



Rule of Law

"For the United Nations, the rule of law refers to a principle of governance in which all persons, institutions and entities, public and private, including the State itself, are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced and independently adjudicated, and which are consistent with international human rights norms and standards. It requires, as well, measures to ensure adherence to the principles of supremacy of law, equality before the law, accountability to the law, fairness in the application of the law, separation of powers, participation in decision-making, legal certainty, avoidance of arbitrariness and procedural and legal transparency."

The rule of law and transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict societies:
Report of the Secretary-General ([S/2004/616](#), 23 August 2004)

United Nations and the Rule of Law: <https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/>

Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group

The Rule of Law Coordination and Resource Group is chaired by the Deputy Secretary-General and has the overall leadership role for the rule of law in the work of the United Nations. It ensures that the UN is able to foresee new opportunities and address new challenges. The Group take into account the emergence of new realities and actors in the field of the rule of law, and provides guidance to ensure overall coordination and coherence in the Organization's support to Member States. With strengthened leadership and new institutional arrangements in place, the Organization is better placed to address the challenges faced in strengthening the rule of law.

To respond to the interest of encompassing within the framework of the rule of law a broader range of UN activities, the membership of the [RoLCRG](#) now includes 20 entities with important normative components in their mandates:

- UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA): <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/what-we-do/rule-of-law.html>
- UN Department of Political Affairs (DPA): <http://www.un.org/undpa/en>
- UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO): <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/departement-of-peacekeeping-operations>
 - Strengthening the Rule of Law: <http://peacekeeping.un.org/en/strengthening-rule-of-law>
- Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA): <http://www.unocha.org>
- Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR): <http://www.ohchr.org>
 - Rule of Law: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/RuleOfLaw/Pages/RuleOfLawIndex.aspx>
- UN Office of Legal Affairs (OLA): <http://legal.un.org/ola/>
- Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict: <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/>
- Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict: <http://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/about-us/team-of-experts/>
- Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO): <http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/>

- United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF): <http://www.un.org/democracyfund/>
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): <http://www.undp.org>
 - Rule of law, justice, security and human rights: <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/ourwork/democratic-governance-and-peacebuilding/rule-of-law--justice-and-security.html>
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP): <https://www.unenvironment.org/>
 - Promoting Environmental Rule of Law: <https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/environmental-governance/what-we-do/strengthening-institutions/promoting>
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO): <http://www.unesco.org>
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat): <http://unhabitat.org/>
 - Urban Legal Network: <http://www.gltm.net/uln/>
- Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): <http://www.unhcr.org>
 - Rule of Law and Transitional Justice: <http://www.unhcr.org/rule-law-transitional-justice.html>
- UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF): <http://www.unicef.org>
- UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC): <http://www.unodc.org>
- United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS): <http://www.unops.org>
- UN Women – UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women: <http://www.unwomen.org>
 - Rule of Law and Justice: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/peace-and-security/rule-of-law-and-justice>
- World Bank: <http://www.worldbank.org>

UN Conferences & Events

- 13th Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (Doha) - High Level Special Event on Rule of Law, Human Rights and the Post 2015 Development Agenda (13 April 2015): <http://www.unodc.org/congress/en/high-level-events-rule-of-law.html>
- Security Council Open Debate on the promotion and strengthening of the rule of law in the maintenance of international peace and security (19 February 2014):
 - Concept Note: <http://undocs.org/S/2014/75>
 - Meeting Records: <http://undocs.org/S/PV.7113>
- High-level Meeting on the Rule of Law (24 September 2012): <https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/blog/2012/09/high-level-meeting-on-the-rule-of-law-24-september-2012/>
<http://un-library.tumblr.com/post/32196439819/high-level-meeting-on-the-rule-of-law>
 - Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels (A/RES/67/1): <http://undocs.org/A/RES/67/1>
- Treaty Event: “Strengthening the Rule of Law” (24-26 September & 1-2 October 2012): https://treaties.un.org/Pages/TreatyEvents.aspx?path=Treaty/PastTreaty/Page1_en.xml
- Security Council Open Debate on the subject “The promotion and strengthening of the rule of law in the maintenance of international peace and security” (29 June 2010)
 - Concept Note: <http://undocs.org/S/2010/322>
 - Meeting Records: <http://undocs.org/S/PV.6347>, [http://undocs.org/S/PV.6347\(Resumption_1\)](http://undocs.org/S/PV.6347(Resumption_1))

Selected UN Documents

- A/RES/72/119: The rule of law at the national and international levels: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly on 7 December 2017: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/72/119>
- A/72/268 (1 August 2017): Strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities: report of the Secretary-General: <http://undocs.org/A/72/268>
Submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/148.
"Annex: Ways and means to further disseminate international law to strengthen the rule of law": p. 19.
- A/HRC/RES/34/41: Human rights, democracy and the rule of law: resolution / adopted by the Human Rights Council on 24 March 2017: <http://undocs.org/A/HRC/RES/34/41>
- A/HRC/34/46 (31 January 2017): First session of the Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law: report of the Co-Chairs: <http://undocs.org/A/HRC/34/46>
1st session held in Geneva from 21 to 22 Nov. 2016 pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution 28/14.
- A/RES/71/148: The rule of law at the national and international levels: resolution / adopted by the General Assembly on 13 December 2016: <http://undocs.org/A/RES/71/148>
- A/71/515 (11 November 2016): The rule of law at the national and international levels: report of the 6th Committee: General Assembly, 71st session: <http://undocs.org/A/71/515>
- Further documents – click [here](#)

Further Information

- United Nations – What We Do – Uphold International Law: <http://www.un.org/en/sections/what-we-do/uphold-international-law/index.html>
- Global Issues on the UN Agenda – International Law and Justice: <http://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/international-law-and-justice/index.html>
- General Assembly - Sixth Committee (Legal): <http://www.un.org/en/ga/sixth/index.shtml>
 - Seventy-first session: The rule of law at the national and international levels (Agenda item 84): http://www.un.org/en/ga/sixth/71/rule_of_law.shtml

Research & Documentation

- **United Nations Rule of Law - Document Repository**
<https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/knowledge-resources/document-repository/>
The Document Repository is a promotional and educational tool for practitioners and the general public. It seeks to inform users about the UN's work in the field of rule of law, and its efforts to coordinate and strengthen system-wide approaches in this field. It is the central UN rule of law web-based resource, serving as a gateway to the rest of the UN's related sites, and making information more widely accessible about UN rule of law issues and activities, and the various tools, documents and materials on the subject. The website is also an avenue for users to access other web resources on or related to rule of law, developed by the UN or external organizations.
- **Audiovisual Library of International Law**
<http://www.un.org/law/avl/>
Lecture Series on "Rule of Law, Democracy and Good Governance":
<http://legal.un.org/avl/lr/ruleoflaw.html>
The research library contains links to other web-based resources providing international law-related materials. The library is divided into four components: resources relating to treaties; materials concerning the jurisprudence of international courts and tribunals; access to selected UN publications and repositories; and selected scholarly writings in international law.

- Repertoire of Practice of the Security Council – Rule of law:
http://www.un.org/en/sc/repertoire/studies/general_studies.shtml#cat20
- Dag Hammarskjöld Library - Research Guides - UN Documentation - International Law:
<http://research.un.org/en/docs/law>
- Dag Hammarskjöld Library - Research Guide - Human Rights, the Rule of Law & the post-2015 development agenda: <http://research.un.org/en/ruleoflaw>
- UNRIC Library Backgrounder - Special Tribunals & other mechanisms:
http://www.unric.org/html/english/library/backgrounders/specialtribunals_eng.pdf
- UNRIC Library Backgrounder - Responsibility to Protect:
<http://www.unric.org/en/unric-library/26580>

Selected Publications available online

- Successes and challenges in strengthening the rule of law to support sustainable development (Factsheet 3, 13th Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, Doha, 12-19 April 2015):
http://www.un.org/en/events/crimecongress2015/pdf/Factsheet_3_Rule_of_law_EN.pdf
- Rule-of-law tools for post-conflict States: Archives (OHCHR, 2014):
http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HR_PUB_14_4_Archives_en.pdf
- UN Chronicle, Volume XLIX, Number 4, 2012 – “Delivering Justice”:
<http://unchronicle.un.org/issue/delivering-justice/>
- UNDP Results: Rule of Law (26 September 2012): http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/results/english/Results-RuleOfLaw_9-25-12_E.pdf
- The United Nations Rule of Law Indicators: Implementation Guide and Project Tools (DPKO / OHCHR, 2011):
http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/publications/un_rule_of_law_indicators.pdf
- Rule-of-law tools for post-conflict States: Amnesties (OHCHR, 2009):
http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Amnesties_en.pdf
- Rule-of-law tools for post-conflict States: National Consultations on Transitional Justice (OHCHR, 2009):
http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/NationalConsultationsTJ_EN.pdf
- Rule-of-law tools for post-conflict States: Reparations programmes (OHCHR, 2008):
<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/ReparationsProgrammes.pdf>
- Rule-of-law Tools for Post-Conflict States: Maximizing the legacy of hybrid courts (OHCHR, 2008): <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/HybridCourts.pdf>
- Rule-of-law tools for post-conflict States: Truth commissions (OHCHR, 2006):
<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/RuleoflawTruthCommissionsen.pdf>
- Rule-of-law tools for post-conflict States: Mapping the justice sector (OHCHR, 2006):
<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/RuleoflawMappingen.pdf>
- Rule-of-law tools for post-conflict States: Monitoring legal systems (OHCHR, 2006):
<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/RuleoflawMonitoringen.pdf>
- Rule-of-law tools for post-conflict States: Prosecution initiatives (OHCHR, 2006):
<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/RuleoflawProsecutionsen.pdf>
- Rule-of-law tools for post-conflict States: Vetting - an operational framework (OHCHR, 2006): <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/RuleoflawVettingen.pdf>
- UNHCR Suggested Reading on the Rule of Law and Transitional Justice:
<http://www.unhcr.org/4a2cc2e26.html>
- DPKO Magazines - UN Police Magazine, Corrections Update, Justice Review:
<http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/publications.shtml>