

Central Asia and International Law

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The Central Asian States (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan), as well as the region as such, are increasingly gaining in significance as international players. During the Soviet period, they were only nominally sovereign States but since 1991, they became full-fledged members of the international community, and have, ever since, been constructing their respective schools of international law. Some Central Asian international lawyers became prominent academics of an international standing but still more has to be done, given the challenges the region is currently facing.

Unresolved border disputes, regional migration, drug trafficking, human trafficking, disputes over water, the rise of terrorism are just a few challenges, which require Central Asian States' cooperation among themselves, and with other States. The competing interests of especially China, Russia, the United States, and the European Union in the region are adding to the complex mosaic of regional dynamics.

Central Asian States have to learn applying international law as a tool to advance their own lawful interests, and to maintain international and regional peace and security. Kazakhstan's current membership in the UN Security Council (2017 - 2018) is an excellent occasion to promote respect for international at the regional level. Unfortunately, international law is still largely unknown among the general public, and even among some law professionals, or is regarded as "institutionalised politics", and this paradigm must shift towards a more constructive, realistic and practical understanding of the phenomenology of international law.

For this, a new generation of international lawyers - open-minded, passionate about international law and the future of their societies, and skilled linguistically - should be brought up in Central Asia. Their vision of international law would be based upon Asian values, and would correlate with universal humanitarian values, for the sake of a better and safer world.

The proposed paper will deal with current challenges to teaching international law in Central Asia, including curricular issues, independence of higher education institutions, language issues, influence of various foreign schools of international law doctrine, etc., and explore ways to integrate the Central Asian schools of international law in a broader Asian and international picture.

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