An Introduction to International Criminal Law and Procedure





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Robert Cryer, Hakan Friman Darryl Robinson, Elizabeth Wilmshurst

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An Introduction to INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE

International criminal law has developed considerably in the last decade and a half, resulting in a complex and re-invigorated discipline. This has impacted directly on the popularity of the study of the subject, particularly on postgraduate law degrees. This textbook serves these courses by providing an introduction to the principles of international criminal law and processes. Written by four international lawyers with experience of teaching international criminal law, it is accessible yet sophisticated in its approach. It covers substantive international criminal law applicable to domestic prosecutions of international criminal law. In addition to practitioners and researchers in the field, and in related fields such as criminal law, students of international law and international relations will find this introduction invaluable.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL LAW AND PROCEDURE

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Preface

With the start of the first prosecutions by the International Criminal Court and the closing phases of the work of the ad hoc Tribunals, this is a good time for a new book on international criminal law and its institutions. This book is intended as an accessible yet challenging explanation and appraisal of international criminal law and procedure for students, academics and practitioners. We focus on the crimes which are within the jurisdiction of international courts or tribunals – genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and aggression – and the means of prosecuting them. We also briefly discuss terrorist offences, torture, and other crimes which are not (yet) within the jurisdiction of an international court or tribunal.

International criminal law is now a vast subject, even on our circumscribed view of what it contains. This book is intended as a manageable and useful introduction to the field, and therefore does not attempt to delve into the entirety of the subject in the full detail it deserves. We welcome comments on possible improvements that could be made. We have sought to be succinct rather than simplistic in our presentation. We have included some references to academic commentary, both in the footnotes and in 'further reading' sections at the end of each chapter. However, there is a great deal of writing on international criminal law, and we could not refer to it all. We hope that this book piques the interest of those new to the subject to further investigations including into the considerable and insightful literature which the developments in international criminal law have engendered.

While we hope that this book will appeal to practitioners as well as to students, the chapters are intended to cover the subjects which can be dealt with during a university Masters course in international criminal law. Part A is introductory. Following a discussion in Chapter 1 of what we mean by international criminal law and of some of its most fundamental principles, we consider in Chapter 2 the objectives of this body of law: do they differ from those of national law, for example? Part B is concerned with prosecutions in national, rather than international, courts. Chapter 3 discusses the principles of jurisdiction as they relate to international crimes, Chapter 4 describes some instances of national prosecutions and Chapter 5 concerns extradition, transfer of information and other means by

which States cooperate to assist in bringing suspects to justice before national courts. Part C, which concerns international prosecutions, begins in Chapter 6 with a history of the trials following the Second World War and Chapters 7 and 8 respectively discuss the ad hoc Tribunals and the International Criminal Court. Chapter 9 describes in brief other courts with an international element which have been established to investigate and prosecute international crimes. Part D discusses the substantive law of international crimes. Chapters 10 to 13 cover genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and aggression; Chapter 14 introduces the subject of transnational crimes, and takes as examples terrorist offences and torture. Part E is concerned with the principles (in Chapters 15 and 16) and the procedures (in Chapters 17 and 18) used in international prosecutions. Part F considers various aspects of the relationship between the national and international systems: State cooperation with the international courts and tribunals (in Chapter 19) and immunities, in relation to both national and international jurisdictions (in Chapter 20). We end with our conclusions in Chapter 21, which contains our assessment of the development of international criminal law and its institutions and our forecast for the future.

The website which accompanies this book provides access to documents to which reference is most frequently made and material which may be useful in teaching. It also sets out questions which invite the reader to engage in further reflection and discussion of various issues in each of the chapters of the book.

The authors have all taught, to a greater or lesser extent, in international criminal law courses. Three of us took part in the negotiations on the International Criminal Court and participated at the Rome Conference. Some of the comments in this book rely directly on our experience in this capacity.

We have all had an input into each chapter. Each of us drafted a number of chapters, which were circulated and commented upon by the other three. Each chapter has been the object of intensive discussion amongst all of us to achieve as much coherence among our views as possible. We have attempted to produce a book which reads as a coherent whole, rather than as a collection of separate papers from different writers. Of course, with four authors, complete consensus on every matter of substance was neither possible nor expected and the views expressed in individual chapters are therefore those of the author of that chapter, and not necessarily of the group as a whole. The responsibility for Chapters 2, 3, 6, 7, 15 and 16 rests with Robert Cryer, for Chapters 4, 5, 9, 17, 18 and 19 with Håkan Friman, for Chapters 11, 12 and 20 with Darryl Robinson and for Chapters 8, 10, 13, and 14 with Elizabeth Wilmshurst. Chapters 1 and 21, which express the views of us all, were written by Rob and Elizabeth (Chapter 1) and by Rob (Chapter 21). Elizabeth has also had the responsibility of keeping us all together and seeking a consistent text.

We express particular thanks to Finola O'Sullivan and Sinead Moloney of Cambridge University Press; to Professor Claus Kress who gave his wise advice and substantial contributions to the conceptualization and development of this book and to Charles Garraway, for his contributions, including in particular to the section on command responsibility.

> Robert Cryer Håkan Friman Darryl Robinson Elizabeth Wilmshurst October 2006

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Table of Abbreviations

A. Ch.	Appeals Chamber
ACHPR	African Charter of Human and People's Rights
ACHR	American Convention on Human Rights
AJIL	American Journal of International Law
All ER	All England Reports
AP	Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions
AU	African Union
BFSP	British and Foreign State Papers
BYBIL	British Yearbook of International Law
CAT	Convention Against Torture
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CLF	Criminal Law Forum
CMR	Court Martial Reports
CPA	Coalition Provisional Authority
ECHR	European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and
	Fundamental Freedoms
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
EJIL	European Journal of International Law
EOC	Elements of Crime
ETS	European Treaty Series
EU	European Union
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
F. Supp.	Federal Supplement
GA	General Assembly
GC	Geneva Convention
Hague Recueil	Recueil des cours de l'Academie de droit international
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICLQ	International and Comparative Law Quarterly
ICLR	International Criminal Law Review

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	UNMIK	UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo
	UNTAES	United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern
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UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Administration In East Timor
UNTS	United Nations Treaty Series
WTO	World Trade Organization
YIHL	Yearbook of International Humanitarian Law
ZaöRV	Zeitschrift für ausländisches öffentliches Recht und Völkerrecht

Table of Abbreviations

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PART A

Introduction

1

Introduction: What is International Criminal Law?

1.1 International criminal law

International law typically governs the rights and responsibilities of States;¹ criminal law, conversely, is paradigmatically concerned with prohibitions addressed to individuals, violations of which are subject to penal sanction by a State.² The development of a body of international criminal law which imposes responsibilities directly on individuals and punishes violations through international mechanisms is relatively recent. It was not until the 1990s, with the establishment of the ad hoc Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda, that it could be said that an international criminal law regime had evolved. This is a relatively new body of law which is not yet uniform, nor are its courts universal.

International criminal law developed from various sources. War crimes originate from the 'laws and customs of war', which accord certain protections to individuals in conflict situations. Genocide and crimes against humanity evolved to protect persons from gross human rights abuses including those committed by their own governments. With the probable exception of the crime of aggression with its focus on inter-State conflict, the concern of international criminal law is now with individuals and with their protection from wide-scale atrocities. As was said by the Appeal Chamber in the *Tadić* case in the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY):

A State-sovereignty-oriented approach has been gradually supplanted by a human-beingoriented approach ... [I]nternational law, while of course duly safeguarding the legitimate interests of States, must gradually turn to the protection of human beings \dots^3

The meaning of the phrase 'international criminal law' depends on its use, but there is a plethora of definitions, not all of which are consistent. The most dedicated chronicler of uses of 'international criminal law', Georg Schwarzenberger,⁴ described six

¹ See, e.g. Robert Jennings and Arthur Watts (eds.), Oppenheim's International Law (9th edn, London, 1994) 5-7.

² Glanville Williams, 'The Definition of Crime' (1955) 8 Current Legal Problems 107.

³ Tadić ICTY A. Ch. 2.10.1995 para. 97.

⁴ Georg Schwarzenberger, 'The Problem of an International Criminal Law' (1950) 3 Current Legal Problems 263.

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different meanings that have been attributed to it, all of which related to international law, criminal law and their interrelationship, but none of which referred to any existing body of international law which directly created offences that could be committed by individuals; Schwarzenberger believed that no such law existed at the time. 'An international crime', he said in reference to the question of the status of aggression, 'presupposes the existence of an international criminal law. Such a branch of international law does not exist.'⁵

Cherif Bassiouni,⁶ on the other hand (and writing almost half a century later), listed 25 categories of international crimes, being crimes which affect a significant international interest or consist of egregious conduct offending commonly shared values, which involve more than the State because of differences of nationality of victims or perpetrators or the means employed, or which concern a lesser protected interest which cannot be defended without international criminalization. His categories include, as well as the more familiar ones, traffic in obscene materials, falsification and counterfeiting, damage to submarine cables, and unlawful interference with mail.

Different meanings of international criminal law have their own utility for their different purposes and there is no reason to decide upon one meaning as the 'right' one.⁷ Nevertheless, it is advisable from the outset to be clear about the sense in which the term is used in any particular situation. In this chapter we will attempt to elaborate the meaning which we give to the term for the purposes of this book and compare it with others.

1.1.1 Crimes within the jurisdiction of an international court or tribunal

The approach taken in this book is to use 'international crime' to refer to those offences over which international courts or tribunals have been given jurisdiction under general international law. They comprise the so-called 'core' crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and the crime of aggression (also known as the crime against peace). Our use thus does not include piracy, slavery, torture, terrorism, drug trafficking, and many crimes which States Parties to various treaties are under an obligation to criminalize in their domestic law. But because a number of the practical issues surrounding the repression of these crimes are similar to those relating to international crimes, they are discussed in this book, although only terrorist offences and torture will be discussed in any detail. Some of them (terrorist offences, drug trafficking and individual acts of torture) have been suggested as suitable for inclusion within the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC)⁸ and may therefore constitute international crimes within our meaning at some time in the future.

⁵ Georg Schwarzenberger, 'The Judgment of Nuremberg' (1947) 21 *Tulane Law Review* 329 at 349.

⁶ M. Cherif Bassiouni, 'The Sources and Content of International Criminal Law: A Theoretical Framework' in M. Cherif Bassiouni (ed.), *International Criminal Law* (2nd edn, New York, 1999), vol. I, 32, 33.

⁷ But omnibus uses of 'international criminal law' risk implying that there is a structural unity to what is being referred to, and thus treating very different things as having similarities. For an example, see Barbara Yarnold, 'Doctrinal Basis for the International Criminalisation Process' (1994) 4 *Temple International and Comparative Law Journal* 85.

⁸ See Final Act of the Rome Conference A/CONF.183/10, Res. E.

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Our approach does not differentiate the core crimes from others as a matter of principle, but only pragmatically, by reason of the fact that no other crimes are currently within the jurisdiction of international courts. However, it is clear that since these crimes have a basis in international law, they are also regarded by the international community as violating or threatening values protected by general international law.

'International criminal law', as used in this book, encompasses not only the law concerning genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and aggression, but also the principles and procedures governing the international investigation and prosecution of these crimes. As we shall see, in practice the greater part of the enforcement of international criminal law is undertaken by domestic authorities. The principle of complementarity, which is fundamental to the whole of international criminal law enforcement, shows that national courts both are, and are intended to be, an integral and essential part of the enforcement of international criminal law.⁹ In this book therefore we shall cover not only the international prosecution of international crimes, but also various international aspects of their domestic investigation and prosecution.

1.2 Other concepts of international criminal law

1.2.1 Transnational criminal law

Until the establishment of the international courts and tribunals in the 1990s, the concept of international criminal law tended to be used to refer to those parts of a State's domestic criminal law which deal with transnational crimes, that is, crimes with actual or potential transborder effects. This body of law is now more appropriately termed 'transnational criminal law'. A similar terminological distinction between 'international criminal law' (criminal aspects of international law) and 'transnational criminal law' (international aspects of national criminal law) can also be found in other languages, such as German ('*Völkerstrafrecht*' compared with '*Internationales Strafrecht*'), French ('*droit international pénal*' and '*droit pénal international*') and Spanish ('*derecho internacional penal*' and '*derecho penal internacional*').

Transnational criminal law includes the rules of national jurisdiction under which a State enacts and enforces its own criminal law where there is some transnational aspect of a crime. It also covers methods of cooperation among States to deal with domestic offences and offenders where there is a foreign element and the treaties which have been concluded to establish this inter-State cooperation. These treaties provide for mutual legal assistance between States in respect of crimes with a foreign element, and extradition of offenders by one State for prosecution in another State. Other treaties require States to criminalize certain conduct by creating offences in their domestic law

⁹ This is particularly the case with the ICC; see Arts. 17 and 18 of the ICC Statute. As to the situation generally, Judges Higgins, Kooijmans and Buergenthal have stated: 'the international consensus that the perpetrators of international crimes should not go unpunished is being advanced by a flexible strategy, in which newly established international criminal tribunals, treaty obligations and national courts all have their part to play.' *Case concerning the Arrest Warrant of 11 April 2000 (Democratic Republic of Congo v. Belgium)* 14.2.2002 Separate Opinion para. 51.

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and to bring offenders to justice if found on their territory, or to extradite them to States that will prosecute. While international law is thus the source of a part of this group of rules, the source of criminal prohibitions on individuals is national law.¹⁰

Until recently, there was not a clear distinction in the literature between international criminal law with its more restricted meaning and transnational law. Transnational law, with its focus on domestic criminal law and on methods of inter-State cooperation in the sphere of criminal law, remains the body of 'international criminal law' with which national legal practitioners are most familiar. Providing full coverage of this body of law would require a volume in its own right. Our discussion of it will address only issues of State jurisdiction, such obstacles to national prosecution as immunities, and State cooperation in national proceedings relating to international crimes; we deal with 'transnational crimes' only in so far as they raise cognate issues to international crimes.

1.2.2 International criminal law as a set of rules to protect the values of the international order

Another, and more substantive, approach to determining the scope of 'international criminal law' is to look at the values which are protected by international law's prohibitions.¹¹ Under this approach international crimes are considered to be those which are of concern to the international community as a whole (a description which is not of great precision), or acts which violate a fundamental interest protected by international law. Early examples include the suppression of the slave trade. The ICC Statute uses the term 'the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole' almost as a definition of the core crimes,¹² and recognizes that such crimes 'threaten the peace, security and well-being of the world'.¹³

It is of course true that those crimes which are regulated or created by international law are of concern to the international community; they are usually ones which threaten international interests or fundamental values.¹⁴ But there can be a risk in defining international criminal law in this manner, as it implies a coherence in the international criminalization process which may not exist. The behaviour which is directly or indirectly subject to international law is not easily reducible to abstract formulae. Even if it were, it is not clear that these formulae would be sufficiently determinate to provide a useful guide for the future development of law, although arguments from coherence with respect to the ambit of international criminal law can

¹³ ICC Statute, para. 3 of the Preamble.

¹⁰ See generally, Neil Boister, 'Transnational Criminal Law?' (2003) 14 EJIL 953 at 967–77.

¹¹ For discussion in relation to the core crimes, see Bruce Broomhall, International Justice and the International Criminal Court: Between State Sovereignty and the Rule of Law (Oxford, 2003) 44–51.

¹² Arts. 1 and 5(1). The International Law Commission framed its investigation into international criminal law in the broad sense as being one into the 'Crimes against the Peace and Security of Mankind': Draft Code of Crimes Against the Peace and Security of Mankind, in Report of The International Law Commission on the Work of its Forty-Eighth Session, UN Doc. A/51/10. See also Lyal Sunga, *The Emerging System of International Criminal Law* (The Hague, 1997).

¹⁴ Bassiouni, 'The Sources and Content of International Criminal Law', 98.

have an impact on the development of the law (as has occurred in relation to the law of war crimes in non-international armed conflict).¹⁵

1.2.3 Involvement of a State

Another approach to defining 'international crimes' relies upon State involvement in their commission.¹⁶ There is some sense in this. For example, aggression is necessarily a crime of the State, committed by high-level State agents. War crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity often, perhaps typically, have some element of State agency. But the subject matter of international criminal law, as we use it, deals with the liability of individuals, irrespective of whether or not they are agents of a State. In the definition of the crimes which we take as being constitutive of substantive international criminal law, the status of the perpetrator is irrelevant, with the exception of the crime of aggression.¹⁷

1.2.4 Crimes created by international law

An international crime may also be defined as an offence which is created by international law itself, without requiring the intervention of domestic law. In the case of such crimes, international law imposes criminal responsibility directly on individuals. The classic statement of this form of international criminal law comes from the Nuremberg International Military Tribunal's seminal statement that

crimes against international law are committed by men, not abstract entities, and only by punishing individuals who commit such crimes can the provisions of international law be enforced ... individuals have international duties which transcend the national obligations of obedience imposed by the individual state.¹⁸

The definition of an international crime as one created by international law is now in frequent use.¹⁹ But this criterion may lead to fruitless debate as to what is and what is not 'created' by international law.²⁰ The more pragmatic meaning used in this book, which we do not claim is authoritative, excludes from detailed discussion certain

¹⁵ On such developments, see chapter 12.

¹⁶ See, e.g. M. Cherif Bassiouni, *Crimes Against Humanity In International Criminal Law* (2nd edn, The Hague, 1999) 243–6, 256.

¹⁷ The reference in Art. 8(2)(b)(viii), ICC Statute, to the transfer of population 'by the Occupying Power' would also seem to require that the perpetrator is a State agent.

¹⁸ Nuremberg IMT: Judgment and Sentences (1947) 41 *AJIL* 172 at 221.

¹⁹ Broomhall, International Justice and the International Criminal Court, 9–10; Robert Cryer, Prosecuting International Crimes: Selectivity in the International Criminal Law Regime (Cambridge, 2005) 1; Hans-Heinrich Jescheck, Die Verantwortlichkeit der Staatsorgane nach Völkerstrafrecht (Bonn, 1951) 9; Otto Triffterer, Dogmatische Untersuchungen zur Entwicklung des materiellen Völkerstrafrechts seit Nürnberg (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1966) 34; Gerhard Werle, Principles of International Criminal Law (The Hague, 2005) 25.

²⁰ A slightly different criterion of an international offence, one with a 'definition as a punishable offence in international (and usually conventional) law' leads to the inclusion of a much wider category of crimes, including hijacking, injury to submarine cables and drugs offences (Yoram Dinstein, 'International Criminal Law' (1975) 5 *Israel Yearbook on Human Rights* 55 at 67).

conduct which has been suggested to be subject to direct liability in international criminal law but which others dispute, such as piracy and slavery,²¹ a general offence of terrorism,²² and individual acts of torture.²³

Occasionally the *sui generis* penal system of the international criminal tribunals and courts is described as 'supranational criminal law' in process of development.²⁴ This term is somewhat misleading since it is normally reserved for law imposed by supranational institutions and not treaty-based or customary international law;²⁵ the ICTY, International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) and ICC are not supranational in nature, neither as institutions nor as regards the laws they enforce.

1.3 Sources of international criminal law

As international criminal law is a subset of international law, its sources are those of international law. These are usually considered to be those enumerated in Article 38(1) (a)–(d) of the Statute of the International Court of Justice, in other words, treaty law, customary law, general principles of law and, as a subsidiary means of determining the law, judicial decisions and the writings of the most qualified publicists. As will be seen, all of these have been used by the ad hoc Tribunals. They are available for use by national courts in so far as the national system concerned will allow. The ICC Statute contains its own set of sources for the ICC to apply, which are analogous, although by no means identical, to those in the ICJ Statute.²⁶

1.3.1 Treaties

Treaty-based sources of international criminal law, either directly or as an aid to interpretation, include the 1907 Hague Regulations, the 1949 Geneva Conventions (and their additional protocols) and the Genocide Convention. They form the basis for many of the crimes within the jurisdiction of the ad hoc Tribunals and the ICC. The Statute of the ICC, which sets out the definitions of crimes within the jurisdiction of the ICC, is, of course, itself a treaty. Security Council resolutions 827(2003) and 955(2004), which set up the ICTY and ICTR respectively, were adopted by the Security Council pursuant to its powers under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, and thus find their binding force in Article 25 of the Charter. Their source is therefore a treaty. The Statutes of the Tribunals have had an important effect on the substance of international criminal law both directly, as applied by the Tribunals, and indirectly as

²¹ See, e.g. Broomhall, International Justice and the International Criminal Court, 23–4.

²² See, e.g. Antonio Cassese, *International Criminal Law* (Oxford, 2003) 128–30. ²³ *Ibid.*, 117–20.

²⁴ E.g. Roelof Haverman, Olga Kavran and Julian Nicholls (eds.), *Supranational Criminal Law: A System Sui Generis* (Antwerp, 2003).

²⁵ See, e.g. Werle, *Principles of International Criminal Law*, 38–9, and Bassiouni, 'The Sources and Content of International Criminal Law', 4–5.

²⁶ Art. 21 of the ICC Statute.