



A Practical Guide to Using International Human Rights and Criminal Law Procedures

Elgar Practical Guides

Connie de la Vega, Marshall P. Madison Professor of Law and Academic Director of International Programs, University of San Francisco, School of Law, US and Alen Mirza, independent international human rights consultant and member of the Board of Directors for Human Rights Advocates

This book is a practical, experience-based guide for advocates seeking remedies for human rights violations through the use of international institutions. Since 1948, when the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, mechanisms for addressing human rights violations have multiplied to include UN Charter based bodies, treaty-based organizations including the international criminal court, and regional institutions. Each mechanism has its own admissibility requirements: accreditation, timeliness of claims, and exhaustion of remedies. For practitioners, the maze of rules and institutions can be difficult to navigate. This book offers step-by-step approaches for maximizing the institutions' intended effect—promotion of human rights at all levels.

'A tireless and fearless human rights defender, personally acquainted with every aspect of the available UN and regional systems, let alone the American institutions, Professor Connie de la Vega gives here one more proof of her lifelong dedication to the cause. This wide-ranging guide to the international and regional organs and mechanisms, now so numerous as to form a maze difficult to penetrate, goes far beyond a description of their components. It teaches NGOs and other civil society actors how to make proper use of the different instances, bodies and procedures, with advice on how to choose and put to use those that may best serve one's endeavour. Clear knowledge of options available is, therefore, the first need to be fulfilled in order to avoid pitfalls and obstacles. This guide is certainly a most welcome contribution to all of those who still believe that universal human rights are now the only hope for social progress in a world where dominant politics seems determined to move backwards.'

– José Lindgren-Alves, Member of the Advisory Committee to the UN Human Rights Council and former member of CERD, Brazil

'International human rights and international criminal law procedures for upholding the rights of victims represent a great breakthrough in theory, but they are of limited utility unless they are accessible to, and can be used effectively by, the victims and civil society advocates. This book is an invaluable guide to the complexities of these procedures and how they can be used to bring real change.'

– Philip Alston, New York University, School of Law, US and UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights

'This is a wonderfully practical and straightforward guide for victims and those representing them on how to make international human rights bodies actually work. It explains in clear, accessible language how to get your issue or case before the UN, regional human rights bodies and the International Criminal Court, and what you can expect when you do so. The book fills the gap between theory and implementation nicely, and should be the go-to handbook for those doing human rights work to carry with them wherever they go.'

– Naomi Roht-Arriaza, Hastings College of the Law, US

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