United Nations
Library resources and services

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Overview

- United Nations collections at uOttawa
- Structure of the United Nations
- Important legal bodies
- Document symbols
- Research tools
International law is a major element of the UN

Linked to key legal decisions and statements

Complex and challenging to navigate!

"to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained"

- UN Charter
uO Libraries

● Depository library since 1968
● Receive a copy of all UN official records and major publications in English and French [with some exceptions]
● Resources available online and in print
  ○ MRT general + gov [3rd flr]
  ○ Law library
  ○ Annex
Came into existence on 24 October 1945
193 member states
The Charter is the UN’s constituting instrument
Six main bodies
- General Assembly
- Security Council
- Economic and Social Council [ECOSOC]
- International Court of Justice [ICJ]
- Secretariat
- Trusteeship Council [suspended in 1994]
... plus 15 agencies, several programs and bodies
• Chief deliberative organ of the United Nations
• Discusses, initiates studies, and makes recommendations on questions regarding security, peacekeeping, international law, international cooperation
• Composed of various subsidiary organs: boards, commissions, committees, councils, panels, and working groups
• Most legal issues at the GA are referred to its “sixth committee”
Sixth Committee

- All member states entitled to representation
- GA allocates agenda items related to legal matters to the Sixth Committee
- The Sixth Committee deliberates and reports to the GA for each agenda item - each report:
  - summarizes the committee's consideration of the item
  - identifies the sponsors of draft resolutions
  - reports the vote, if any, of Member States on draft texts
  - transmits the final version of draft resolutions and/or decisions recommended to the GA for adoption
- GA votes on each report + draft resolutions / decisions

[more info]
Legal units within the GA

- **International Law Commission** → systematizes rules of international law and drafts conventions on subjects not yet regulated by international law

- **UN Commission on International Trade Law** → modernizes and harmonizes rules the law of international trade
Security Council

- Primary responsibility for maintenance of international peace and security → power to oblige
- Investigates, makes recommendations and formulates plans regarding international disputes and conflicts, which may include:
  - Economic sanctions
  - Military action
- Can refer certain situations to International Criminal Court [created by, but separate from UN] if it appears international crimes have been committed

[more info]
Intn’l Court of Justice

- Principal judicial organ of the United Nations
- Deals with disputes between states only
- Provides advisory recommendations on legal questions submitted by other UN bodies and agencies
- Composed of 15 judges who are elected to nine-year terms by the General Assembly and the Security Council

[more info]
- **International agreements** entered into by any Member of the United Nations
- Treaty documents include info on: ratification, texts of any declarations, and reservations or objections
- Many multilateral agreements establish a body to monitor the implementation of the agreement.

[more info]
Document symbols

- Consist of letters and numbers
- First letter indicates the principal UN body responsible for it

A/  (General Assembly)
E/  (Economic and Social Council)
S/  (Security Council)
ST/ (Secretariat)
T/  (Trusteeship Council) *inactive
• Certain organs retain their own symbol, independent of the parent body:

CRC/C/ Committee on the Rights of the Child
DP/ United Nations Development Programme
TD/ United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNEP/ United Nations Environment Programme
Even more document symbols

- Second and third level elements indicate subsidiary bodies:
  - /AC. ... Ad hoc committee
  - /C. .../ Standing, permanent, or main committee
  - /CN. .../ Commission
  - /CONF. .../ Conference
  - /GC. .../ Governing council
  - /PC/. .../ Preparatory committee
  - /SC. .../ Subcommittee
  - /Sub. .../ Subcommission
  - /WG. .../ Working group
Still more document symbols

- Certain elements reflect the nature of the documents:
  - CRP  Conference room paper
  - NGO/  Statements by non-governmental organizations
  - L.  Limited distribution (e.g. draft documents)
  - PET/  Petition
  - PRST/  Statements by the President of the Security Council
  - PV  Verbatim records of meeting
  - R  Restricted distribution/access
  - RES/  Resolutions
  - SR.  Summary record of meetings
  - WP.  Working papers
UN docs in the uO collection

(MRT Government Pubs – MRT 3rd floor)

**Call numbers:**

- **UN2 A...** General Assembly
- **UN2 E...** Economic and Social Council
- **UN2 S...** Security Council
- **UN2 ST...** Secretariat
- **UN2 T...** Trusteeship Council
Strengthening International Cooperation in Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Persons and Protecting Victims of Such Trafficking

E/CN.15/2006/L.9/Rev.2

Economic and Social Council/ Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice/ Fifteenth session/ Limited distribution/ Second revision
Security Council resolution 2161 (2014) [on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts by Al-Qaeda]

Resolution 2161 (2014)

Adopted by the Security Council at its 7198th meeting, on 17 June 2014

The Security Council,


Reaffirming that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to peace and security and that any acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable regardless of their motivations, whenever and by whomever committed, and reiterating its unequivocal condemnation of Al-Qaida and other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with it, for ongoing and multiple criminal terrorist acts aimed at causing the deaths of innocent civilians and other victims, destruction of property and greatly undermining stability,
1. Check the website of the body / organization
2. Check the government information research guide [more info]
   a. United Nations Bibliographic Information System (UNBISnet)
   c. Yearbook of the United Nations
   d. AccessUN [older pubs]
   e. United Nations Treaty Collection Online
   f. Universal Human Rights Index
3. Check the library [classic] catalogue
4. Ask the gov info librarian!
5. Tip: check out http://ask.un.org/ for key FAQs
The University of Ottawa Library receives automatically documents distributed by the Depository Services Program (the DSP program concluded in 2013), the United Nations (with some exceptions), and the European Commission.

Our collection is equally enriched by donations and acquisition of publications from other foreign governments and international organizations such as OECD, World Bank, UNESCO, IMF, multilateral development banks etc.

The publications from international organizations and governments are located in different libraries, including Media Resources (microforms), GSG Information Centre (maps), Morisset (annual reports, statistics, studies, royal commissions etc.), Brian Dickson (parliamentary publications, gazettes, treaties etc.) and, Health Sciences Library (World Health Organization, specialized studies from Health Canada etc.). Check the library catalogue to find out where a specific document is located.

Please note that certain collections -- e.g. official UN documents -- are not listed in the catalogue. Do not hesitate to contact me or a reference desk at any uOttawa library for more information.
Classic catalogue

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Berkman Library
Brian Dickson Law Library
Centre for Organizational Development and Learning

Format:
Any
Archival Material
Book
Computer File
E-Book

Language:
Any
Arabic
Chinese
Dutch
English

Year:
After Before

Publisher:

Sort:
Relevance ▼

Limit to available items

Submit Clear
A real example

Looking for the following document: CCPR/C/30/D/167/1984

Many references to it, including in this document:

http://www.lubicon.ca/Im/un051017.pdf
Have a question?

Get in touch!

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United Nations emblem
Charter of the United Nations
United Nations system organizational chart
Document symbols
Government information research guide
Links for key UN legal bodies located throughout the presentation