Introductory Thoughts About the Universal Protection of Human Rights

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ABSTRACT

The introductory article gives a short overview of the historical evolution of the international acceptance of human rights. Signing first treaties about freedom of religion, states progressively made commitments on minority protection, citizenship issues, humanitarian law, labour law and following the trauma of World War Two, they also accepted that each human possesses inalienable rights. From this perspective, one of the greatest achievements of the 20th century international law-making is the recognition of human rights as well as ensuring their appropriate procedural guarantees. The article highlights the main fruits of the universal standard setting, the different treaty based and charter-based monitoring bodies and their activities.

KEY WORDS

Human rights, United Nations, conventions, monitoring, national implementation

One of the greatest achievements of the 20th century international law-making is the recognition of human rights, i.e. the legal guarantees enjoyed by human beings, who are their titular possessors and not only their indirect beneficiaries through the implementation of rules obliging states.[1] The success of the notion of human rights – advocated first by philosophers as presented in detail in our book by Aleksander Stępkowski[2] – goes hand in hand with the development of international humanitarian law and the criminalisation of different methods and means of warfare. (See e.g. the ban of the 2nd Lateran Council on the use of crossbows between Christian armies (1139) and the *habeas corpus* in the Magna Charta (1215) or the similar rule of '*no arrest without judicial decision*' (concerning the nobles whether powerful or simple) in the Hungarian Golden Bull (1222).

Although historical international law embraced conventions and treaties offering a certain limited freedom of religion (like the '*Cujus regio, eius religio!*' principle in the Holy Roman Empire, Augsburg, 1555) or the capitulation treaties between the Ottoman Empire and some European powers about free Christian worship in Constantinople and in some merchant cities around, these engagements were imposed

1 For a detailed overview of the history and the present of international human rights see e.g.: Shelton, 2013; Sicilianos, 2024.

2 See in particular: Stępkowski, 2026, pp. 63–102.

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on states and could not be invoked by individuals before the local judiciary or public administration. The non-observation of these commitments was eventually sanctioned by war if the protecting state wanted to fight; however, the alleged violation was often used as a pretext for a planned and prepared armed intervention serving territorial ambitions.

On the other hand, the religious tolerance dispositions of some treaties could also serve the aim of what we nowadays call "minority protection", especially when a certain religion was attached predominantly to a certain ethnicity.[3] Peace treaties recognising a kind of self-government to such communities can be considered as an example of such an endeavour.

The prohibition of slavery and slave trade, which appeared first in bilateral (1817, 1818, 1827 etc.), then also in multilateral treaties (1841, 1885, 1890), where Great Britain was a contracting party, contributed to the recognition of the equal dignity of human beings. Although the peace treaties of the former central powers, as well as some treaties contracted with the League of Nations contained detailed material and procedural rules for the protection of religious, ethnic or linguistic minorities on international level, the emergence of the Nazi ideology in Germany shortly after World War I and the Stalinist policy in the Soviet-Union were manifestly running against the extension of the protecting function of international law and the appeasement policy as well as the non-intervention doctrine definitely contributed to the progressive buildup of the Hitlerian machinery of genocide.

On the other hand, as a kind of reaction to the success of the Bolshevik revolution and some similar but failed attempts in other countries, a rather comprehensive network of international conventions was elaborated during the "*interbellum*" within the International Labour Organization. These conventions protected people against forced labour, and they tried to save children, women from dangerous working conditions threatening their health and fertility. Under the auspices of the League of Nations, a certain sectorial type of treaty-making activity was launched e.g. for asylum seekers (1922, 1924, 1926, 1928, 1933) or in favour of the nationality of the married woman (1930), i.e. her consent was required in contrast with the former automatism to follow the husband's status.

It was after the victory of the Allies over the Axis and as a reaction to the shock caused by the tragedy of the Holocaust that governments expressed their readiness to pay enhanced attention to the recognition of human rights., as inherent rights of individuals and not only as a simple obligation imposed on states. Beside the material aspects (i.e. on the formulation of the content of these rights), this metamorphosis had an effect on the procedural aspects (i.e. the legal guarantees of their implementation) as well.

The importance of the respect of human rights is emphasised in the Charter of the United Nations at several points, mostly in connection with the functions of the

3 See in particular: Šmigová, 2026, pp. 31–62.

main organs, without, however, detailing their content, except for the principle of non-discrimination.

> '(....) to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women (...)'[4] '(...) to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion; (...)'[5],'promoting international co-operation in the economic, social, cultural, educational, and health fields, and assisting in the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion. (...)'[6], '(...) universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion. (....)'[7], '(...) promoting respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all (...)'[8], '(...) the promotion of human rights, (...)'[9], '(...) to encourage respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion, (...)'.[10]

The catalogue of human rights was adopted in 1948 by the General Assembly under the title the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. The preparatory and drafting work[11] under the leadership of Eleanore Roosevelt and René Cassin (presented in our book in depth by Irine Kurdadze and Eka Siradze[12] and also covered *per tangentem* by Tanja Karakamisheva-Jovanovska,[13] Grega Strban and Katarina Kogej[14] is of enormous importance not only because of the rather precise formulation of the rights but also because of the considerable delay with which the promised international treaty was finally elaborated. This had the unexpected but truly positive consequence that despite the *prima facie* non-binding character of the Declaration adopted originally as a resolution of the General Assembly, this instrument was progressively recognised not only by academics but also by several governments, the International Court of

4 UN Charter, Preamble.
5 Ibid., Art. 1 (3).
6 Ibid., Art. 13 (1)(b).
7 Ibid., Art. 55 (c).
8 Ibid., Art. 62 (2).
9 Ibid., Art. 68.
10 Ibid., Art. 76 (c).
11 For a short recapitulation of the main positions, see e.g.: Charlesworth, 1948, paras. 4–12.
12 See in particular: Kurdadze and Siradze, 2026, pp. 149–192.
13 See in particular: Karakamisheva-Jovanovska, 2026, pp. 221–260.
14 See in particular: Strban and Kogej, 2026, pp. 261–300.

Justice[15] and the International Criminal Court[16] as the *quasi* authentic interpretation of the Charter or as a norm already enjoying a customary law character.[17]

Adopted only in 1966, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights reflect on the one hand, the almost universal consent about the materialisation of the detailed content of the rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. On the other hand, it also shows the division of the states concerning their national implementation and the monitoring on an international level. The confrontation between the liberal perception of state sovereignty and its perception by the Soviet bloc (analysed by Irine Kurdadze and Eka Siradze[18]), which overemphasised its "eternity" and untouchability, resulted in the setting up of a monitoring system where the basic commitment is reduced to the regular submission of national reports, while tougher commitments (interstate claims or individual claims) are optional. (See the reasons in the book in the contributions by Tanja Karakamisheva-Jovanovska,[19] Grega Strban, Katarina Kogej,[20] Bartlomej Oreziak[21] and Katarína Šmigová[22]). It has to be emphasised, however, that their national constitutional background also prevented several western or liberal states from accepting the optional (or facultative) dispositions.

Many countries formerly belonging to the Soviet bloc were ready to accept the optional forms of monitoring when they succeeded to change their political regime in 1989/1990.[23]

15 'Wrongfully to deprive human beings of their freedom and to subject them to physical constraint in conditions of hardship is in itself manifestly incompatible with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as with the fundamental principles enunciated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. (...)'. United States Diplomatic and Consular Staff in Tehran (*United States of America v. Iran*), Judgment of 24 May 1980, ICJ Reports1980, para. 91, p. 42.

16 '185. The Chamber accepts that the right to reparations is a well-established and basic human right that is enshrined in universal and regional human rights treaties, 372 and in other international instruments (...) These international instruments, as well as certain significant human rights reports, have provided guidance to the Chamber in establishing the present principles.' (The footnote 372 above begins as follows: '372 See Article 8 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which contains provisions relating to the right of every individual to an "effective remedy" for acts violating fundamental rights; (...)'). *The Prosecutor v. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo*, Decision establishing the principles and procedures to be applied to reparations, ICC-01/04-01/06-2904 07-08-2012, para. 185, pp. 66.

17 Kurdadze and Siradze, 2026, op. cit.

18 Ibid., op. cit.

19 Karakamisheva-Jovanovska, 2026, op. cit.

20 Strban and Kogej, 2026, op. cit.

21 See in particular: Oreziak, 2026, pp. 499–552.

22 Šmigová, 2026, op. cit.

23 As of 2025, the individual complaints within the ICCPR accepted from the region by Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Ukraine.
The individual complaints within the CERD are accepted by Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Czechia, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine.

Although the separation of the civil and political rights from the economic, social and cultural rights can be well defended from the point of view of the corresponding obligations of states (i.e. a costless abstention from violation *versus* a budgetary and institutional intervention in favour of the realisation), this dichotomy is not an absolute truth. Free elections belong to the group of political rights but in a good number of cases, the national budget should cover at least a certain part of the costs in order to diminish the inherent disadvantage of smaller political parties. The realisation of a fair trial cannot go without legal education, new technics and smart devices or translation costs, assistance by a legal counsel, eventually to be granted in case of insolvency by the state. On the other hand, some aspects of the economic, social and cultural rights can be secured without budgetary implications. (e.g. non-discrimination in access to studies, equal pay for equal work, etc.)

Following the qualification of the two above types of rules as belonging to the first and to the second generation of human rights (see on this Tanja Karakamisheva-Jovanovska[24], Grega Strban and Katarina Kogej[25]), the dismantling of the colonial system and the birth of sovereign countries in the so called third world led to the introduction of the notion of the third generation of human rights, partly emphasising the right to peace, the right to development and the right to healthy environment, partly pointing out to the need of a certain intercommunity, interregional and global solidarity when achieving these rights, conceived as the precondition of the genuine promotion of human rights.[26]

Inspired by the Soviet approach advocating that the realisation of the economic, social and cultural rights is the precondition of the realisation of the civil and political rights, adepts of a branch of the academia in certain Muslim countries put that the realisation of both groups of rights should be granted within the limits that are still compatible with the Islamic religion. This approach is often in collision with the principle of securing equal rights without gender-based discrimination or with the right of privacy and freedom of belief and religion. The arguments developed therefore are generally similar to those of the late "*cultural relativism*" (see Aleksander Stępkowski's article)[27] and the question often emerges whether this is not only a fundamentalist minority of the given religion who would like to impose their own interpretation of religion-conform behaviour to the majority of believers.

It should be emphasised that while *restrictive* human rights protection proclaimed on a regional or on religious basis is hardly compatible with the universality of human rights, there is no legal, ethical or moral problem when a regional institutional approach gives more protection and is more efficacious than the universal one. Neither is it a problem, of course, when the regional approach only repeats the same commitments that have already been adopted on a universal level.

24 Karakamisheva-Jovanovska, 2026, op. cit.
25 Strban and Kogej, 2026, op. cit.
26 Šmigová, 2026, op. cit.
27 Stępkowski, 2026, op. cit.

In addition to the Universal Declaration and the Covenants, a wide network of sectoral human rights conventions were adopted under the auspices of the United Nations Organization. The main part of these sectoral conventions is linked to different aspects of the prohibition of discrimination[28] (see the chapter written by András Bethlendi,[29] Mario Vinković[30]) and torture[31] (analysed by Martin Faix and Petr Stejskal[32]) or the special protection of vulnerable people such as children[33] (covered by Márta Benyusz[34]), people with disabilities[35] (treated by Igor Milinković[36]), refugees and asylum seekers[37] (see Nóra Béres's contribution[38]), or migrant workers[39] (presented by Filip Bojić[40]).

Among the specialised agencies of the United Nations, the human rights protecting standard setting of the UNESCO and of the ILO is worth mentioning.

Under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, governments adopted a convention against discrimination in education[41]. The International Labour Organization also continued its law-making to protect workers by preparing conventions and monitoring their implementation e.g. in the field of health,[42] age,[43] equality as well as non-discrimination[44] and trade unions.[45]

Acquisition and loss of citizenship are closely related to human rights especially when intertwined with racial or sexual discriminatory aspects. The United Nations[46]

28 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979).
29 See in particular: Bethlendi, 2026, pp. 301–336.
30 See in particular: Vinković, 2026, pp. 337–366.
31 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment (1984).
32 See in particular: Faix and Stejskal, 2026, pp. 367–400.
33 Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).
34 See in particular: Benyusz, 2026, pp. 401–430.
35 International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).
36 See in particular: Milinković, 2026, pp. 465–498.
37 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951).
38 See in particular: Béres, 2026, pp. 193–220.
39 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990).
40 See in particular: Bojić, 2026, pp. 431–464.
41 Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960).
42 Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155), Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187).
43 Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).
44 Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111).
45 Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98).
46 Convention on Reduction of Cases of Multiple Nationality and Military Obligations in Cases of Multiple Nationality (1963), Convention on the Nationality of Married Women (1957), Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons (1954), Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness (1961).

followed the direction shown by the League of Nations[47] and although the acquisition is facilitated, the LoN and UN conventions still see dual nationality as an institution that is to be avoided in contrast with the current permissive European and South-American approaches,[48] which consider it as a phenomenon interlinked with migration, immigration and regard it as something that can be adequately regulated with due respect to the states' sovereignty.

The extension of the universal protection of human rights is going ahead with the penalisation of the most serious crimes committed against individuals, ethnics or communities[49] and with the limitation of means and methods of warfare and the extension of the protection of the victims of armed conflicts in international humanitarian law.

The monitoring of the commitments of the sectoral human rights conventions was drafted in an optional (or facultative) style; contracting parties, who should submit periodical reports about the implementation of the given convention, can also accept the option of the institution of inter-state complaint and individual complaint. This possibility is generally included either in the main text as a facultative disposition or in an optional protocol. The examination of the reports and complaints is entrusted to monitoring committees whose members should be chosen from among the candidates proposed by the contracting parties respecting professionalism, geographic and gender equilibrium. The committees, whose members should act in their individual capacity, issue analysing reports that do not generally have a legally binding character but contain statements about the compatibility of national rules and practice with the commitments of the given convention. The committees may also issue recommendations concerning the settlement of an interstate dispute or the material content of an individual complaint.

Similarities and differences within the functioning of the complaint system are examined in the articles written by Tanja Karakamisheva-Jovanovska,[50] Grega Strban and Katarina Kogej,[51] András Bethlendi,[52] Márta Benyusz,[53] Filip Bojić,[54] Igor Milinković.[55]

There are two interesting phenomena that should be given thought.

The first is what several monitoring committees ultimately realised, i.e. that several "*general comments*" (*conclusions générales)* can be drawn from the evaluations

47 Convention on Certain Questions Relating to the Conflict of Nationality Laws (1930).
48 European Convention on Nationality (1997) adopted under the auspices of the Council of Europe; Kovács, 2014, pp. 3–14; Kovács, 2018.
49 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948), International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid (1973), Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998).
50 Karakamisheva-Jovanovska, 2026, op. cit.
51 Strban and Kogej, 2026, op. cit.
52 Bethlendi, 2026, op. cit.
53 Benyusz, 2026, op. cit.
54 Bojić, 2026, op. cit.
55 Milinković, 2026, op. cit.

of the many state reports or even concerning the facultative commitments. These guidelines facilitate the coherent international interpretation and bring the genuine content of the convention closer to interested people, government officials, politicians, NGO-s and the academia. These "*general comments*" can be considered as the *quasi* authentic interpretation of the conventional rules – pending their attachment to the conventional text, the general cohesion of governmental opinions in the submitted reports as well as the *de facto* acceptance in the practice – and they may be useful for governmental experts and policy makers in the preparation of their future reports as well as in the harmonisation of the national legislation with the contracted obligations.[56] Although committees have no explicit competence to issue these "*general comments*", governments do not contest them and they are a huge benefit for the academia.

The second phenomenon is the progressive involvement of the International Court of Justice into the monitoring.

While sectoral human rights conventions do not attribute any monitoring role to the International Court of Justice, the recent jurisprudence of the ICJ gives the impression that the World Court does not exclude its own involvement if its jurisdiction can be established on the basis of a bilateral convention on friendship and cooperation containing a clause promising to refer their eventual bilateral dispute to the International Court of Justice (Article 36 (1)[57] of the Statute of the ICJ) or in the hypothesis of corresponding unilateral declarations recognising the jurisdiction of the Court as compulsory (Article 36 (2)[58] of the Statute of the ICJ).

So far, the International Court of Justice has dealt with these possibilities mostly only during the preliminary phases (preliminary objections) (see *Georgia v. Russia*,[59]

56 Alston, 2001, pp. 763–776; Takata and Hamamoto, 2023, paras. 57–66; The Purpose and Use of UN Treaty Body General Comments.

57 ICJ, Statute, Art. 36 (1) The jurisdiction of the Court comprises all cases which the parties refer to it and all matters specially provided for in the Charter of the United Nations or in treaties and conventions in force.

58 ICJ, Statute, Art. 36 (2) The states Parties to the present Statute may at any time declare that they recognise as compulsory ipso facto and without special agreement, in relation to any other state accepting the same obligation, the jurisdiction of the Court in all legal disputes concerning: the interpretation of a treaty; any question of international law; the existence of any fact which, if established, would constitute a breach of an international obligation; the nature or extent of the reparation to be made for the breach of an international obligation.

59 Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (*Georgia v. Russian Federation*) Judgement of 1 April 2011, ICJ Reports, 2011, para. 113, p. 120. 'The Court concludes that (...) the day on which Georgia submitted its Application, there was a dispute between Georgia and the Russian Federation about the latter's compliance with its obligations under CERD as invoked by Georgia in this case'.

Azerbaijan v. Armenia[60] *and Armenia v. Azerbaijan*,[61] *Canada and The Netherlands v. Syria*[62]) and it pronounced rarely *in merito* (see *Ukraine v. Russia* (2024)[63] and the advisory opinion about *Israel and the Palestinian Territory* (2024)[64]). It seems – and the academia largely attribute this tendency to the legacy of judge Augusto Cançado Trindade (recently passed away) – that the International Court of Justice should be taken into account when examining the status of the monitoring of the human rights conventions of the United Nations.

The different forms of the *charter based human rights* protection activity must also be taken into consideration beside the *treaty based human rights protection* of the United Nations as it is pointed out by István Lakatos.[65]

This roots back to the length of the preparation and ratification procedure of the two Covenants that finally entered into force only in 1976. In 1970, when seeing the growing number of communications about alarming human rights violations in a number of countries, it was decided to mandate the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights – belonging to the Commission on Human Rights – to review 'situations which reveal a consistent pattern of violations of human

60 Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (*Azerbaijan v. Armenia*), Order of 7 December 2021 and Judgement of 21 November 2024, ICJ Reports 2021, paras. 51–52, pp. 424–425 and ICJ Reports 2024, paras. 90–91.

61 Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (*Armenia v. Azerbaijan*), order of 7 December 2021 and Judgement of 21 November 2024, ICJ Reports 2021, paras. 58–59, p. 382 and ICJ Reports 2024. paras. 70, 72, 74.

62 'In light of the foregoing, the Court concludes that, *prima facie*, it has jurisdiction pursuant to art. 30, para. 1 of the Convention against Torture to entertain the case to the extent that the dispute between the Parties relates to the interpretation or application of the Convention.' Application of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (*Canada and the Netherlands v. Syrian Arab Republic*), Order of 16 November 2023, para. 47, p. 602.

63 Application of the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism and of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (*Ukraine v. Russian Federation*), Judgement of 31 January 2024, ICJ Reports, 2024, paras. 217, 221, 242, 391, 392, pp. 165–167, 173, 209. See in the operative part of the judgement: 'The Court (...) Finds that the Russian Federation, by the way in which it has implemented its educational system in Crimea after 2014 with regard to school education in the Ukrainian language, has violated its obligations under art. 2, para. 1 (a), and 5 (e) (v) of the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination; (...)' para. 404, p. 212.

64 '220. On the basis of the evidence before it, the Court considers that Israel's planning policy in relation to the issuance of building permits, and its practice of property demolition for lack of a building permit, constitutes differential treatment of Palestinians in the enjoyment of their right to be protected from arbitrary or unlawful interference with privacy, family and home, as guaranteed under art. 17, para. 1, of the ICCPR.' '229. The Court observes that Israel's legislation and measures impose and serve to maintain a near-complete separation in the West Bank and East Jerusalem between the settler and Palestinian communities. For this reason, the Court considers that Israel's legislation and measures constitute a breach of art. 3 of CERD.' Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, Advisory Opinion of 19 July 2024, ICJ Reports 2024, paras. 220, 229.

65 See in particular: Lakatos, 2026, pp. 103–148; see also: Kurdadze and Siradze, 2026, pp. 149–192.

rights' and to prepare recommendations to the Economic and Social Council. Based on the experiences acquired through these reports, the next step forward was made by the successive Secretary Generals when they appointed special rapporteurs on certain "situations" or certain countries where massive human rights violations were revealed in numerous verified and truthful communications.

In 2006, the system underwent reforms partly in response to the criticism regarding the composition of the Commission on Human Rights. Critics argued that the principle of the equitable geographic representation in an intergovernmental led to the inclusion of several governments with poor records on human rights. Another permanent criticism concerned the choice of the situations and the targeted countries. The reform abolished the Commission on Human Rights and its competences were transferred to the newly established Human Rights Council, where, in spite of the fact that it is an intergovernmental body, the 47 members should be individually devoted to the protection of human rights and during the election, the candidate's government's attachment to human rights should also be taken into consideration together with the equitable geographical representation.

In order to calm down critics pointing at a kind of political selectivity in the choice of situations, the reform introduced the Universal Periodic Review,[66] which relates to all UN Member States who should submit in every 4,5 years a general report about the status and the challenges of human rights in their respective countries to the Human Rights Council. The Human Rights Council is entitled to have hearings and to issue recommendations, which are rather well followed, i.e. in 76%.[67]

Despite the aims of the reform, powerful states still criticise the composition and the selection of "situations" when they feel bias and the never-ending character of ongoing procedures is also under fire. Currently, the United States of America does not participate in the Human Rights Council and its participation in the UNESCO is also under review.[68]

Last but not least, the importance of the activity of some other specialised institutions should be emphasised. Beside the already mentioned UNESCO and ILO, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) should be paid tribute for organising and financing human rights outreach and capacity-building programs in developing or civil war torn countries and for playing an essential role in setting up and financing disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes (DDR) for child soldiers. In the latter one, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) also plays an important role, i.e. in the planning and the supervision of the local partners.

The articles of the book contain manifold interesting analyses written by Central European academics with a special regard to Central and Eastern European cases

66 Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2024.
67 Ibid., p. 5.
68 White House, 2025.

brought before UN authorities.[69] They not only provide the opportunity of getting access to up to date information about the current tendencies and functioning of the human rights protection activity of the United Nations but they also bring the results of scholarly research in our region into limelight.

69 See in particular: Oreziak, 2026, pp. 499–552; Vinković, 2026, pp. 337–366; Karakamisheva-Jovanovska, 2026, pp. 221–260; Bethlendi, 2026, pp. 301–336; Faix and Stejskal, 2026, pp. 367–400; Kurdadze and Siradze, 2026, pp. 149–192; Milinković, 2026, pp. 465–498.

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