

claim historical or cultural ties to a particular territory, often with related questions of self-determination and the desire for autonomy or independence. The humanitarian consequences of territorial disputes are addressed in Chapters 3 and 4. Displacement, human rights abuses, and restrictions on movement and access to basic services can result from such disputes, particularly for populations living in disputed areas, leading to humanitarian crises.

Two further issues relating to territorial disputes are addressed throughout the volume. The broader geopolitical implications are explored, given the potential impact upon regional power dynamics and alliances as States seek to expand their influence or counter the influence of rival powers by asserting territorial claims or supporting parties involved in disputes. Finally, territorial disputes raise important legal and normative questions regarding the interpretation and application of international law, including principles such as self-determination, territorial integrity and the prohibition of the use of force. Resolving these disputes requires adherence to established legal frameworks and international norms which are discussed throughout.

Overall, the book is a delight to read and provides a comprehensive analysis of the Western Sahara question, shedding light on the complexities of the dispute and its implications for contemporary international law. This work will be of interest to a wide pool of readers ranging from international law practitioners, academics and researchers in the field, legal and policy officers in international organizations, policymakers and foreign policy advisors, to any reader with a keen interest in international relations and diplomacy, international law, territorial disputes and conflicts, colonialism and self-determination.

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*German Practice in International Law 2019* by STEFAN TALMON [CUP, Cambridge, 2022, xxviii + 467pp, ISBN: 978-1-316-51461-0, £170 (h/bk)]

This volume, edited by Professor Stefan Talmon of Bonn University together with two assistant editors and a group of students, is the first in a new series and covers the year 2019. As Talmon explains at the beginning of the volume, 'GPIL [presents] German Government practice in the field of public international law in English and in a timely fashion.' It also covers some significant decisions of German courts.

Digests of State practice form an essential resource for international lawyers, both in academia and in practice. State consent remains the ultimate source of international law, and it is therefore essential that the practice of States is accessible to that community. Practice has a role to play in the interpretation

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of treaties and more generally in understanding international rules. It feeds also into the formation of customary international law.

This volume provides this essential service, and it does so by blending the traditional mode of presenting the material, and organising it well, with stimulating commentary. The volume reaches back to other publications reporting on the practice of the Federal Republic of Germany, including *Völkerrechtliche Praxis der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, published (in German) from 1957 to 2018 in *Zeitschrift für ausländisches öffentliches Recht und Völkerrecht* and also the relevant section in the *German Yearbook of International Law*. The practice of other States is reported in a similar fashion.

It is, however, a distinctive feature of this volume that practice is presented throughout in English, ensuring a wide accessibility. It is furthermore distinct that the commentary provides context.

Practice is conveniently organised into 11 broad subject categories (with some 40 more specific sub-categories): 1. Foundations and Functions of International Law; 2. States and Their Organs; 3. Inter-State Political and Economic Relations and Transactions; 4. State Jurisdiction and Immunities; 5. State Responsibility and Liability; 6. Antarctica, Sea, Air and Space; 7. Individuals, Their Human Rights and Their International Criminal Responsibility; 8. Natural Resources and the Environment; 9. The United Nations and Other International Organisations; 10. Use of Force, Arms Control and Disarmament; and 11. International Disputes and Their Settlement. The volume includes helpful preliminary matter (tables of cases, German statutes, European legislation, treaties) and a carefully constructed and detailed index, as well as good footnotes and references. Navigation of these headings is intuitive to the international lawyer.

The volume offers an excellent overview of what Germany said or did in the field of international law in the year in question. In relation to each case study, there is lively commentary by Talmon himself and/or one or more students. The commentary turns what could otherwise be a dry reference work into a lively and interesting read. There are value judgments expressed, and quite rightly so, about the importance of certain practice in the overall positioning of Germany under international law. An example of this is the entry 'Germany on a Mission: Putting Climate Change on the Agenda of the Security Council'. Such commentary makes this volume much more than a simple repertoire of material that may be available elsewhere.

This and by extension further annual volumes of *German Practice in International Law* are highly recommended to all interested in the role of international law in world affairs and the position of Germany in this role.

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