

BOOK REVIEWS

Advanced Introduction to International Food Law. Neal D. Fortin. Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2023. 137 pp. ISBN 978-1-80220-826-9. US\$120.00.

Advanced Introduction to International Food Law is the latest in the Elgar Advanced Introductions series. Clocking in at six chapters and only 137 pages, it provides an excellent overview of a complicated subject.

The introductory chapter provides a brief history of international food law—defining basic concepts, such as “transnational law,” and delving into what is characterized as “food.” Fortin emphasizes the importance of accounting for differences in measurements, terminology, and even spelling (flavor vs. flavour) when researching international food laws. He also notes the variation in safety issues in different geographic areas.

Chapter 2 explains the history and roles of the various agencies participating in food safety and standards. It can be hard to keep the abbreviations for the various agencies straight. The list of abbreviations at the very beginning of the book is a useful tool. Several diagrams and tables in the chapter are particularly helpful in illustrating the connections between these different bodies. Chapter 2 also includes a brief overview of international trade agreements.

Chapters 3 and 4 expand on this brief overview. Chapter 3 details the rules of international trade and delves into the history and functions of the WTO. Chapter 4 continues with a deeper discussion of WTO agreements and dispute settlements. As in Chapter 2, a diagram provides a great explanation of the WTO panel process.

The next chapter is the longest, which makes sense since it delves into the complexity of comparative food law. While comparing US and EU food policies, the author urges us to avoid stereotypical assumptions, such as the European Union is more precautionary than the United States. There are concrete suggestions, such as “draw explicit comparisons” and “take account of functional equivalence.” As in the introductory chapter, Fortin stresses the need to consider differences in terminology. He also reminds us to “have a healthy skepticism” regarding these comparisons and to examine the political constructions in various nations and how these affect food laws.

Overall, this book is a detailed introduction to international food law, without being overwhelming. It would be immensely helpful for a reader ready to dip their toes into this subject.

Laura Dixon-Caldwell
Instructional and Reference Services Librarian
Robert S. Marx Law Library
University of Cincinnati College of Law
Cincinnati, Ohio
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Advanced Introduction to International Conflict and Security Law. Nigel D. White. Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2023. 2nd ed. 174 pp. ISBN: 978-1-80088-903-3. US\$120.00.

In *Advanced Introduction to International Conflict and Security Law*, Nigel D. White takes on the challenging task of providing a concise introduction to the law of international conflict and security. As White notes in the book’s preface, the scope of most international law topics is now so vast that authors are forced to choose between writing books that offer thin, shallow coverage or writing compendious, unwieldy tomes. White expresses his intention to resolve this challenge and to address the uniquely politicized nature of this branch of international law by emphasizing normative frameworks rather than surveying specific legal rules. In practice, this proves to be a difficult

balance to strike, and the book's six substantive chapters veer unevenly between racing through lists of legal rules, retreating into vague generalities, and successfully striking the balance between depth and conciseness.

Chapter 2's overview of arms control law is compellingly argued but light on information about the underlying law. White contrasts the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention and the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention, which engage in lawmaking, with the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which is more accurately understood as a political bargain between existing nuclear powers. White characterizes arms control law as an especially politicized area, where the United Nations (UN) is able to take action against non-State actors and undisputed threats like North Korea, but not against major powers or States that have major powers' backing.

Chapter 3 combines a welcome increase in legal complexity with a similar focus on politicization, emphasizing how politics undermine the prohibition on the use of force established by *jus cogens* norms and Article 2(4) of the UN Charter. White describes how both the United States (US) and Russia have routinely violated the prohibition on the use of force, openly asserting their rights to military intervention during the Cold War and ignoring the international condemnation of the war on terror and the invasion of Ukraine. White identifies the right to self-defense established by Article 51 of the UN Charter as a particular challenge to enforcing the prohibition on the use of force. Mutual claims of preemptive self-defense can easily spiral into an arms race as seen between the US and Russia during the Cold War and between India and Pakistan today. Moreover, it can be challenging to determine when and how to apply preemptive self-defense to modern security threats, such as attacks by non-State actors and cyberattacks.

In Chapter 4, White provides an impressively succinct and thorough survey of the history, present, and potential future of the regulation of private violence. White points out that, historically, States routinely delegated the use of force to private actors, such as privateers and the colonialist English and Dutch East India Companies. However, over time, private combatants were gradually subsumed into the State's armed forces, and modern international law typically only governs combatants who are under the effective control of a State. This has resulted in an absence of international legal liability for private contractors who participate in humanitarian law violations, such as the torture of prisoners at Abu Ghraib or the massacre of civilians at Nisour Square. Increasingly, international organizations seek to create new norms to fill this gap, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross's Montreux Document or the UN's Draft Convention on Private Military and Security Companies.

In Chapter 5, White describes and critiques the pragmatist, realist approach to collective security, which suggests that law is cynically manipulated to justify political goals. White cites numerous examples where this appears to be the case, including the extensive manipulation of the UN's legal framework to legitimize the Korean War and the current failure to intervene in the Syrian Civil War. Despite this, White rejects a purely realist approach to collective security. While he believes that the UN can and should do more to enforce humanitarian law, he nevertheless argues that the UN General Assembly meaningfully asserts the importance of law as an independent force through its willingness to condemn major powers' violations of international law.

Unfortunately, the book's steadily increasing level of detail means that Chapter 5 often feels disjointed, and Chapter 6 descends into an overwhelming laundry list of the legal norms governing the law of armed conflict. In the space of forty-two pages, Chapter 6 races through discussions of reciprocity, military necessity, proportionality, humanitarian law, war crimes, belligerent occupation, and more. While the individual examples are well chosen and clearly explained, the overwhelming number of legal norms discussed means that the chapter can cover each norm only superficially, and the sheer volume is difficult to absorb.

Chapter 7 provides a by-now welcome return to a more abstract discussion of the currently developing *jus post bellum* norms, which address the unique challenges of post-conflict States. Although this area of law is still developing, White cites as promising recent UN statements highlighting the importance of self-determination, emphasizing the obligations of peacekeepers to practice due diligence against human rights abuses, and rejecting blanket amnesties.

Ultimately, White suggests that international conflict and security law need significant reform to adapt to modern conflicts. The law is still grappling with how to address new technologies such as drones and cyberattacks. More fundamentally, the law does not adequately address modern conflicts' political structure. It typically assumes a reciprocal bargain between two States, each complying with the law so that the other will also comply. However, modern conflicts often include non-State actors, such as armed insurgents and private contractors who do not fit easily within the reciprocity framework. Additionally, even in inter-State conflicts, some States ignore and undermine reciprocity as when Russia's legal violations provoked a cycle of retaliation with Ukraine. White argues

that international conflict and security law must move beyond relying on reciprocity to incorporate external compliance mechanisms.

Overall, White's depth and breadth of expertise is clear, but it is less clear that it is possible to summarize the depth and complexity of international conflict and security law in the *Advanced Introduction* format. White does an impressive job of explaining dense topics clearly and compellingly. However, he never quite finds a way to achieve adequate legal depth while maintaining a manageable volume of new information. Researchers interested in an introduction to the topics covered in this book might be better served by reading his scholarly articles.

Caitlin Hunter
Reference Librarian
Hugh & Hazel Darling Law Library
UCLA School of Law
Los Angeles, California
doi:10.1017/jli.2024.40

The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights: A Commentary. Barnali Choudhury, ed. Cheltenham, UK; Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2023. Pp. 378. ISBN 978-1-80037-566-6. US\$232.00.

The UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, introduced just over a decade ago, have significantly influenced the landscape of international human rights and business practices. Choudhury's comprehensive commentary delves into the intricacies of these principles, providing both seasoned human rights professionals and newcomers with valuable insights and practical examples.

The book is divided into two parts. Part 1 focuses on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, while Part 2 explores the Principles for Responsible Contracts. Each chapter begins by specifying the relevant Guiding Principle, followed by a detailed table of contents. This structured approach allows readers to easily navigate through the extensive material and locate specific sections with ease.

The text contains many examples demonstrating the practical application of the UN Guiding Principles. It discusses how these principles have become the baseline for almost all business and human rights-related initiatives, influencing international standards, domestic laws, and international treaties. Notably, the Guiding Principles have been integrated into frameworks such as the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, ISO26000, and the ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy.

While the Guiding Principles have had a transformative impact on the human rights landscape, the book does not shy away from addressing the Guiding Principles' shortcomings. Each chapter critically examines how the principles sometimes fall short of their goals and offers suggestions for improvement. This critique is essential for understanding how the principles can evolve to better protect human rights.

A significant strength of the book is its practical guidance on implementing the Guiding Principles in day-to-day business operations. It provides ample discussions and examples of best practices and highlights areas where improvements are needed. The commentary also explains how certain principles should be read in conjunction with others, enhancing the reader's ability to apply them effectively in real-world scenarios.

The book also covers the Principles for Responsible Contracts, introduced by the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General. These principles aim to integrate the management of human rights risks into contract negotiations. The commentary explains how these principles should work in practice and offers suggestions for improvement, making it a valuable resource for understanding the intersection of human rights and business contracts.

The commentary highlights the significant influence of the Guiding Principles at both the international and national levels. For instance, they have been instrumental in shaping legislation, such as the UK's Modern Slavery Act, France's *Devoir de Vigilance*, Germany's Supply Chain Act, and the Netherlands' Child Labour Due Diligence Law. These examples underscore the principles' role in promoting human rights due diligence and accountability.

In conclusion, this commentary on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights is an essential resource for anyone involved in human rights work. It provides a thorough analysis, practical guidance, and critical evaluation of the principles, making it invaluable for experienced professionals and those new to the field. The book