

Guide to Researching International Human Rights Law

Online Sources and Databases

January 2021 Update



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Introductory Note

This guide is intended to identify, and guide researchers in using, online repositories of information and documents necessary for understanding international human rights law, including jurisprudence and soft law. It is focused on the core human rights instruments and bodies of the regional and United Nations human rights systems, and the interpretations that they produce. For more information about the human rights courts and monitoring bodies themselves, see the International Justice Resource Center (IJRC) Online Resource Hub (<https://ijrcenter.org/courts-monitoring-bodies/>).

There is no centralized database of international human rights law. However, identifying what the treaty texts and human rights bodies say about a particular human right or legal concept is essential to understanding the substance of international human rights law and, therefore, vital for holding governments to their legal obligations and for developing effective advocacy strategies. As such, researching international human rights law requires creativity and, oftentimes, using more than one database. Furthermore, because the universities and organizations that maintain the key databases have limited resources and do not charge a fee to users, each website or resource tends to have its own limitations or gaps. Particularly useful databases are highlighted below in **green**.

For your future reference, the IJRC website contains a list of research aids that we periodically update (<http://www.ijrcenter.org/research-aids/>), as well as a series of thematic research guides (<http://www.ijrcenter.org/thematic-research-guides/>). To facilitate initial research and capture documents that are not included in existing searchable databases, IJRC has created a custom Google search form (“Human Rights Document Search”), which searches across the websites of the various bodies and databases included in this guide, and can be accessed here: <https://ijrcenter.org/human-rights-document-search/>.

Please do not hesitate to contact IJRC with any questions related to researching or using international human rights protections: ijrc@ijrcenter.org.

Treaty Texts & Ratifications

For an overview of a country's human rights obligations and engagement with supranational oversight bodies, see IJRC's Country Factsheet series: <http://www.ijrcenter.org/country-factsheets/>.

GLOBAL

There are numerous ways to locate the text, status, ratification information, and RUDs (reservations, understandings, and declarations) for human rights treaties and other multilateral instruments. Which site or database you use will depend on what type of information you are looking for and how much you already know about the relevant treaty.

UN Treaty Collection, Human Rights Chapter

- URL: <https://treaties.un.org/pages/Treaties.aspx?id=4&subid=A&lang=en>
- Content: Most up-to-date information on State ratifications of UN human rights treaties, with text of reservations, understandings, and declarations (RUDs), as well as information on adoption and entry into force.
- Scope: United Nations human rights treaties
- Note: By clicking on a treaty name and then on the "Full Details" link, you can access various language versions of the treaty text in PDF.

OHCHR Core Instruments Webpage

- URL: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CoreInstruments.aspx>
- Content: the core United Nations human rights instruments, including optional protocols, with links to treaty bodies.
- Scope: UN human rights treaties
- Note: This site is best for quick access to the treaty texts.

UN Treaty Body Database: Ratification Status by Country or by Treaty

- URL: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx
- Content: Quick reference list of the ratifications for core human rights treaties, as well as acceptance of complaint processes and inquiry procedures, available by country or by treaty.
- Scope: United Nations human rights treaties
- Note: Click on the Excel or Word icon to download the information listed.

OHCHR Status of Ratification Interactive Dashboard

- URL: <http://indicators.ohchr.org/>
- Content: information on States' ratification of the core UN human rights instruments, organized by State or by instrument, along with visual representations.
- Scope: UN human rights treaties
- Note: Click on the "Underlying Data" link for a spreadsheet with ratification specifics, including whether each State has also accepted the relevant complaints mechanism.

<https://ijrcenter.org/guide-to-researching-international-human-rights-law/>

UN Treaty Collection, United Nations Treaty Online Series

- URL: https://treaties.un.org/Pages/Content.aspx?path=DB/UNTS/pageIntro_en.xml
- Content: Multilateral treaties, including human rights agreements, deposited with the UN Secretary General.
- Scope: various multilateral treaties
- Note: Search by title, participant (State), or text. Use the “Advanced Search” tab to filter results by date of entry into force or other criteria.

University of Minnesota Human Rights Library

- URL: <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instree/ainstls1.htm>
- Content: List of regional and universal human rights treaties, soft law principles, and select other documents, organized by theme.
- Scope: Regional and universal human rights instruments
- Note: This list does not include instruments or other documents adopted after 2016 and is not comprehensive. The information and links on entry into force and on ratification are mostly out of date, unless they link directly to the UN Treaty Collection or another external, official source.

Additionally, you can access each of the UN human rights treaty bodies and its respective instruments and rules from the following OHCHR webpage:

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/HumanRightsBodies.aspx>.

REGIONAL

Intergovernmental organizations’ websites tend to be the best source for the text and ratification status of regional human rights treaties. Additionally, the webpages of the regional human rights bodies contain their own treaties, soft law, statutes, and rules of procedure; note, though, that the information about treaty ratification on these sites is not always as up-to-date as the information on the intergovernmental organizations’ sites.

Africa

- African Union, OAU/AU Treaties, Conventions, Protocols & Charters, <https://au.int/en/treaties> (**Note** that the information on this website is the most up-to-date.)
- African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights: <https://www.african-court.org/wpafc/documents/>
- African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights: <https://www.achpr.org/resources>

Americas

- Organization of American States, Multilateral Treaties, Human Rights: http://www.oas.org/dil/treaties_subject.htm#General
- Inter-American Commission on Human Rights: http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/mandate/basic_documents.asp
- Inter-American Court of Human Rights: <http://corteidh.or.cr/index.php/en/about-us/instrumentos>

<https://ijrcenter.org/guide-to-researching-international-human-rights-law/>

Europe

- Council of Europe, Treaty Office: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/>
- European Union, EUR-Lex, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/collection/eu-law/treaties/treaties-other.html>
- European Committee of Social Rights: http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/ECSR/ECSRdefault_en.asp
- European Court of Human Rights: <http://www.echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=home> (Official Texts tab)

Middle East and North Africa

- League of Arab States, Legal Affairs Sector: http://www.lasportal.org/ar/legalnetwork/Pages/agreements_treaties.aspx
- Arab Human Rights Committee: <http://www.lasportal.org/ar/sectors/dep/HumanRightsDep/Pages/Mechanisms.aspx#tab1> and <http://www.lasportal.org/ar/sectors/dep/HumanRightsDep/Pages/Committee.aspx>

Southeast Asia

- ASEAN: <http://agreement.asean.org/>
- ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights: <http://aichr.org/documents/>

Resolutions & Declarations

Use the sites below to access the resolutions and other decisions emitted by the political organs of intergovernmental organizations.

OHCHR Charter Body Database

- URL: <http://ap.ohchr.org/Documents/gmainec.aspx>
- Content: Resolutions emitted by the United Nations political organs, including the General Assembly, Security Council, and Human Rights Council.
- Scope: United Nations documents
- Note: To access a UN document to which you do not have a link, when you know the UN document number, type in: www.undocs.org/ followed by the document number (e.g., www.undocs.org/A/HRC/27/L.1).

RightDocs

- URL: <https://www.right-docs.org/>
- Content: Resolutions emitted by the United Nations Human Rights Council, and reports to the Human Rights Council by special procedures, committees, and other mechanisms.
- Scope: United Nations Human Rights Council

Regional Intergovernmental Organizations

- African Union: <http://www.au.int/en/decisions/assembly> and <http://www.au.int/en/decisions/council>
- Council of Europe: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cm/adopted-texts> and <http://semantic-pace.net/default.aspx?search=Y2F0ZWdvcnlf3RyX2VuOjJBZG9wdGVkIHRIeHQi>
- European Union, Council of the EU: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/conclusions-resolutions/>
- Organization of American States: http://www.oas.org/dil/declarations_and_resolutions.htm

Judgments & Decisions

To search the judgments and decisions on individual complaints from *all* the regional and universal human rights bodies, you will need to use at least four different databases (specifically, WorldCourts, the HUDOC databases for the European Court of Human Rights and European Committee of Social Rights, and the UN Treaty Body Search). Additionally, once you have found decisions of interest, you should check the individual websites of the bodies that have emitted them to make sure that there are not more recent cases that cite or modify their holdings.

You may want to start your jurisprudence search by referring to a compilation or guide, such as those produced by the European Court of Human Rights or Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; IJRC also produces thematic research guides on various topics, which are available on our website: <http://www.ijrcenter.org/thematic-research-guides/>.

To facilitate initial research and capture documents that are not included in existing searchable databases, IJRC has created a custom Google search form (“Human Rights Document Search”), which searches across the websites of the various bodies and databases included in this guide, and can be accessed here: <https://ijrcenter.org/human-rights-document-search/>.

GLOBAL

IJRC Custom Google Search Form

- URL: <https://ijrcenter.org/human-rights-document-search/>
- Content: Searchable database of judgments, decisions, interim measures, advisory opinions, and other orders from most regional human rights bodies (except the European), some UN treaty bodies, many international criminal tribunals, and some sub-regional courts.
- Scope: Supranational courts and quasi-judicial bodies, plus the databases in this guide
- Note: This tool returns a wide range of content, including documents submitted by NGOs and made publicly available online by human rights bodies. Results can be sorted by human rights system, and by date or relevance.

WorldCourts.com

- URL: <http://www.worldcourts.com>
- Content: Searchable database of judgments, decisions, interim measures, advisory opinions, and other orders from most regional human rights bodies (except the European), some UN treaty bodies, many international criminal tribunals, and some sub-regional courts.
- Scope: Supranational courts and quasi-judicial bodies
- Note: This is the most comprehensive human rights case law database, although it is not entirely up-to-date. Check the index page for each body to see a reverse chronological list of all documents for that body (e.g., <http://www.worldcourts.com/ecowascci/eng/index.htm>).

WorldLII and subsidiary databases

- URL: <http://www.worldlii.org/>
- Content: Searchable database of case law from sub-regional courts, many human rights courts and commissions, international criminal tribunals, some UN treaty bodies, and other international adjudicatory bodies. This database does not include the European Committee of Social Rights or African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, but does include select judgments of the European Court of Human Rights.
- Scope: Supranational courts and quasi-judicial bodies
- Note: This database is several years out of date for some bodies. Click on each body's name (<http://www.worldlii.org/int/cases/>) to see a list of its decisions and the year in which each section was last updated. View the list of more localized databases, which may contain additional content, or be more easily searchable:
http://www.worldlii.org/worldlii/sponsors/#supporting_liis.

UN BODIES

While there are a number of databases that contain UN human rights mechanisms decisions on complaints, none is comprehensive or entirely up-to-date.

UN Treaty Bodies

- URL: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/TreatyBodies.aspx>
- Content: Links to each treaty body's webpage, where the most recent decisions (which may not yet be in any other database) can be accessed by clicking on the "Sessions" link on the right side of the page and then opening the link for the most recently concluded session.
- Scope: UN treaty bodies
- Note: Scroll to the bottom of the session page for the list of complaints ("communications") decided during the session.

UN Treaty Body Search

- URL: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en
- Content: Views (and other documents) of the UN treaty bodies concerning individual complaints. Contains decisions from all eight bodies that currently accept complaints. Results can be filtered by certain criteria, but are not text searchable.
- Scope: UN treaty bodies
- Note: Select "Jurisprudence" in the "Filter by Document Type" section to see only decisions on individual complaints.

OHCHR Jurisprudence Database

- URL: <https://juris.ohchr.org/>
- Content: Searchable database of decisions of the Human Rights Committee, Committee Against Torture, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, and Committee on the Rights of the Child.
- Scope: some UN treaty bodies
- Note: The content of this database was taken from the SIM database, which is no longer in operation. Currently, this database is not as complete as the OHCHR Treaty Body Search.

OHCHR, Special Procedures Communication report and search

- URL: <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/>
- Content: Searchable database of communications from and to special procedure mandate holders concerning specific alleged violations.
- Scope: UN Human Rights Council special procedures
- Note: Click on “Communication search” (<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/Tmsearch/TMDocuments>) to filter documents by topic, date, or place; use the “Search term” box on that page to search the database of documents for specific words or terms.

UN Special Procedures, Communications Reports

- URL: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/CommunicationsreportsSP.aspx>
- Content: Summaries of alleged violations communicated to States by the UN special procedures and the States’ responses, submitted thrice annually to the Human Rights Council.
- Scope: UN special procedures
- Note: These reports are from December 2010 onward. For prior communications, see either the individual pages of the special procedures (accessible from <http://spinternet.ohchr.org/Layouts/SpecialProceduresInternet/ViewAllCountryMandates.aspx?Type=TM>) and view their annual reports to the Human Rights Council (which are also collected on this page, for each year since 2007: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/AnnualreportsHRC.aspx>).

AFRICA

African Case Law Analyser

- URL: <http://caselaw.ihrda.org/doc/search/>
- Content: Decisions and judgments of the continental human rights bodies and sub-regional courts, searchable by keyword, country, and other criteria.
- Scope: African human rights bodies and sub-regional courts
- Note: This database is approximately one year behind, and has some other gaps or missing decisions. Use the Keywords page to quickly access decisions related to particular topics (<http://caselaw.ihrda.org/keywords/>). Links sometimes do not work on this site; to access a decision when you know the case number, type in caselaw.ihrda.org/doc/ followed by the case number (e.g., <http://caselaw.ihrda.org/doc/001.12/>).

African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights

- URL: <http://www.achpr.org/communications/>
- Content: List of decisions on complaints (communications) decided by the African Commission.
- Scope: African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights

African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights

- URL: <https://www.african-court.org/cpmt/all>
- Content: Searchable database and list of decisions and judgments issued by the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, in addition to pending cases, all of which can be filtered by status or retrieved through text search.
- Scope: African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights
- Note: Some of the older judgments are scanned copies of the original documents, meaning readers cannot search the text. To see these documents in searchable PDF or html, use the Case Law Analyser.

African Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

- URL: <https://www.acerwc.africa/table-of-communications/>
- Content: List of communications received by the ACERWC, with PDFs of final decisions.
- Scope: African Committee on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
- Note: The linked PDFs are searchable, but there is not a direct way to search the text of all decisions simultaneously or to filter the list. However, the ACERWC has not decided many communications, so the list is short.

THE AMERICAS

CEJIL, SUMMA Database

- URL: <https://sidh.cejil.org/>
- Content: Decisions and judgments and provisional measures from the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The database also includes statistics, and information on the members of the Inter-American Court and Commission.
- Scope: Inter-American Commission and Court
- Note: Click on the "Documents" tab to see all documents, or conduct a text search of decisions and judgments, or filter by specific criteria (including type of human rights violation). Note that some source documents may be available only in Spanish. Use the "Case" tab to see all cases; click on "View" in a specific case, then on the links in the right hand sidebar under "IACommission documents" or "IAHRCourt documents" to see the relevant judgment(s) or decision(s) on a particular case.

Inter-American Court of Human Rights

- URL: <http://www.corteidh.or.cr/cf/Jurisprudencia2/index.cfm?lang=en>
- Content: Searchable database of Inter-American Court judgments, orders, and other documents.
- Scope: Inter-American Court
- Note: Click on the "Decisions and Judgments" tab for a full list of judgments in contentious cases. The search function is inconsistent and not reliable in the results it produces, particularly in English. Also note that the most recent judgments, and many orders, will only be available in Spanish. See the Court's Jurisprudence Bulletin for concise summaries of recent judgments (<https://www.corteidh.or.cr/publicaciones.cfm?lang=en>).

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Cases

- URL: <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/>
- Content: Lists of merits reports, admissibility and inadmissibility decisions, and friendly settlement reports, organized by year of publication.
- Scope: Inter-American Commission and Court
- Note: Access the decisions from the “Cases” tab in the top menu bar. Select the type of decision and then the year in which it was published. Note that the most recent decisions may only be available on the Spanish language version of the website (<http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/default.asp>).

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, SIMORE Database

- URL: <https://www.oas.org/ext/en/human-rights/simore/>
- Content: Recommendations contained in IACHR merits decisions, friendly settlements, annual reports, country and thematic reports, and precautionary measures
- Scope: Inter-American Commission
- Note: Recommendations are separated paragraph by paragraph, meaning that the text search will not pull from the full document, but rather will search and yield individual recommendations.

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Rapporteurship Webpages

- URL: <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/mandate/rappoteurships.asp>
- Content: Lists of key judgments and decisions (including on admissibility and friendly settlements) from the Inter-American Commission and Court that are related to the vulnerable groups and issue areas covered by the Commission’s rapporteurships.
- Scope: Inter-American Commission and Court
- Note: Use these pages as a starting place for identifying relevant doctrine, if your search is related to one of the rapporteurships’ mandates. Keep in mind that some pages may be more frequently updated than others.

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Thematic Reports

- URL: <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/thematic.asp>
- Content: The thematic reports of the Inter-American Commission go into significant detail on issues of concern in the region and refer to the Commission and Court’s holdings.
- Scope: Inter-American Commission and Court
- Note: Note the date of publication of each report to determine whether more timely research is additionally required.

Loyola Law School

- URL: <https://iachr.lls.edu/database>
- Content: Searchable database of Inter-American Court judgments, along with summaries.
- Scope: Inter-American Court of Human Rights
- Note: The database does not include the most recent decisions.

BJDH

- URL: <http://www.bjdh.org.mx/interamericano> and <https://www.buscatdh.bjdh.org.mx/inicio.aspx>
- Content: Jurisprudence of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, searchable by keyword and other criteria.
- Scope: Inter-American Court of Human Rights
- Note: The interface of this database is only in Spanish, as are the results it generates. In addition to including provisional measures orders and other Inter-American Court documents, it also includes select UN and Mexican decisions.

EUROPE

European Court of Human Rights, HUDOC

- URL: <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/>
- Content: Judgments and decisions taken by the European Court of Human Rights and the former European Commission on Human Rights, searchable by many different criteria and by keyword or exact phrase.
- Scope: European Court of Human Rights
- Note: The ECtHR has published a guide on researching its caselaw (https://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/CLIP_Finding_understanding_case_law_ENG.pdf). Use the filters in the left sidebar to narrow down your results by level of importance to see the most significant judgments. Use the hyperlinks within the text of judgments and decisions to directly access the case law cited. See the Judgments and Decisions webpage (<http://www.echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=caselaw&c=>) for compilations of reported judgments and decisions. See also the HUDOC EXEC database for information on the execution of the European Court's judgments:
<http://hudoc.exec.coe.int/eng#%22EXECDocumentTypeCollection%22:%22CEC%22>

European Court of Human Rights, Factsheets

- URL: <http://echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=press/factsheets>
- Content: Summaries of the European Court's most important judgments, organized by topic. The factsheets do not cover every issue area or group, but they do cover many topics.
- Scope: European Court of Human Rights
- Note: The factsheets include both decided and pending cases.

European Court of Human Rights, Case-Law Guides & Research Reports

- URL: http://echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=caselaw/analysis&c=#n14278064742986744502025_painter
- Content: Description and analysis of the European Court's jurisprudence on select issues.
- Scope: European Court of Human Rights
- Note: Double check the holdings in these guides against the more recent "Overview of the Court's Case-Law" synthesizing precedential decisions, which is published at least annually (http://echr.coe.int/Pages/home.aspx?p=caselaw/analysis&c=#n13794084798725475324837_painter).

Council of Europe Handbooks

- URL: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/human-rights-rule-of-law/human-rights-handbooks>
- Content: Description and analysis of the European Court's interpretation of select articles of the European Convention on Human Rights.
- Scope: European Court of Human Rights
- Note: Some handbooks may be a decade or more out of date. Use the other resources listed above to identify more recent judgments. Also see the Commissioner for Human Rights' issue papers on select topics (<http://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/issue-papers>).

European Committee of Social Rights, HUDOC

- URL: <http://hudoc.esc.coe.int/eng#>
- Content: Searchable database of the European Committee of Social Rights' decisions on collective complaints and its conclusions regarding State reports.
- Scope: European Committee of Social Rights
- Note: Use the filters in the left side bar to narrow down your search.

European Committee of Social Rights Website

- URL: http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/Complaints/Complaints_en.asp
- Content: List of decisions on admissibility and merits, and other case documents, concerning collective complaints, organized chronologically by case.
- Scope: European Committee of Social Rights

THEMATIC

ESCR-Net Caselaw Database

- URL: <https://www.escr-net.org/caselaw>
- Content: Searchable database of *select* national, regional, and international decisions concerning economic, social, and cultural rights, along with summaries.
- Scope: domestic, regional, and international courts and quasi-judicial bodies
- Note: This database not comprehensive, but rather only includes select decisions from certain bodies. It also does not include more recent decisions. The "keyword" search field is not a full text search function and will only return results where the word is truly a keyword.

Global Health and Human Rights Database

- URL: <http://www.globalhealthrights.org/>
- Content: Searchable database of decisions, judgments, general comments, and instruments related to health and human rights.
- Scope: Most regional and international human rights bodies
- Note: Visit the instructional page for guidance on using this database: <http://www.globalhealthrights.org/how-to-use-the-database/>.

Global Freedom of Expression database

- URL: <https://globalfreedomofexpression.columbia.edu/>
- Content: Searchable database of decisions, with summaries, related to freedom of expression. Includes the regional human rights courts, sub-regional courts of Africa, and UN treaty bodies.
- Scope: domestic and regional courts and UN treaty bodies
- Note: Use the “Filters” tab to narrow your search.

Equal Rights Trust, Virtual Library on Equality

- URL: <http://www.equalrightstrust.org/advanced-search>
- Content: Searchable database of summaries of select national, regional, and international courts and human rights bodies’ judgments, decisions, and other documents on discrimination
- Scope: domestic, regional, and international courts and human rights bodies
- Note: The database also contains legal briefs, reports, and other documents. Narrow the results by topic, country, source, publication date, or text.

CRIN, Legal Database

- URL: https://www.crin.org/en/library/custom-search-legal?promo=1&search_api_language=current
- Content: Searchable database of summaries of select national, regional, and international courts and human rights bodies’ judgments and decisions related to children’s rights.
- Scope: domestic, regional, and international courts and human rights bodies
- Note: The database also contains national laws and international standards. Narrow the results by region, country, theme, date, language, and other criteria.

OHCHR, Anti-Discrimination Database

- URL: <https://adsdatabase.ohchr.org/SitePages/Anti-discrimination%20database.aspx>
- Content: Searchable database of national, regional, and international standards and case law concerning racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance
- Scope: domestic, regional, and international courts and human rights bodies
- Note: Narrow the results by keyword, country, or type. The database also includes national action plans, guidelines, and resolutions.

Refworld

- URL: <http://www.refworld.org/type,CASELAW,,,,,0.html>
- Content: Searchable database of select national, regional, and international courts and human rights bodies’ judgments and decisions related to asylum and the rights of refugees.
- Scope: domestic, regional, and international courts and human rights bodies
- Note: The “Court Interventions” section contains UNHCR and other *amicus curiae* briefs.= <http://www.refworld.org/type,AMICUS,,,,,0.html>.

UNODC Human Trafficking Case Law Database

- URL: <https://www.unodc.org/cld/index.jsp>
- Content: Searchable database of select national and regional court judgments related to trafficking in persons.
- Scope: domestic and regional courts
- Note: Use the criteria in the left side bar to narrow your search, including by specific court.

UNODC, Sharing Electronic Resources and Laws on Crime (SHERLOC)

- URL: <https://www.unodc.org/cld/v3/sherloc/>
- Contents: Searchable database on the law of transitional organized crime, including treaty information, select national case law, national legislation, reports, guides, and bibliographies.
- Scope: domestic courts and legislation
- Note: Users can narrow case searches by country, crime, date, court, and a significant number of other criteria.

UNODC, Smuggling of Migrants Portal/Case Law Database

- URL: <https://www.unodc.org/cld/en/v3/som/>
- Contents: Searchable database of select domestic court decisions and national legislation, along with secondary sources, on smuggling of migrants.
- Scope: domestic courts and legislation
- Note: Users can narrow case searches by country, verdict, date, court, victim's nationality, and a number of other criteria.

INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL LAW

ICC Legal Tools

- URL: <https://www.legal-tools.org/search/>
- Contents: Searchable database of filings, decisions, judgments, legislation and treaties, and secondary sources relevant to trials for international crimes.
- Scope: domestic, regional, and international or hybrid criminal courts
- Note: Use the filters to narrow results by court or type of body, type of decision, and other criteria. The database is kept relatively up-to-date.

ICC Court Records and Transcripts

- URL: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/pages/crm.aspx>
- Contents: Searchable database of filings, decisions, judgments, and other documents produced in the International Criminal Court's proceedings.
- Scope: International Criminal Court
- Note: Select the "decision" filter and narrow results by "type of decision" to include, for example, only convictions or acquittals.

International Crimes Database

- URL: <http://www.internationalcrimesdatabase.org/>
- Contents: Curated, searchable database of judgments on international crimes from national and international or hybrid courts. The database includes fairly detailed legal summaries of each case, along with links to judgments and contextual sources.
- Scope: domestic courts and international criminal tribunals
- Note: The database is not comprehensive and emphasizes particularly significant cases. Users can filter results by year and type of crime, or see full lists of cases by name or crime category.

IRMCT Case Law Database

- URL: <http://cld.irmct.org/>
- Contents: Searchable database of decisions and judgments from all proceedings before the international criminal tribunals for Rwanda and for the former Yugoslavia, including appeals before the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT).
- Scope: ICTR and ICTY
- Note: Search results include relevant excerpts and information about the decision or judgment. Use the “notion” filters to find decisions on specific procedural or substantive concepts.

IJRC – ICTY and ICTR Case Index & Summaries

- URL: <https://ijrcenter.org/international-criminal-law/case-summaries/>
- Contents: Index and linked summaries of cases before the international criminal tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, including appeals before the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT).
- Scope: ICTR and ICTY
- Note: The tables of cases can be sorted by defendant’s name, case number, trial judgment date, and other criteria.

TRIAL International’s Universal Jurisdiction Database

- URL: <https://trialinternational.org/resources/universal-jurisdiction-database/>
- Contents: Summaries of significant criminal cases involving the exercise of universal jurisdiction in national courts.
- Scope: national courts (select cases)
- Note: Filter search results by keyword, country, and other criteria. The database generally does not include case documents or judgments.

Other Interpretations of Standards

General (non-case specific) interpretations and analysis of international human rights law include UN treaty bodies' general comments (and those of the African Commission), as well as courts' advisory opinions. See the webpages of each human rights body or court for a list of its advisory opinions, general comments, and other interpretations of a general nature.

GLOBAL

OHCHR General Comments Webpage

- URL: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/Pages/TBGeneralComments.aspx>
- Content: Links to the general comments and recommendations of the UN treaty bodies.
- Scope: UN treaty bodies

UN Treaty Body Database

- URL: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en
- Content: General comments and general recommendations of the UN human rights treaty bodies, retrievable by committee and date (no full text search).
- Scope: UN treaty bodies
- Note: Filter your search by "general comment/recommendation" to see only these documents. Leave all other fields blank to see all general comments.

WorldCourts.com

- URL: <http://www.worldcourts.com>
- Content: Advisory opinions from regional and international courts, as well as case law.
- Scope: Supranational courts and human rights bodies
- Note: This database does not include the European Court of Human Rights, and there is no option for narrowing your search results to only include advisory opinions.

International Law Commission

- URL: <http://legal.un.org/ilc/>
- Content: Studies and recommendations concerning potential international treaties.
- Scope: international law
- Note: See the Texts, instruments and final reports webpage (<http://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/texts.shtml>) for information on finalized and pending treaty drafts.

REGIONAL

European Court of Human Rights, HUDOC

- URL: [https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{"languageisocode":\["ENG"\],"documentcollectionid":\["ADVISORYOPINIONS"\]}](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{)
- Content: Advisory opinions issued by the European Court of Human Rights.
- Scope: European Court of Human Rights
- Note: The Court has only issued a handful of advisory opinions to date.

Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Advisory Opinions

- URL: https://corteidh.or.cr/opiniones_consultivas.cfm?lang=en
- Content: Advisory opinions issued by the Inter-American Court of Human Rights.
- Scope: Inter-American Court of Human Rights
- Note: Some opinions are only available in Spanish.

African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights

- URL: <https://www.achpr.org/legalinstruments/>
- Content: General comments, guidelines, and principles prepared by the African Commission.
- Scope: African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
- Note: See the "Other Publications" section of the bottom of the web page for the ACHPR's general comments.

African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights

- URL: <https://www.african-court.org/cpmt/advisory-finalised>
- Content: Advisory opinions issued (and requests rejected) by the African Court.
- Scope: African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights
- Note: Use the different tabs to see finalized or pending opinions.

African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child

- URL: <https://www.acerwc.africa/general-comments/>
- Content: General comments issued by the ACERWC.
- Scope: African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
- Note: The webpage does not list the general comments in chronological order.

Observations on State Implementation & Conditions

There are multiple sources for analysis and conclusions regarding States' fulfillment of their human rights obligations. These include the outcome documents of the Universal Periodic Review, concluding observations from UN treaty bodies and several regional bodies, and reports by the Inter-American Commission and the European Commissioner for Human Rights.

GLOBAL

Universal Human Rights Index

- URL: <http://uhri.ohchr.org/>
- Content: Searchable database of all UN human rights mechanisms' country-specific findings and recommendations, including Universal Periodic Review outcomes and treaty bodies' concluding observations, in addition to other documents.
- Scope: UN human rights treaty bodies, special procedures, and Universal Periodic Review
- Note: Click on the "Countries" section to see all documents related to a specific country. Use the advanced search (<http://uhri.ohchr.org/search/annotations>) to conduct a text search and filter by theme or group. See special procedures' recommendations prior to 2006 via the OHCHR website (<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/Recommendations.aspx>).

UPR-Info Database of UPR Recommendations and Voluntary Pledges

- URL: <https://www.upr-info.org/database/>
- Content: Searchable database of recommendations and pledges made by States in the Universal Periodic Review process, in addition to statistics.
- Scope: Universal Periodic Review
- Note: Filter by State, issue, and other criteria, or conduct a text search. Click on "Advanced search and tools" for additional criteria and export tools.

UN Treaty Body Database

- URL: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en
- Content: Database of UN treaty bodies' outputs, including concluding observations on State reports and the Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture's country visit reports. Documents can be filtered by criteria, but full text search is not an option.
- Scope: UN human rights bodies

Universal Periodic Review

- URL: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/Documentation.aspx>
- Content: Reports and recommendations related to the Universal Periodic Review. Access the national report, compilation of UN information, stakeholders' (civil society) information, questions, and outcome document, organized by country and cycle.
- Scope: Universal Periodic Review
- Note: Click the link at the top of the page for each country to access its prior review.

<https://ijrcenter.org/guide-to-researching-international-human-rights-law/>

OHCHR, Special Procedures Communication report and search

- URL: <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/>
- Content: Searchable database of communications from and to special procedure mandate holders on specific alleged violations, which sometimes include general situations or legislation.
- Scope: UN Human Rights Council special procedures
- Note: Click on “Communication search” (<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/Tmsearch/TMDocuments>) to filter by topic, date, or place; use the “Search term” box to search the database of documents for specific words or terms.

OHCHR, Special Procedures Database

- URL: <http://spinternet.ohchr.org/SitePages/Home.aspx>
- Content: Links to information related to Human Rights Council special procedure mandate holders’ visits to countries, including the visit schedule, reports, and statistics.
- Scope: UN Human Rights Council special procedures
- Note: View information and documents related to all country visits (<http://spinternet.ohchr.org/Layouts/SpecialProceduresInternet/ViewCountryVisits.aspx>). Click on the “Search documents” link (<http://spinternet.ohchr.org/Layouts/SpecialProceduresInternet/Search.aspx>) to look up documents related to a specific mandate and/or region or country, and to filter by date.

REGIONAL

African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, Concluding Observations

- URL: <https://www.achpr.org/statereportsandconcludingobservations>
- Content: List of State reports and concluding observations on implementation of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights.
- Scope: African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights
- Note: Visit the “State Reporting” page to see communications (complaints), press releases and other information relating to each State (<https://www.achpr.org/states>).

African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, Mission Reports

- URL: <https://www.achpr.org/documentationcenter>
- Content: List of reports concerning promotion and fact-finding missions carried out by the African Commission or its special mechanisms.
- Scope: African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights
- Note: Filter by document type (“Mission Reports”) in the right sidebar.

African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Concluding Observations Table

- URL: <https://www.acerwc.africa/concluding-observations/>
- Content: List of concluding observations, with PDFs, of concluding observations on initial and periodic reports by States to the ACERWC.
- Scope: African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
- Note: See the Initial and Periodic Reports Table (<https://www.acerwc.africa/initial-and-periodic-reports/>) for the State reports.

<https://ijrcenter.org/guide-to-researching-international-human-rights-law/>

Arab Human Rights Committee, Concluding Observations

- URL: <http://www.lasportal.org/ar/humanrights/Committee/Pages/Reports.aspx> (Arabic)
- Content: List of State reports and concluding observations on implementation of the Arab Charter on Human Rights.
- Scope: Arab Human Rights Committee
- Note: Use the Chrome browser to access a translated version of the Arabic site, using Google's automated translation. The reports and concluding observations are in PDF, though, and only available in Arabic.

COE Commissioner for Human Rights, Country Visit Reports

- URL: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/country-reports-by-country>
- Content: Database of reports prepared by the Commissioner following his visits to Council of Europe Member States.
- Scope: Council of Europe
- Note: Access the Country Visits page for additional statements, organized by State and year (<http://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/country-monitoring>).

European Committee for the Prevention of Torture, HUDOC Database

- URL: <http://hudoc.cpt.coe.int/eng#>
- Content: Searchable database of reports on country visits and statements by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.
- Scope: Council of Europe
- Note: Filter by language to eliminate duplicate results.

European Committee of Social Rights, HUDOC Database

- URL: <http://hudoc.esc.coe.int/eng#>
- Content: Searchable database of conclusions regarding States' reports on implementation of the European Social Charter, and other Committee documents.
- Scope: European Committee of Social Rights
- Note: Select "Conclusions" in the left side bar to see conclusions regarding State reports, and refer to the Social Charter or Revised Social Charter to filter by article number.

European Committee of Social Rights, Conclusions

- URL: http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/Conclusions/ConclusionsIndex_en.asp
- Content: List of conclusions concerning State reports on implementation of the European Social Charter, organized by State and by year.
- Scope: European Committee of Social Rights
- Note: See the Country Factsheets link in the left side bar for a summary of each State's accepted provisions, reports, and domestic implementation of the European Social Charter (http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/socialcharter/links_en.asp).

European Committee against Racism and Intolerance, HUDOC Database

- URL: <http://hudoc.ecri.coe.int/eng#%20>
- Content: Searchable database of reports on racism and intolerance in Council of Europe Member States, including recommendations for improvement.
- Scope: European Committee against Racism and Intolerance
- Note: See the Committee's website for information about its work and reporting cycles (http://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/default_en.asp).

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Country Reports

- URL: <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/country.asp>
- Content: List of the Commission's reports concerning specific countries, organized chronologically.
- Scope: Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
- Note: See the Country Visits page for additional materials related to country visits, including those regarding which no official report has yet been issued (<http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/activities/countries.asp>).

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Annual Reports

- URL: <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/annual.asp>
- Content: List of the Commission's annual reports, which – in Chapter IV – include both an overview of human rights conditions in the Americas and a section focused on a small group of countries with particularly concerning human rights abuses.
- Scope: Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
- Note: See the annexes for the annual report of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression and other reports published during the previous year.

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Thematic Reports

- URL: <http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/reports/thematic.asp>
- Content: The thematic reports of the Inter-American Commission go into significant detail on issues of concern in the region and refer to the Commission and Court's holdings.
- Scope: Inter-American Commission and Court
- Note: Note the date of publication of each report to determine whether more timely research is additionally required.

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Hearings

- URL: <http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/audiencias/advanced.aspx?lang=en>
- Content: Searchable database of audio and video recordings of thematic and case hearings held by the Commission. Use the country, topic, date, or participant filters to narrow your search.
- Scope: Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
- Note: Use the Topics list for quick access to hearings by issue area (<http://www.oas.org/es/cidh/audiencias/topics.aspx?lang=en>). See the IACHR Sessions page for press releases and useful summaries ("reports") of the periods of sessions in which public hearings are held (<http://www.oas.org/en/iachr/activities/sessions.asp>).

National Legislation & Jurisprudence

Sources on human rights-related national legislation and jurisprudence abound, although no database is comprehensive. A good starting point is Yale Law Library's country-specific foreign law research guides (<http://library.law.yale.edu/research/guides/country-guide>), which link to a number of other sources. Also refer to the "THEMATIC" part of the "Jurisprudence & Decisions" section above, which includes a number of databases that contain national law and jurisprudence.

GLOBAL

GlobaLex

- URL: <http://www.nyulawglobal.org/Globalex/index.html>
- Content: List of guides on individual countries' legal systems, with links to primary sources.
- Scope: global (national legislation)

Lexadin

- URL: <http://www.lexadin.nl/wlg/legis/nofr/legis.php>
- Content: Links to primary sources of national law, organized by country.
- Scope: global (national legislation)

Legal Information Institute (LII)

- URL: <https://www.law.cornell.edu/world>
- Content: Links to primary sources of national law, organized by country.
- Scope: global (national legislation)
- Note: Click on the regions under "National Law Material" for country-specific primary sources.

Legislationline

- URL: <http://www.legislationline.org/>
- Content: This OSCE/ODIHR database includes national constitutions, criminal codes, and other legislation related to civil and political rights, organized by State and topic, in addition to commentary on draft national legislation.
- Scope: OSCE participating States (national legislation)
- Note: To directly access constitutions and criminal codes, listed by State, click on the "Constitutions" (<http://www.legislationline.org/documents/section/constitutions>) and "Criminal Codes" (<http://www.legislationline.org/documents/section/criminal-codes>) links.

WorldLII and subsidiary databases

- URL: <http://www.worldlii.org/>
- Content: Searchable database of case law and legislation from national (and other) jurisdictions. Use the advanced search (<http://www.worldlii.org/forms/search1.html>) to filter by jurisdiction and type of result.
- Scope: global (national legislation and case law)
- Note: Visit the Databases page to see other LII database and their contents (http://www.worldlii.org/worldlii/sponsors/#supporting_liis).

THEMATIC

Refworld

- URL: <http://www.refworld.org/publisher/NATLEGBOD.html>
- Content: Searchable database of national (and other) law related to asylum, nationality, and the rights of refugees.
- Scope: global (national legislation and case law)
- Note: See the “Case Law” section to search judgments from national courts (<http://www.refworld.org/type,CASELAW,,,,,0.html>).

NATLEX

- URL: http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.home?p_lang=en
- Content: Searchable database of national legislation related to workers’ rights.
- Scope: global (national legislation)
- Note: Browse by topic or by country, or conduct a text search. Also see the related databases on occupational safety and health (<http://www.ilo.org/dyn/legosh/en/f?p=14100:1000:0::NO:::>), employment protection (<http://www.ilo.org/dyn/eplex/termmain.home>), HIV/AIDS and work (<http://www.ilo.org/aids/legislation/lang--en/index.htm>), and working conditions (<http://www.ilo.org/dyn/travail/travmain.home>).

International Committee of the Red Cross, IHL National Implementation Database

- URL: <https://www.icrc.org/applic/ihl/ihl-nat.nsf/vwLawsByCountry.xsp>
- Content: List of national legislation relevant to international humanitarian law, organized by State and topic.
- Scope: global (national legislation)

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, Case-Law Database

- URL: <http://fra.europa.eu/en/case-law-database>
- Content: Searchable database of Court of Justice of European Union and European Court of Human Rights case law, as well as select national court decisions, referencing the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.
- Scope: European Union Member States (national and regional jurisprudence)
- Note: Use the filters to narrow your search by European Convention on Human Rights articles.

IHRDA, Sexual and Gender-based Violence database

- URL: <http://sgbv.ihrda.org/>
- Content: Database of national court decisions and legislation concerning sexual and gender-based violence, currently limited to the Democratic Republic of Congo, Gambia, Kenya, Mali, and Uganda.
- Scope: national courts in Africa
- Note: Narrow the results by year, country, type of document, or keyword.

African Child Rights Cases

- URL: <https://national-cases.acerwc.africa/>
- Content: Database of national court decisions involving children’s rights.
- Scope: national courts in Africa
- Note: Filter results by country, court, or subject, in addition to text search.

REGIONAL

Network of the Presidents of the Supreme Judicial Courts of the EU, Common Portal of Case Law

- URL: <http://network-presidents.eu/rpcsje/index.php>
- Content: Searchable databases of select European national courts.
- Scope: European Union Member States (national case law)

African Law Library

- URL: <http://www.africanlawlibrary.net/>
- Content: Searchable database of select continental, sub-regional, and national legislation and court decisions.
- Scope: Africa (national and regional legislation and case law)
- Note: Use the Court Decisions search (<http://www.africanlawlibrary.net/search/court-decisions>) for jurisprudence.

Please notify us (ijrc@ijrcenter.org) of any databases that should be included in this guide.



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