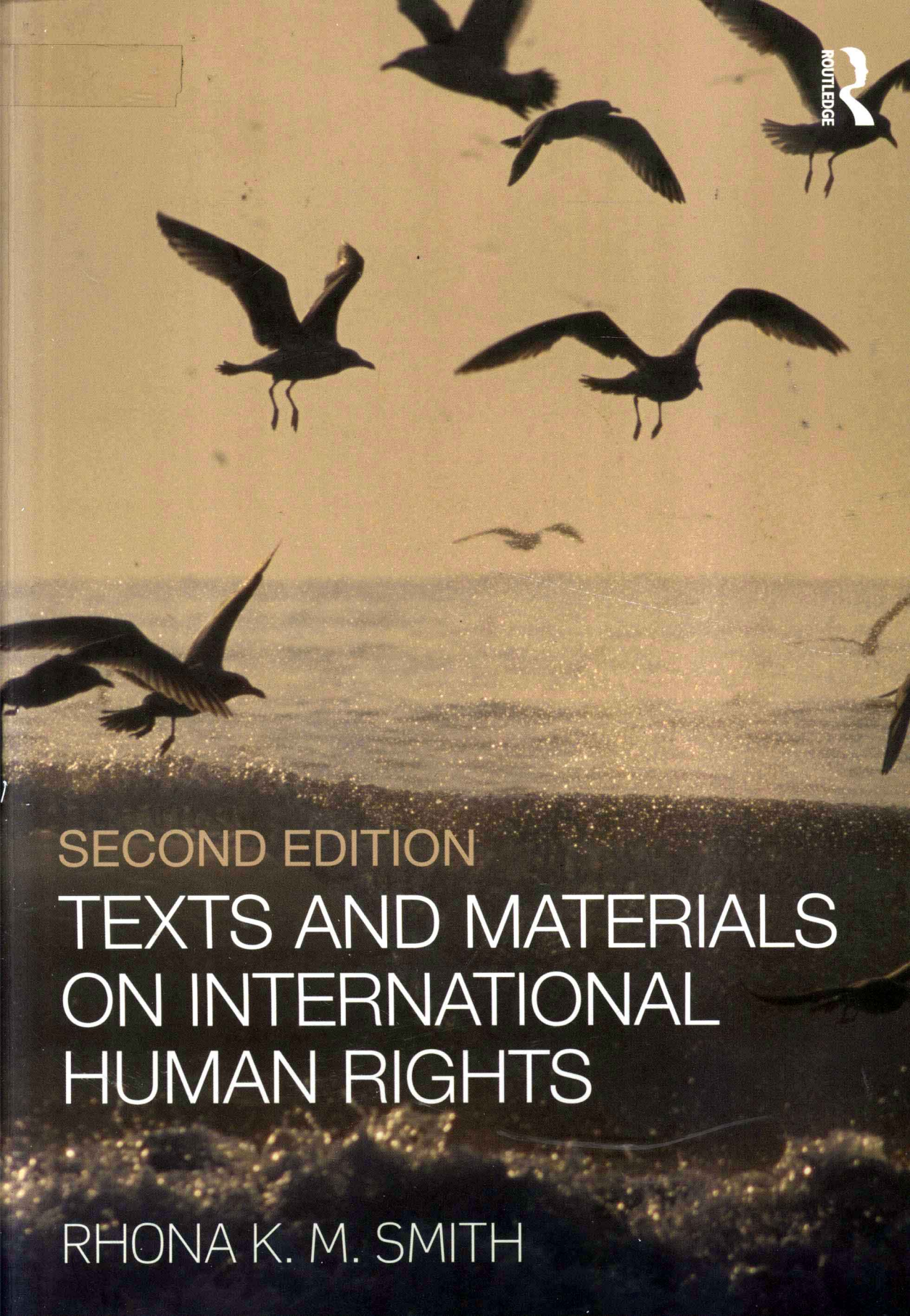




ROUTLEDGE

SECOND EDITION

TEXTS AND MATERIALS ON INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

RHONA K. M. SMITH

TEXTS AND MATERIALS ON INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS

Second Edition

Rhona K. M. Smith



04020077

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

Second edition published 2010
by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

Simultaneously published in the USA and Canada
by Routledge
270 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2010, 2007 Rhona K. M. Smith

First edition published 2007 by Routledge-Cavendish

Typeset in Garamond Three and Helvetica Neue by
RefineCatch Limited, Bungay, Suffolk
Printed and bound in Great Britain by
CPI Antony Rowe, Chippenham, Wiltshire

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Smith, Rhona K. M.

Texts & materials on international human rights / Rhona K. M. Smith.—2nd ed.

p. cm

1. Human rights. 2. Civil rights. I. Title.

II. Title: Texts and materials on international human rights.

K3240.S57 2010

341.4'8—dc22

2009016178

ISBN10: 0-415-49107-X (hbk)
ISBN13: 978-0-415-49107-5 (hbk)
ISBN10: 0-415-49115-0 (pbk)
ISBN13: 978-0-415-49115-0 (pbk)
ISBN10: 0-203-86760-2 (eBook)
ISBN13: 978-0-203-86760-0 (eBook)

PREFACE

This book seeks to provide an introduction to international human rights law, particularly those primary sources (treaties, other instruments and jurisprudence) which elaborate the fundamental rights and freedoms to which we are all entitled. International human rights benefits remarkably from the world wide web. Indeed, it is possible to access almost all the primary materials through the official websites of the key organisations: the United Nations; Council of Europe; International Labour Organisation; Organisation of American States; African Union. A wealth of non-governmental organisations, charities, governments and individuals add to this their own views, guidelines and materials. Never in history have we, wherever we are in the world, been able to freely and easily access as much information on our 'common birthright' of human rights as we can today. Although a remarkable resource, the sheer volume of information available can appear daunting. Thus this text provides an entry into the maze of material, introducing the key topics and the key materials. It is neither a substitute for reading the primary resources nor is it intended to compare with the esteemed monographs, other books and commentaries already on the market. In the space available, it cannot cover the entire range of rights and freedoms. Rather it takes a thematic approach, attempting to draw together the main areas of activity under umbrella headings, demonstrating the interdependence and indivisibility of international human rights. Inevitably there are repetitions and omissions, as well as different approaches to the materials selected.

The chapters cover the fundamentals of international human rights (i.e. what they are, where to find them, how to enforce them), then the rights accorded to key vulnerable groups, reflecting those areas which appear to be of most interest to students. As the book is targeted at undergraduates and those new to the area, the principal problem in selecting materials remains anticipating what will be taught in introductory courses and be of most interest to intending students.

With a focus on primary materials, almost all the extracts are in the public domain and freely available. However, I sought the consent of the relevant bodies

for reproduction of extracted materials. To this end, I am grateful to the international and regional organisations for permission to reproduce jurisprudence and documents. In particular my gratitude to Bianka Ochs of the OHCHR in Geneva for ploughing through lists of documents to ensure permission was granted. I have, for reasons of copyright, limited the use of secondary sources. In its place, I have provided indicative further reading lists at the conclusion of each chapter to assist with further research.

As far as possible, the text and materials were accurate as at 26 March 2009 though updated at proof stage as far as practicable.

In accordance with the old Scottish saying, 'the best laid schemes o' Mice an' Men gang aft agley'. As external circumstances seemed to thwart the compilation of the first edition at every turn, inevitably friends and family deserve acknowledgement and heartfelt gratitude for their support and understanding as yet again I retreated from normality and resorted to working almost every evening and weekend. Zoe Botterill (who left just before the initial manuscript was submitted) and Madeleine Langford proved most helpful when this project was eventually reallocated to them by Cavendish after Ruth Massey's departure for pastures new. For this edition, Fiona Kinnear and Holly Davis have proven very helpful and professional. Finally my International Human Rights students at Strathclyde and Northumbria Universities have, over the years, enlightened me as to what students find most useful and interesting.

RKMS

Beijing. March 2009

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