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# American Journal of International Law

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- On the Use and Abuse of Necessity in the Law of State Responsibility  
Robert D. Sloane
- *Agora: Kiobel*  
Curtis A. Bradley  
Carlos M. Vázquez  
Brian Richardson



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# INTERNATIONAL LAW: 100 WAYS IT SHAPES OUR LIVES

Many find international law abstract and static. Topics such as war and peace or relationships between countries are considered by some to be not so much questions of law, but of power and influence. Others question the existence of international law.

*International Law: 100 Ways It Shapes Our Lives* was conceived from the proposition that international law not only exists, but also penetrates more deeply and broadly into everyday life than is generally recognized. Some ways are of relatively recent vintage, while others are long-standing. 100 examples were identified by ASIL members, vetted by a smaller group of experts, and organized into seven chapters: 1) daily life; 2) leisure; 3) travel; 4) commerce 5) health and the environment; 6) personal liberty; 7) public safety and global security.

Join us in demonstrating how international law shapes our lives by

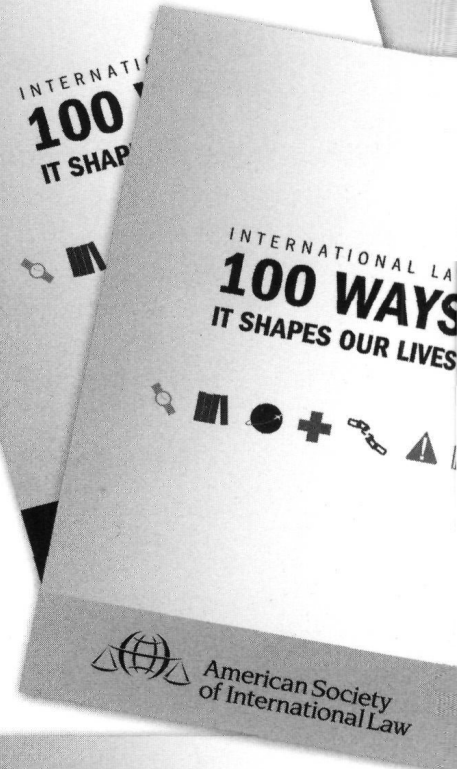
- Visiting *100 Ways* at [www.asil.org/100ways](http://www.asil.org/100ways)
- Using it in teaching and general civic education programs;
- Adding ways to the list; and
- Sharing your experiences using *International Law: 100 Ways It Shapes Our Lives*.

We hope that this creative and interactive project will help demonstrate the diversity and the centrality of international law to our lives today.



IN DAILY LIFE

- 1 Always knowing what date and time it is anywhere on the planet.**  
By universal recognition of the prime meridian and Greenwich Mean Time (via international agreement at the International Meridian Conference in 1884). The latter was updated to "universal time" in 1928, and subsequent technical agreements have refined the definition further.
- 2 Mailing a letter reliably and easily to anyone in the world.**  
By ensuring a truly universal postal network and recognizing that specified postal rates in one country would satisfy delivery requirements in all countries (the Constitution of the Universal Postal Union, 1964).
- 3 Driving cars with improved safety standards.**  
By adopting global safety standards for automobiles, notably the Agreement Concerning the Establishing of Global Technical Regulations for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment, and Parts Which Can Be Fitted and/or Used on Wheeled Vehicles (1998).
- 4 Being able to call Arkansas, Missouri, or most of Montana home.**  
As the result of the bilateral treaty known as the Louisiana Purchase (1803).
- 5 Placing and receiving telephone calls worldwide.**  
By creating an international communication network and by reaching an international agreement preventing national claims to the geostationary orbit. See the 1865 Constitution of what is now called the International Telecommunications Union, the oldest intergovernmental organization, and the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, Including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (UN Space Treaty, 1967).



- 6 Knowing that a second is the same length of time everywhere in the world.**  
By setting internationally recognized standards, particularly the Decision of the 13th General Conference on Weights and Measures (1967), under the auspices of the International Office of Weights and Measures (est. 1875).
- 7 Using the same software on computers worldwide.**  
By providing rights of distribution, copyright, and rental to authors of computer programs via the World Intellectual Property Organization Copyright Treaty (1996).
- 8 Getting an up-to-date weather forecast about your destination before you travel.**  
By benefiting from international rules for the collection and dissemination of worldwide weather data, as provided for by the Convention of the World Meteorological Organization (1947) and the International Telecommunication Convention (1932).
- 9 Watching news and events from around the world on television.**  
As a result of the international convention providing equal access to the international satellite communications network, as stated in Resolution 1721 (XVI) of the General Assembly of the United Nations (1961).
- 10 Listening to a BBC program on your radio.**  
By following regulations, implemented by the International Telecommunication Union, that provide for shared use of the radio spectrum and assign positions for communication satellites, building from the International Telegraph Convention (1865).

# AMERICAN JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL LAW

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CONTENTS

PAGE

## On the Use and Abuse of Necessity in the Law of State Responsibility

*Robert D. Sloane* 447

Article 25 of the International Law Commission's Articles on State Responsibility defines necessity as a general "circumstance precluding wrongfulness" in the law of state responsibility. It has been adopted rapidly and almost uniformly, but with scant independent analysis, as a putative codification of international custom. This essay argues that with reference to the ILC mandate, the definition reflects far more "progressive development" than "codification" of general international law. It also questions the definition's advisability, coherence, and normative appeal in theory and practice.

## Agora: *Kiobel*

- |   |                          |     |
|---|--------------------------|-----|
| Attorney General Bradford's Opinion and the Alien Tort Statute  | <i>Curtis A. Bradley</i> | 509 |
| Alien Tort Claims and the Status of Customary International Law | <i>Carlos M. Vázquez</i> | 531 |
| The Use of Vattel in the American Law of Nations                | <i>Brian Richardson</i>  | 547 |

## Editorial Comment

- |  |                         |     |
|--|-------------------------|-----|
| Correcting America's Continuing Failure to Comply with the <i>Avena</i> Judgment | <i>Steve Charnovitz</i> | 572 |
|--|-------------------------|-----|

## Notes and Comments

- |  |                            |     |
|--|----------------------------|-----|
| The <i>Nicaragua</i> Case: A Response to Paul Reichler | <i>Stephen M. Schwebel</i> | 582 |
| Paul Reichler's Rejoinder                              | <i>Paul S. Reichler</i>    | 583 |
| The Francis Deák Prize                                 |                            | 585 |
| Nominations for the Board of Editors                   |                            | 585 |

## Current Developments

- |  |                         |     |
|--|-------------------------|-----|
| The 2011 Judicial Activity of the International Court of Justice | <i>Jacob Katz Cogan</i> | 586 |
|--|-------------------------|-----|

## International Decisions

*Edited by David P. Stewart*

- |  |  |     |
|--|--|-----|
| <i>Jurisdictional Immunities of the State (Germany v. Italy; Greece Intervening)</i> (Alexander Orakhelashvili)                              |  | 609 |
| International Court of Justice decision on sovereign immunity from civil claims for wartime atrocities                                       |  |     |
| <i>N.S. v. Secretary of State for the Home Department</i> (Geert De Baere)   |  | 616 |
| Court of Justice of the European Union judgment on responsibility for processing asylum seekers challenging transfer to their state of entry |  |     |
| <i>Vinter v. United Kingdom</i> (Marek Szydło)   |  | 624 |
| European Court of Human Rights judgment on permissibility of irreducible life sentences  |  |     |
| " <i>Republic of Korea v. Araye</i> " (Seokwoo Lee and Young Kil Park)   |  | 630 |
| Korean Supreme Court decision on universal jurisdiction over Somali pirates  |  |     |

<i>Golan v. Holder</i> (Anupam Chander, Madhavi Sunder, and Uyen Le) U.S. Supreme Court opinion on constitutionality of statute implementing Berne Convention on literary and artistic works	637
--	-----

## Contemporary Practice of the United States Relating to International Law

*Edited by John R. Crook*

U.S. Supreme Court Rules Statute Directing State Department to Record Jerusalem-Born Citizen's Birthplace as "Israel" Does Not Raise Political Question	644
Ninth Circuit Revisits Armenian Genocide Legislation en Banc, Finds Preemption	646
United States, Afghanistan Conclude Agreement on Their Long-Term Relationship	649
State Department Legal Adviser Outlines Legal Principles Bearing on Crisis in Syria	650
United States Pursues Multitrack Strategy to Address Conflict in Syria	652
U.S. District Court Upholds Head of State Immunity for Sri Lankan President	655
Second Circuit Rules RICO Does Not Reach Extraterritorially	657
Senate Foreign Relations Committee Holds Hearings on the Law of the Sea Convention	659
United States Adopts New Model Bilateral Investment Treaty	662
United States and Europe Affirm Shared Principles on International Investment	664
Military Commission Proceedings Resume at Guantánamo Bay	666
U.S. Supreme Court Holds Torture Victim Protection Act Does Not Authorize Suit Against Organizations	668
Senior White House Official Confirms Drone Strikes, Discusses U.S. Targeting Principles and Practices	670
Attorney General Discusses Targeting of U.S. Persons	673
Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Missile Technology Control Regime	676
United States Initiates Suspension of Argentina's Trade Benefits Because of Nonpayment of U.S. Companies' Arbitration Awards	678
Brief Notes	680

## Recent Books on International Law

*Edited by Richard B. Bilder*

### Review Essay

The Shifting Landscape of International Investment Law and Its Commentary (Jürgen Kurtz)	686
---	-----

### Book Reviews

Meron, Theodor. <i>The Making of International Criminal Justice: A View from the Bench: Selected Speeches</i> (Michael J. Matheson)	694
Fabry, Mikulas. <i>Recognizing States: International Society &amp; the Establishment of New States Since 1776</i> (James Crawford)	700
Mackenzie, Ruth, Kate Malleson, Penny Martin, and Philippe Sands. <i>Selecting Inter- national Judges: Principle, Process, and Politics</i> (W. Michael Reisman and Ramanu- jan Nadadur)	704
Schabas, William. <i>The International Criminal Court: A Commentary on the Rome Statute</i> (Leila Nadya Sadat)	708
Ruys, Tom. <i>'Armed Attack' and Article 51 of the UN Charter: Evolutions in Customary Law and Practice</i> ; Lubell, Noam. <i>Extraterritorial Use of Force Against Non-state Actors</i> (Tai-Heng Cheng)	710
Bodansky, Daniel, Jutta Brunnée, and Ellen Hey (eds.). <i>The Oxford Handbook of International Environmental Law</i> (Hari M. Osofsky)	715
Gallagher, Anne T. <i>The International Law of Human Trafficking</i> (Martina E. Van- denberg)	721

### Books Received

727

## International Legal Materials. Contents, Vol. LI, No. 2

730

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