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International case law

The international community has established a number of courts for solving disputes regarding international law. Their legal nature varies and the scope of jurisdiction and binding effect of their case law largely depends on the relevant founding act.

Most international courts have a website providing access to their decisions and opinions. Hereafter, you find a non-exhaustive list of such websites:

ECHR - European Court on Human Rights: the court established by the Council of Europe to ensure the observance of rights embodied in the [European Convention on Human Rights](#). The database of the ECHR also contains case law information notes.

ICJ - International Court of Justice: the principal judicial organ of the United Nations (UN), established by the Charter of the United Nations. The Court's role is to settle, in accordance with international law, legal disputes submitted to it by States and to give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by authorised United Nations organs and specialised agencies.

ICC - International Criminal Court: an independent, permanent court that tries persons accused of the most serious crimes of international concern, namely genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.

ITLOS - International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea: a court established by the United Nations [Convention on the law of the sea](#).

EFTA Court: this court established by the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) fulfils the judicial function within the EFTA system, interpreting the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA) with regard to the EFTA States party to the Agreement. At present those EFTA States are Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway.

In addition, there are various databases and information sources on international case law. To mention just some examples (this list does not reflect any choice in terms of quality or contents):

JURE, a database created by the European Commission, contains case law on jurisdiction in civil and commercial matters and on the recognition and enforcement of judgments in another State than the one where the judgment was passed. This includes case law on relevant international conventions (i.e. 1968 Brussels Convention, 1988 Lugano Convention) as well as EU and Member State case law).

The [World Legal Information Institute](#) (a legal research facility developed collaboratively by several legal information institutes and other organisations): database and links on courts and case law

The [Lauterpacht Centre for International Law](#) at the University of Cambridge

National courts, too, apply and interpret international law so that their decisions and opinions also are relevant. Some of the case law databases mentioned above include case law established by national courts. You may also be able to find relevant information via the pages on [Member State case law](#) and [EU case law](#).

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