

BOOK REVIEW

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 expands on the original blueprint of the Guiding Principles and pushes for the development of new norms and practices to further enhance human rights protection worldwide.

I highly recommend this book to those with interest and expertise in human rights, business, or higher education. Whether you are a beginner in this field or a seasoned expert, this book offers valuable insights and practical examples that will enhance your understanding and application of the Guiding Principles. It would also serve as an excellent text for a course on human rights and businesses.

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doi:10.1017/jli.2024.36