The Project on International Courts and Tribunals
The International Judiciary in Context

**International Judicial Bodies**

### Human Rights Bodies

### International Criminal Law
- (*EXISTING*) European Court of Human Rights (1959–1998)
- (*EXISTING*) Inter-American Court of Human Rights (1975–1998)

### Regional Economic Integration Agreements
- Europe
  - (*EXISTING*) European Court of Justice (1952–
  - (*EXISTING*) European Court of Justice of the Communities of Independent States (1993–

### Law of the Sea
- (*EXISTING*) International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (1996–)

### Environment
- (*EXISTING*) International Court for the Environment

### Quasi-Judicial, Implementation Control and other Dispute Settlement Bodies

### Human Rights Bases
- (*EXISTING*) O. Committee of Experts on the Application of Certain Recommendations (1926–)
- (*EXISTING*) Conference Committee on the Application of Certain Recommendations (1932–)
- (*EXISTING*) Governing Body Committee on Freedom of Association (1948–)
- (*EXISTING*) Committee of Independent Experts under the European Social Charter (1965–)
- (*EXISTING*) International Commission on Racial Discrimination (1959–)
- (*EXISTING*) International Civil and Political Rights Committee (1976–)
- (*EXISTING*) Committee on Human Rights (1979–)
- (*EXISTING*) Committee of Experts to carry out the work of all forms of Discrimination against Women (1970–)
- (*EXISTING*) Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1967–)
- (*EXISTING*) Committee on Against Torture (1987–)
- (*EXISTING*) African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (1987–)
- (*EXISTING*) European Committee for the Protection of Turtles or Degradation of their Habitats or Substances or Wastes (1979–)
- (*EXISTING*) European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (1995–)
- (*EXISTING*) Human Rights Commission for Bosnia Herzegovina (1995–)

### International Administrative Tribunals
- (*EXISTING*) International Labour Organization Administrative Tribunal (1946–)
- (*EXISTING*) United Nations Administrative Tribunal (1949–)
- (*EXISTING*) Appeal Board of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (1956–)
- (*EXISTING*) Appeal Board of the Western European Union (1956–)
- (*EXISTING*) Appeal Board of Europe Against Racism and Xenophobia (1965–)
- (*EXISTING*) Appeals Board of NATO (1965–)
- (*EXISTING*) Appeal Board of the Inter-American Administrative Authority (1975–)
- (*EXISTING*) Administrative Tribunal of the Organization of American States (1966–)
- (*EXISTING*) World Bank Administrative Tribunal (1980–)

### Inspection Panels
- (*EXISTING*) World Bank Inspection Panel (1994–)
- (*EXISTING*) Inter-American Development Bank Independent Investigation Mechanism (1995–)
- (*EXISTING*) International Monetary Fund Administrative Tribunal (1994–)
- (*EXISTING*) Appeal Board of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (1965–)
- (*EXISTING*) Appeals Board of the European Space Agency (1975–)

### International Claims and Compensation Bodies - Multilateral / Bilateral
- (*EXISTING*) German Forced Labour Compensation Programme (2000–)
- (*EXISTING*) Eritrean-Ethiopian Claims Commission (2000–)

### Non-Compliance / Implementation Monitoring Bodies
- (*EXISTING*) Implementation Committee under the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1990–)
- (*EXISTING*) Implementation Committee on Flag State Implementation (1987–)
- (*EXISTING*) North Korean Commission on the Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula (1991–)

### Regional Commission and International Administrative Tribunals
- (*EXISTING*) Permanent Court of Arbitration (2000–)
- (*EXISTING*) International Joint Commission (2000–)
- (*EXISTING*) Organization of American States (1954–)
- (*EXISTING*) World Court of Human Rights (1975–)
- (*EXISTING*) UN International Dispute Settlement Understanding (1995–)
- (*EXISTING*) Implementation of the UN International Dispute Settlement Understanding (1995–)

### Permanent Arbitral Tribunals / Conciliation Commissions
- (*EXISTING*) World Court of Justice (1945–1998)
- (*EXISTING*) World Court of the Commonwealth of Independent States (1993–
- (*EXISTING*) Permanent Arbitral Tribunal / Conciliation Commission (1952–)
- (*EXISTING*) Court of First Instance of the European Communities (1988–)
- (*EXISTING*) European Energy Tribunal (1984–)
- (*EXISTING*) European Energy Tribunal (1984–)
- (*EXISTING*) European Dispute Settlement Understanding (1995–)

### Internationalized Criminal Courts and Tribunals
- (*EXISTING*) Court of Justice of the European Communities (1952–)
- (*EXISTING*) African Commission for the Settlement of Disputes (1981–)
- (*EXISTING*) Permanent Arbitral Tribunal of the Central African Common Market (1963–)
- (*EXISTING*) Court of Justice of the Arab Community (1984–)
- (*EXISTING*) Permanent Arbitral Tribunal of the Arab Community (1930–)
- (*EXISTING*) Arab Court of Justice
- (*EXISTING*) American Court of Justice
- (*EXISTING*) Latin American Court
- (*EXISTING*) Caribbean Court of Justice
- (*EXISTING*) Caribbean Court of Justice
- (*EXISTING*) OAS Court of Justice
- (*EXISTING*) OAS Court of Justice
- (*EXISTING*) International Criminal Court for Latin America
- (*EXISTING*) International Criminal Court

### EXISTING
- The date in parenthesis indicates the year in which the body started operating. The date is not the year in which the agreement establishing the body was signed, nor necessarily the year the agreement’s entry into force.
- The date in parenthesis indicates the year in which the body was in operation.
- Proposed bodies, whose activities have been considered in the past by academics and lawyers, but which have not yet become realities.

### PROPOSED
- The list is not exhaustive, but only illustrative. There are more than 80 mixed arbitral tribunals and claims commissions that were created in the aftermath of World Wars I and II. Some of them were created in the wake of armed conflicts and revolutions. Most of them were created in the aftermath of World Wars I and II.
- Log on to our website for news about international courts and tribunals (judgments, press releases, articles, and more).
- This chart can also be downloaded from the PICT site.

### EXTING
- The material herein may be reproduced without seeking permission provided that it is accurately reproduced, is not used for commercial purposes, includes an acknowledgement of the author, and the Project on International Courts and Tribunals.

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**NY**
The International Judiciary in Context:
A Synoptic Chart

The purpose of this chart is to provide international legal scholars and practitioners with a compendium of all international judicial bodies. Yet, this apparently straightforward task is riddled with traps and dilemmas. Perhaps the greatest challenge is to portray what can be called oxymoronically “an anarchic system” without exaggerating its level of order. The grouping and sub-grouping of all these bodies and mechanisms into a taxonomy does not imply the existence of an “international judicial system”, if by system it is meant “a regularly interacting or interdependent group of items forming a unified whole” or “a functionally related group of elements” (Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th ed.). Whether they ought to exist as a system is open to debate.

The second challenge is that in order to capture the dynamism and fluidity of the international judicial domain, any chart of the international judiciary needs to have a temporal dimension. Thus, alongside existing institutions, such as the International Court of Justice, the chart portrays bodies that have been closed down (labeled “extinct”), such as the Permanent Court of International Justice. There are also bodies provided for in treaties that never entered into force (abreasted), such as the International Prize Court; idle ones like the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe’s European Nuclear Energy Tribunal (dormant); and nascent bodies, like the International Criminal Court. Moreover, the synoptic chart also includes bodies that have been debated and remain confined to the realm of ideas, such as a possible International Court for the Environment (proposed). In sum, the chart depicts the past, present and potential make-up of the international judiciary.

The main focus of the chart is on international judicial bodies. On the top portion of the chart, there are 43 different institutions (of which only 16 are currently functioning) grouped by subject-matter jurisdiction in seven clusters. The main criteria, which set them apart from all other entities listed in the bottom part of the chart, are:

- a) are permanent institutions;
- b) are composed of independent judges;
- c) adjudicate disputes between two or more entities, at least one of which is either a State or an International Organization;
- d) work on the basis of predetermined rules of procedure; and
- e) render decisions that are binding.

Altogether, these entities form the so-called “international judiciary”. However, in order to fully understand the reasons for the rapid quantitative increase in the number of international judicial bodies, the extensive transformation of their competencies, and the success of certain subject-matter jurisdictions over others, it is necessary to include also those bodies and mechanisms which, while not meeting several or all of the above mentioned standards, also play a role in the enforcement, interpretation and implementation of international law. When these international judicial bodies are placed in a much larger historical and analytical context, 82 other entities and mechanisms, referred to as “Quasi-Judicial, Implementation Control and other Dispute Settlement Bodies”, and gathered in seven autonomous clusters, need to be accounted for (excluding extinct International Claims and Compensation Bodies).

The institutions and mechanisms listed in this chart have very few legal or functional links among one another; either within or across each major grouping or cluster. Admittedly, until 1995 the International Court of Justice could review judgments of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal, but the link was then severed by the UN General Assembly. Certain institutions listed in the group “human rights bodies” (e.g., the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights) act as a mandatory filter for certain international courts and tribunals (in this case the Inter-American Court of Human Rights). Again, there are several cases of potentially competing “jurisdictions”, both among bodies within the same group (e.g., the International Court of Justice and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea) and bodies in different groups (e.g., the non-compliance procedures, the International Court of Justice or the World Trade Organization Dispute Settlement Body, to cite but a few). However, beyond such links, each institution is formally unrelated to any other.

Nonetheless, in their staggering diversity these 125 international bodies and mechanisms have certain commonalities that justify their presence on the same layout. First, all of these entities make legal determinations, and this sets them apart from other bodies, such as the UN General Assembly or the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, which share the same aspiration towards a “just world” but are of a quintessentially political nature. To be precise, these 125 bodies determine whether certain acts are congruous with certain norms. And this leads to a second commonality, which is the fact that in order to make their determinations they all resort to the same body of law: international law. Third, all of these international bodies have been established directly or indirectly (i.e., through a decision taken by a body established by treaty) by international agreements. It follows that they are subject to a legal order that is different from that of national systems, but, at the same time, that they are subject to (and materially dependent on) State support. Finally, and perhaps more importantly, collectively they are the expression of a widely shared need to abandon a world where only States count and the mighty rule, in favor of an order where certain fundamental common values are shared, protected and enforced by all members of a wide society, composed of States, International Organizations and individuals in all their legal incarnations (NGOs, peoples, corporations, natural persons, etc.).

Like any chart, this one is most likely incomplete. It is the result of an ongoing research effort carried out within in PICT, and should be considered at best a partial representation of what exists, or has existed. Certain groupings have a more illustrative function, for the enormous number of bodies that have been created in the past could not properly fit in the scheme. Other entries might change status in the near future, and new institutions and mechanisms might be created. Therefore, this chart will be updated regularly. To this end, any comments and suggestions will be greatly appreciated and can be sent to <cr28@acf2.nyu.edu>.

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Note to Version 2.0
This is an updated version of the Synoptic Chart that was prepared in 1998 as a supplement to the special issue of the NYU Journal of International Law and Politics, Vol. 31, 4. That version listed 41 bodies in the top group and 55 in the bottom one. Some of the additions are new bodies that have been created or proposed since 1998, while others are simply past omissions that have been kindly pointed out by readers.

New features of this chart include a special category for “dormant bodies” and a new sub-grouping in the bottom part called “Internationalized Criminal Courts and Tribunals” (i.e., domestic criminal tribunals with international supervision created in the aftermath of regional and domestic armed conflicts, such as those for Sierra Leone, Kosovo, East Timor, and Cambodia). These are the latest additions to the multitude of bodies populating the international legal scene.