts where there has been little success on a national level.

1.4.2 PLENARY - Bringing Human Rights Violators to Justice - Video Case Study on Child Soldiers - Instructions for teachers

Play the video on the use of child soldiers. Introduce the video by explaining to students that:

Between 1994 and 2003 a war was fought in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) between its government and various armed rebel groups. More than 5.4 million people died as a result of the fighting. Of these, 2.7 million were children. One of the notable features of the DRC conflict was the use of children as soldiers. In 2006, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued a warrant of arrest for the leader of one rebel group, Thomas Lubanga Dyilo. He was charged with enlisting and conscripting children under the age of fifteen years into the Union des Patriotes Congolais [Union of Congolese Patriots] (UPC), and using them to participate actively in hostilities. The enlistment and conscription of children under fifteen into armed forces or groups or the use of them to participate actively in hostilities is a war crime under Article 8 of the ICC Statute. The DRC authorities surrendered Lubanga to the ICC in The Hague.

At Lubanga’s trial, the ICC heard evidence that boys and girls under the age of fifteen were recruited into the UPC between 2002 and 2003. Some were abducted and forced into the rebel group, while others were encouraged or coerced into joining. They were sent to military training camps where they underwent harsh
training regimes and punishments. Children were used to fight in battles and as bodyguards for senior members of the UPC. Girls were used to carry out domestic work and many were raped and suffered sexual violence.

Ask students to take notes during the video and be prepared to discuss the questions below:

1. What was the outcome of the trial in the International Criminal Court?

2. Why are prosecutions of crimes related to the use of child soldiers difficult to carry out in national courts?

If there is time, you may wish to ask students to do research on what is being done to rehabilitate former child soldiers.

**Judgment in the case of Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo in the International Criminal Court, 14 March 2012**

What was the outcome of the trial?

On 14 March 2012, Lubanga was found guilty. The ICC decided that the UPC’s recruitment of children and the use of children in military activities was part of a coordinated plan. As leader of the group, Lubanga played a crucial role in making decisions on recruitment policies and the planning of military operations. He also made speeches to local people in which he encouraged children to join the UPC and he used under fifteens amongst his bodyguards. The ICC therefore found that Lubanga bore ultimate responsibility for the UPC’s conscription and enlistment of children and their use in hostilities. He was sentenced to 14 years’ imprisonment. The ICC’s decision and sentence were upheld on appeal on 1 December 2014. Lubanga is currently serving his sentence in a prison in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

A number of former child soldiers have applied to the ICC for compensation, known as reparations, for the harm they suffered as a result of Lubanga’s actions. The form that this should take, who should receive it and whether it should be paid solely by Lubanga or also from the ICC Trust Fund for Victims (TFV) is still to be decided. This
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is the first case in which the ICC has had to make decisions on reparations and the delay has caused a lot of frustration. The TFV has delivered a plan for symbolic reparations that was approved by the International Criminal Court on 21st October 2016. This takes into account the amount to be paid by Lubanga, the amount to be paid by TFV, a list of potential victims and an assessment of the harm they have suffered.

Why are prosecutions of crimes related to the use of child soldiers difficult to carry out in national courts?

The ICC spent considerable energy on crimes related to child soldiers during its early years, listing them in seven of the first twelve **indictments**. However, at the national level less has been achieved, with very few successful prosecutions. Post-conflict states seldom have the infrastructure to carry out the necessary investigations and prosecutions and political will is often lacking as very often all sides, including the current government, will have used children as soldiers. Thus, if not pursued by international courts there is little chance of redress at the national level.

If there is time, you may wish to ask students to conduct research on rehabilitation of former child soldiers.

Students should understand that although prosecution of human rights abusers and getting legal remedies in court may not be easy for the reasons above, some former child soldiers are helped by various organisations to try to lead a normal life again. Within the UN system, UNICEF (The United Nations Children’s Fund) has opened rehabilitation centres for child soldiers, and NGOs such as War Child work to reintegrate former child soldiers into society and into education.
Lesson One: Glossary

**Binding:** if an agreement or a piece of law is binding on a party, it has legal effect on that party, meaning that that party must adhere to its terms

**Conscripting:** forcible recruitment

**Debt bondage:** the labour of a person for the purposes of repayment of a debt

**Enlisting:** voluntary recruitment, even though it might not be truly voluntary given the situations under which children of young age are living

**Environmental Law:** the branch of law concerned with the protection and use of the natural environment

**Genocide:** the intentional destruction of a national, ethnical, racial or religious group of people.

**Humanitarian Law:** the branch of law regulating conduct in armed conflict. It seeks to limit the effects of the conflict by offering protection to those taking part in hostilities, to those no longer taking part in hostilities and to civilians.

**Indictment:** a formal accusation or criminal charge

**Intellectual property:** creative property belonging to an individual or organisation including for example, artistic work, ideas, designs and symbols

**ICC Trust Fund for Victims:** established under Article 79 of the Rome Statute. The purpose of the TFV is twofold: (i) to implement reparation orders by the International Criminal Court and (ii) to provide physical, psychological, and material support to victims and their families

**International Court of Justice:** the main judicial organ (court) of the UN considering questions on international law which rules on disputes between states and provides advice on legal questions raised by UN organs and agencies

**International human rights Law:** the branch of international law concerned with the protection of individual and collective rights and freedoms

**Labour Law:** the branch of law concerned with the rights of workers in their employment

**The Law on the use of Force:** the branch of law setting out the conditions under which countries may use force against one another

**The Law of the Sea:** the branch of international law that deals with issues relating to the use of seas and oceans such as the setting of territorial boundaries, the protection of the marine environment and biodiversity, and piracy.

**Refugee Law:** the branch of law dealing with the rights and protections of refugees

**Self-defence:** refers in this context to military actions taken by states in response to an armed attack, or threat of armed attack
**Sustainable development:** economic and human development that does not use up resources in an unsustainable way, compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

**Trade Law:** the branch of law regulating the trade relationships between states

**Tribunal:** a body with judicial powers (a court-like function), authorised to settle a dispute between parties

**Union of Congolese Patriots:** a political and military group founded by Thomas Lubanga in Ituri, in the Democratic Republic of Congo
Footnotes:

1 These are the two most important sources of international law. Other sources of international law include: a) general principles of law common to many countries b) judicial decisions including the decisions of national courts and the ICJ c) legal scholarship.

2 Civil and political rights are protected by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). Some of these rights are also covered in other international treaties and in national law, but we refer here mainly to the ICCPR for consistency.

3 Article 6 of the ICCPR

4 Article 19(2) of the ICCPR

5 Article 8 of the ICCPR

6 Article 21 of the ICCPR

7 Socio-economic rights are protected by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Some of these rights are also covered in other international treaties and in national law, but we refer here mainly to the ICESCR for consistency.

8 Article 12 of ICESCR

9 Article 13 of ICESCR

10 Article 7(b) of ICESCR

11 Article 15(a) of ICESCR

12 Article 1(1) of ICCPR, and Article 1(1) of ICESCR


14 Article 2(1) and Article 26 of the ICCPR and Article 2(2) of ICESCR

15 Article 19(2) of ICCPR

16 Article 21 of the ICCPR

17 Article 25 of the ICCPR and Article 8 of ICESCR

18 Article 13 of ICESCR

19 Article 6 of ICESCR

20 American human rights cases are heard by the Inter-American Court and Commission of Human Rights

21 Other committees (known as UN Treaty Bodies) include: the Human Rights Committee, the Committee on Migrant Workers, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, the Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Committee against Torture