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Editorial

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EDITORIAL

Volume XXI of the Annual Survey of International and Comparative Law follows Volume XX in unusually quick succession as Volume XX suffered from a considerable delay in the process of its preparation and publication. Volume XXI picks up where Volume XX left off – the time of its scheduled appearance - March 2015.

Last year up till this year have proved particularly to be not only eventful and troublesome for the French and Belgian populations, but also, for non-French or Belgians in other parts of the world, especially the Boko-Haram victims of Nigeria. People have had to leave the comfort of their homes to make the necessary personal sacrifices for the purpose of peace-making and peace-keeping. The whole of the Middle East has been experiencing a highly trying time, with one tragedy after another. Law and order has been on the wane for the nations bordering the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf, for Lebanon, Syria and Saudi Arabia, to Iraq and Iran, not to mention the plight of the Palestinians.

Iraq is no longer in the hands of Saddam Hussein, nor is Libya still in the hands of Colonel Muammar Gadhafi, but yet, the two countries are still not out of the woods. The United Nations and the Authority under the leadership and responsibility of the United States still maintain their indispensable but precarious presence. The gloomy situation continues to drag on, draining the energy and exhausting the patience of the leading political world leaders with Obama recently acknowledging and regretting his role in Libya as a mistake as he is about to leave office soon. While the declared so-called bad world leaders of Iraq and Libya have been done away with, the ever-present danger of terrorist attacks from Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram etc., albeit seemingly unreal, is still far from subsiding across the world.

Relatively speaking, Africa is far more peaceful than it was a decade ago. The wars that ripped apart the Democratic Republic of Congo and sucked in its neighbors, causing millions of deaths, have largely been quelled. A few states, such as Somalia, South Sudan, and Central African Republic, are still in chaos, but overall the risk of dying violently in Africa has tumbled. The latest ranking of the world's most violent countries by the Geneva Declaration includes just two African states (tiny Lesotho and Swaziland) among its top ten. Africa is also far more democratic than it was. Now, unlike in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s, nearly all face regular elections, which are harder to rig thanks to social

media. Yet, Africa's trade continues to suffer from dismal infrastructure, lack of investment and corruption.

Another problem that continues to perplex international jurists and publicists relates to the definition of 'an act of aggression.' However, the United Nations Security Council, considered to be competent, has offered a definition that is generally accepted and useful in connection with the possible exercise of the inherent right of self-defense under Article 51 of the Charter because the occurrence of an 'armed attack' may prompt the exercise of that inherent right. Connected with this concern is the notion of 'terrorism' or 'terrorist attack' which may justify further extension of the use of force in the exercise of individual and collective self-defense.

The Annual Survey of International and Comparative Law can only do so much by way of dissemination and spreading wider appreciation of the rules of international law through the publication of studies, articles, papers and notes submitted to it and selected on the basis of current relevancy, topical significance and geographical, as well as systematic, distribution. Based on these guidelines, Volume XXI includes a sufficiently wide variety of topics that correspond with the need to keep the legal public apprised of the current trends in international and legal developments.

Accordingly, Volume XXI contains the following interesting papers: The Effectiveness of International Law: Torture and Counterterrorism; Hybrid Legal Approaches Towards Climate Change: Concepts, Mechanisms and Implementation; Public Regulation of the Oil and Gas Industry in Nigeria: An Evaluation; Twenty Years of TRIPS, Twenty Years of Debate: The Extension of High Level Protection of Geographical Indications – Arguments, State of Negotiations and Prospects; Pension Trust Investment in Nigeria – Celebrating the Sea Change Wrought by the Pension Reform Act; Border Tax Adjustments and Developing Countries: A Perspective from China; and Wartime Environmental Pollution and Endangerment: The Landmine Scourge and the Global Effort to Eliminate It.

As it has already been observed in preceding editorials, the present volume cannot cover all the aspects of international and comparative law issues. However, Volume XXI attempts to touch upon some pertinent topics with the hope that subsequent volumes will carry on the work of keeping the Annual Survey's audiences abreast of developments in international and comparative law.

The Annual Survey accepts and publishes articles from all jurisdictions across the globe, and thus, it may retain and reflect the writing style of each individual writer. This gives the Annual Survey a rich and unique content. The Annual Survey is open to comments and suggestions for improving the journal in various aspects. The journal accepts manuscripts on topics relevant to the field of international and comparative law. The views expressed in the articles published in the Annual Survey are exclusively those of the individual authors and are not to be taken as representing the views of the Board of Editors, the Board of Editorial Advisors, the Editor-in-Chief, or the Press.

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