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A Human Rights Handbook for Judges and Lawyers

by Bertrand Ramcharan

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Judges and lawyers face many challenges in working for just, peaceful and inclusive societies worldwide. This Handbook offers foundational insights from the international human rights community as practical tools to meet them.

It recalls that the international community has elevated some international human rights norms to peremptory norms of international law, among which the absolute prohibition of slavery and of torture. The selection of human rights norms that have now attained the status of customary international law is one of the Handbook's pioneering features. Clear, expert analysis of concepts and principles is supplied; solemn declarations on the rule of law adopted by the UN, such as on the independence of the judiciary and on principles of remedies and reparations, are also listed.

Authoritative, concise and easily accessible, the Handbook reflects its author's decades of expertise serving and writing on the causes of peace and human rights. It is an essential tool for judges and lawyers, as well as for all human rights defenders.

Published under the auspices of the University for Peace.

A Human Rights Handbook for Judges and Lawyers

Bertrand Ramcharan

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Professor Bertrand G. Ramcharan, a Barrister of Lincoln's Inn, London, holds degrees in philosophy, history and law. He has been Chief Speechwriter for the UN Secretary-General, Director of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Director in the UN Political Department, Deputy and then Acting High Commissioner for Human Rights, Professor at the Geneva Graduate Institute, Chancellor of the University of Guyana, Professor of International Law at the University of Ottawa, Visiting Professor at Columbia University and at Lund University, Sweden. He is the author of numerous works on human rights and international law.

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This is a refreshing and innovative work on the implementation of the rule of law nationally, regionally, and internationally, and UPEACE heartily recommends it to the legal community, the peace community and the human rights community worldwide.

– FRANCISCO ROJAS ARAVENA, Rector of the University for Peace

It is sensible and practical, and I commend it to the legal community and more broadly to human rights defenders everywhere.

– SANTIAGO A. CANTON, Secretary-General, International Commission of Jurists

Justice begins with understanding, and understanding human rights is a fundamental pillar to uphold and promote the rule of law. This timely and useful *Human Rights Handbook for Judges and Lawyers* is far more than a guide or a tool for legal reference. It is a compass that orients the conscience of justice. It represents both a reminder and a roadmap for judges and lawyers: a reminder that every decision has implications in human lives, and a roadmap that leads the law toward fairness, dignity, and equality. In its chapters lie the principles that transform authority into accountability, and power into protection. This Handbook is a message of shared understanding between the law and the people it serves, as it reaffirms that justice must be applied with the human rights at its heart. I encourage judges and lawyers worldwide to use it, to ensure that human dignity is not lost in translation, but it is heard, understood, and lived by all.

– BARONESS KENNEDY OF THE SHAWES, LT KC, Director of the International Bar Association Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI)



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