

*Dictionary of International Human Rights Law*. By Connie de la Vega. Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013. Pp. v, 250. ISBN: 978-1-84980-377-9. US\$150.

This slim volume is a useful reference work covering human rights terminology and international instruments. It is divided into two sections: the first has definitions of terms commonly used in the field and also includes major treaties and tribunals; the second is in the form of an appendix with descriptions of major international human rights instruments, together with information on when they were signed and where to locate their texts.

The introductory “Guide to the Dictionary” makes an important point in noting that terms are not used in the exact same manner in all instruments. The examples given are “freedoms” and “rights,” which are not consistently used in human rights instruments, but the point could apply to other subject terms as well.

The first section, on subject terms, comprises the bulk of the volume. The definitions given are quite concise, usually one paragraph in length. A similar work, the *Historical Dictionary of Human Rights* by Jacques Fomerand (published by Rowman and Littlefield in 2014), by contrast has quite extensive remarks for many of the terms. For example, Fomerand’s dictionary has two pages on “Indigenous Peoples,” while the dictionary being reviewed has a single, short paragraph. This is not to say that either approach is superior; which reference work is used depends on the needs of the reader.

A strength of the *Dictionary of International Human Rights Law*’s subject term section is the range of terms included. By including terms and phrases that do not directly fall into the human rights category, such as “AIDS/HIV” and “Public Emergency,” and explaining their significance in terms of human rights actions and instruments, this dictionary is more comprehensive in scope and thus more useful to researchers.

One flaw in this section is that it is an alphabetical index with minimal cross-referencing. Related concepts are thus not grouped together. In one instance, the terms “Acceptance” and “Accession” both appear on the first page because they fall there alphabetically. While the entries mention that these are only two of the ways in which a country can become a party to a treaty under the *Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties* and quite usefully distinguish the two terms, there is no link to or mention of the other methods of joining a treaty — approval and ratification. Furthermore, the entry for “Approval” is identical to the one for “Acceptance,” with no explanation of the difference.

The second part of the book contains the appendix listing international instruments related to human rights. It is quite comprehensive, with 259 items and a variety of types of instruments, such as declarations, conventions, guidelines, etc. The strict alphabetical order once again, to a minor extent, limits

the usefulness of this section, with a great many entries alphabetized under “Convention” or “Declaration,” for example, rather than by topic.

There is some overlap in entries between the two sections, as many of the treaties and other documents listed in the appendix have entries in the first part of the work. In some cases, the emphasis of the entries is different. The description of the *African Charter on Human and People’s Rights* in the appendix states that the charter “recognizes civil and political rights, as well as economic, social, and cultural rights,” whereas the first section entry says that “while it covers civil and political rights it stresses economic, social and cultural rights.” This difference in emphasis may be attributed merely to a variance in wording, perhaps due to a desire to make the appendix entry more succinct, but given that the two descriptions give a different perspective on the document, it would perhaps have been better to either make them match or not to include a descriptive statement in the appendix entry of any item already summarized in the first section.

Constance A. Johnson  
Senior Legal Research Analyst  
Law Library of Congress  
Washington, D.C. USA

***Extraterritorial Application of Selected Human Rights Treaties.*** By Karen da Costa. Leiden; Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2013. Pp. vii, 324. ISBN: 978-90-04-22837-5. US\$189.00.

The issue of extraterritorial application of human rights treaties has been at the forefront of debates and discussions in various legal, political, and judicial fora, especially since the terrorist attacks on the United States of September 11, 2001, and the ensuing “war on terror.” Domestic and international courts and tribunals have adjudicated cases raising extraterritoriality issues under various circumstances, such as during peace or military occupations where state agents engage in illegal activities abroad or in cases of arrest, detention, and torture outside the jurisdiction of a state. Da Costa, in her book *Extraterritorial Application of Selected Human Rights Treaties*, approaches this subject in a skillful, meticulous, and scholarly manner by covering legislative history, fundamental canons of treaty interpretation, state practice, case law, and arguments advanced by states for or against the application of human rights treaties beyond their respective territories.

Da Costa’s scholarly methodology first focuses on reviewing the existing jurisdictional clauses that give rise to the extraterritorial application in three basic legal instruments: the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Convention on Human Rights, and the Convention Against