

FOREWORD

In a time of both turbulence and renewed energy in the pluralist study of international law, this book emerges as a beacon of innovation and critical inquiry. It arrives amidst a shifting landscape where dissatisfaction with conventional approaches to international law is palpable, particularly in light of the burgeoning discourses surrounding the decolonization of law.

With each chapter, this book deliberately carves out its own theoretical foundations, transcending the confines of traditional paradigms to explore not just “international law” but also the complex dynamics of “international legal practice and expertise” within the African context. Drawing from an expansive array of disciplinary lenses – from sociology and anthropology to psychology, political philosophy and international relations theory – it offers a nuanced understanding of “African international law” and its operationalization.

Central to its narrative is a meticulous examination of the African Union – the Pan-African organization which is the primary producer of African international law – through a diverse range of international law perspectives. By delving into areas such as institutional law, law and development, treaty law, peace and security studies, human and peoples’ rights, democracy and good governance as well as constitutional law and politics, the book not only enriches our understanding of the African legal landscape but also sheds light on how divergent approaches to international law can and do materialise within and across different regions or continents of the world.

Moreover, this book encapsulates the shared sensibilities of Pan-Africanist altruists, resonating with generations of visionaries across varied legal cultures. Its commitment to transparency and humility is commendable, as it nonetheless seeks to achieve the ambitious goal of challenging entrenched perceptions and transforming African international legal thought. Through its blend of creativity, technical precision, and practical utility, the book inspires admiration and close study among legal practitioners and scholars alike.

This book represents a bold yet diplomatic endeavor – a testament to the evolving nature of legal scholarship and its potential to shape a more just and equitable world. As we embark on this intellectual journey together, let us embrace its insights and forge a path toward a future where international law serves as a catalyst for positive change.

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This book presents a compelling narrative of the construction of an international legal system in, by, and for Africa. It provides a coherent understanding of an African international legal regime while navigating its inherent complexities, contingencies, and struggles.

The strength of this book lies in its dual commitment to both theoretical rigor and practical relevance. By theorizing the underlying dynamics of African international legal frameworks and elucidating the agency of various actors involved in their formation, it transcends mere critical analysis. Crucially, by tracing the evolution of African international law and providing insightful taxonomies of its developments, this work is poised to significantly enhance the understanding of African international legal principles.

Of particular note is the book's acknowledgement of a symbiotic relationship between theory and practice. It bridges this gap by offering theoretical insights while maintaining a pragmatic perspective, exemplified notably in the international law performance framework outlined in Chapter 4. This framework not only enhances the measurability and manageability of continental legal integration but also sheds light on opportunities for advancing the impact of African international law.

At its core, this book is a guide, offering essential techniques and strategies to observe, illustrate, and understand the dynamic nature of African international law. It is an indispensable reading for a wide spectrum of stakeholders, including educators, jurists, policymakers, diplomats, journalists, entrepreneurs and human rights advocates, as it offers a roadmap to discover and navigate the increasingly intricate terrain of African international law. This book equips them with the necessary knowledge and insights, as each has a vital role to play in promoting the international rule of law in Africa.

The research also serves as a springboard for further exploration into the dynamic landscape of African international law as it delineates avenues for future inquiry and opens doors to a more comprehensive appreciation of continental legal norms and accountability mechanisms. In doing so, this book is expected to be an impetus for a whole new genre of *writing on* and *practice of* African international law. Its wealth of practical advice and the identification of future research agendas makes it an invaluable resource.

More fundamentally, beyond enriching African international legal science, the book not just contributes to the continent's overarching vision, it holds the potential to shape its future trajectory as well. I highly recommend it.

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