

UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies

Law and Legitimacy

STUDIES ON HUMAN RIGHTS CONVENTIONS



EDITED BY
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UN HUMAN RIGHTS TREATY BODIES

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UN HUMAN RIGHTS TREATY BODIES

The effective implementation of human rights treaty obligations in national law is subject to increasing attention. The main responsibility for the monitoring of national implementation at the global level is entrusted to the UN human rights treaty bodies. These bodies are established by the respective human rights conventions and are composed of independent experts. This book examines these bodies from three perspectives: the legal aspects of their structure, functions and decisions; their effectiveness in ensuring respect for human rights obligations; and the legitimacy of these bodies and their decisions. Containing contributions from a variety of eminent legal experts, including present and former members of the treaty bodies, the analysis should be read in light of the ongoing effort to strengthen treaty bodies under the auspices of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders.

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In a modern world with a growing number of international organisations and entities acquiring ever greater powers and competences, a study of the bodies that monitor the implementation of human rights conventions merits particular attention. Established decades ago by states seeking to confer upon them a modest mandate, human rights treaty bodies today form the centrepiece of the international human rights regime and seek to perform their functions at a time when human rights are in the mainstream and expectations correspondingly run high.

We are grateful to Cambridge University Press for making this study of human rights treaty bodies the inaugural volume in its prestigious new series *Studies on Human Rights Conventions*. It is hoped that this volume will be of interest to scholars, legal practitioners and students seeking a deeper understanding of these bodies' mandates, their work product and the challenges they and others face in promoting the national implementation of human rights standards.

The idea for this book was born out of a larger research project led by Andreas Føllesdal and Geir Ulfstein called 'Should states ratify human rights conventions?', at the Centre for Advance Study, Norway. This book project was funded and hosted by the Centre, where the authors met twice to discuss its concept and draft chapters. The Centre created a wonderful atmosphere for an exchange of ideas among colleagues from around the world. We are particularly grateful for the co-leadership of the research project and the insights and ideas provided by Andreas Føllesdal as well as the hospitality that the Centre, under Scientific Director Gro Steinsland and Office Manager Maria M.L. Sætre, extended to all of the contributors.

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Helen Keller and Geir Ulfstein
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