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EDITORIAL

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On 17 January 2026, the Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction, commonly known as the BBNJ Agreement, has entered into force. The BBNJ Agreement was concluded in September 2023 as the third implementing agreement under the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). It governs biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction (the high seas), covering most of the world's oceans. The primary objective of BBNJ is to ensure the conservation of marine life and promote its sustainable use on the high seas and seabed beyond national jurisdiction: A Global Common. Under the overall objective of the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, the treaty establishes a framework for four key areas: marine genetic resources (MGRs), area-based management tools (including marine protected areas), environmental impact assessments (EIAs), and capacity-building with marine technology transfer. States must share benefits from MGRs, conduct EIAs for potentially harmful activities, and cooperate in conservation efforts. The Agreement also addresses a number of "cross-cutting issues", establishes a funding mechanism and sets up institutional arrangements, including a Conference of the Parties (COP) and various subsidiary bodies, a Clearing-House Mechanism and a Secretariat. COP decisions become binding within 120 days, subject to limited objections. Disputes follow UNCLOS mechanisms, with advisory opinions possible from the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. The Agreement marks a major step in protecting global marine biodiversity.

India has taken a significant step towards marine conservation by signing the BBNJ Agreement in September 2024. As a signatory and with a 7500 km (approx.) coastline and significant interest in the Indian Oceans, India views the treaty as aligned with its UNCLOS commitments and broader goals under initiatives like the Blue Economy and SAGARMALA. Most recently, the Ministry of Earth Sciences proposed to enact a legislation on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction. The Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Bill, 2026 is aimed at establishing measures for India to promote the conservation and sustainable use of, and exercise jurisdiction over activities concerning, marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction. The Bill is in pursuance of India's objective to BBNJ Agreement. The proposed legislation will provide a framework for the management of these activities, consistent with India's obligations under UNCLOS and other relevant international instruments, frameworks, and bodies. Given that several aspects regarding the implementation of the Agreement remain under consideration, a framework legislation has been proposed to grant flexibility in regulating activities through secondary legislation, based on evolving circumstances and negotiations concerning activities in areas beyond national jurisdiction under this Agreement and other relevant instruments, frameworks and bodies. This new legal framework is not just about conservation; it's about creating a sustainable future for maritime activities. The establishment of Marine Protected Areas will safeguard biodiversity, while rigorous Environmental Impact Assessments will ensure that industrial activities do not harm the delicate balance of marine ecosystems. The mandate for capacity building and technology transfer will empower developing nations to participate fully in the benefits of ocean resources. For India, the BBNJ Agreement aligns with its broader vision of Viksit Bharat @ 2047, a roadmap for national development that prioritizes sustainable and inclusive growth. By integrating the BBNJ framework into this vision, India is positioning itself as a leader in the sustainable management of ocean resources.

Prof. (Dr) Manoj Kumar Sinha
President, ISIL

Human Rights Council Special Session on Iran

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) held its thirty-ninth special session on, 23rd January 2026. The special session was convened following an official request, supported by 21 States members of the Council and 30 observer states, to address the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, especially in the context of the repression of nationwide protests starting on 28 December 2025. The resolution was presented in response to concerns regarding the State-led violence and similar patterns of violations, including the use of excessive and lethal force against protesters by security forces, arbitrary arrests and detentions, as this sustained and systematic impunity has created an enabling environment for perpetrators. Hence, the adopted resolution extends the mandate of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Islamic Republic of Iran for the period of 2 years. The resolution also requested for an urgent investigation by the Fact-Finding Mission, in line with the Human Rights Council resolution 58/21 and to conduct an urgent investigation into allegations of the recent and ongoing serious human rights violations and abuses and crime perpetrated in relation to the protests that began on 28 December 2025, including for potential future legal proceedings in line with its mandate. The resolution was passed with 25 votes in favour, 7 against including India, and 14 abstentions.

UN Convention on the International Effects of Judicial Sales of Ships

On 17 February 2026, the United Nations Convention on the International Effects of Judicial Sales of Ships (Beijing Convention on Judicial Sales of Ships) entered into force. Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 7 December 2022, the Beijing Convention opened for signature on 5 September 2023. The Convention creates a harmonised and simplified system for the recognition of judicial sales of ships across borders ensuring smooth international trade. It applies to judicial sales of ships that take place in a state that is party to the Convention. The buyer of a ship in a judicial sale will take clean title that is recognised across the signatory states eliminating the likelihood that buyers could face arrests, liens or maritime claims in other jurisdictions and therefore ensuring that a ship is purchased clean and unencumbered. This gives comfort to purchasers of ships and their financiers encouraging higher participation in judicial sales, increasing the sale proceeds which will then be distributed among creditors. The Convention has 34 signatories and, ratified by only three states Barbados, El Salvador and Spain, is now in force for those States. However, with greater adoption, the Beijing Convention aims to provide greater security to purchasers of ships at judicial sales. This, amongst other benefits, is expected to increase the availability of finance for buyers, by providing greater certainty of title for prospective mortgagees.

UNESCO Welcomes Draft Media Law and Urges Its Swift Adoption by Parliament

On 18 February 2026, UNESCO welcomed the completion of parliamentary committee deliberations on Lebanon's draft Media Law, marking a major milestone in a reform process that has spanned nearly 15 years. The draft law, submitted in late 2025 by the Minister of Information with sustained technical support from UNESCO, will now be referred to the General Assembly for debate and adoption. The Chair of the Parliamentary Administration and Justice Committee has finalized its review and amendments to the draft law. The finalized draft introduces several significant reforms that align with international standards on freedom of expression and the safety of journalists. Notably, it abolishes the criminalization, imprisonment, and pretrial detention of media professionals for publication-related offenses, reinforcing the principle that media-related matters should not be subject to custodial penalties.

The draft also abolishes the Publications Court and provides for the establishment of an independent, specialized civil media court, ensuring that journalists and media professionals are no longer subject to military or criminal courts for their professional work. It extends its provisions to electronic news websites and digital platforms, recognizing the evolving nature of the media ecosystem and ensuring that the legal framework keeps pace with digital transformation.

Further, the draft provides for the establishment of an independent National Media Authority composed of experts, legal professionals, and representatives of trade unions to regulate and oversee the sector in a transparent and accountable manner.

In line with its global mandate to promote freedom of expression, access to information, and the safety of journalists, UNESCO has provided sustained technical expertise throughout the reform process. Working in close coordination with the Ministry of Information, parliamentary committees, and national stakeholders, UNESCO contributed comparative legal analysis and advisory support to help align the draft with international standards and best practices. UNESCO reiterates its commitment to continue supporting national partners in advancing media sector reform and urges Parliament to prioritize its debate and adoption of these laws to strengthen democratic governance, media pluralism, and fundamental freedoms.

PRAHAAR: India's First National Counter-Terror Policy

On February 23, 2026, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) of India officially launched PRAHAAR (Prevention, Response, and Healing Approach to Anti-Terrorism), marking the debut of India's first comprehensive national counter-terrorism policy. It establishes a structured national framework to address evolving and complex security threats, including cross-border terrorism, drone-based attacks, cyber-enabled threats, and organised terror networks. It reiterates the government's unwavering zero-tolerance approach towards terrorism and violence, while emphasising support for victims and rejecting any justification for acts of terror under any circumstances.

The eight-page policy document, underscores India's decades-long experience and leadership in combating terrorism, firmly rejecting any attempt to link terrorism with any particular religion, ethnicity, nationality, or civilisation and formalises a unified and institutionalised approach that has guided India's counter-terror efforts over the years amid evolving threats. The counter-terrorism strategy of 'PRAHAAR', flows from these ideals and is predicated on the following: Prevention of terror attacks to protect Indian citizens and interests; Responses, which are swift and proportionate to the threat posed; Aggregating internal capacities for achieving synergy in a whole-of-government approach; Human rights and 'Rule of Law' based processes for mitigation of threats; Attenuating the conditions enabling terrorism, including radicalization; Aligning and shaping the international efforts to counter terrorism; Recovery and resilience through a whole-of-society approach.

The policy emphasises on strengthening institutional capacity through modernisation of equipment, training, and infrastructure, along with standardisation of counter-terror mechanisms across states and addressing existing operational gaps. In addition, the framework also stresses on strict adherence to human rights and legal safeguards, citing laws such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, newly enacted criminal codes, the Explosives Substance Act, 1908, Arms Act 1959 and Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 including India's international legal commitments.

Members of the European Parliament reached a preliminary political agreement on amendments to the EU Artificial Intelligence Act

On 11 March 2026, the European Parliament reached a preliminary political agreement on amendments to the EU Artificial Intelligence Act. On 13 March, the Council adopted its negotiating mandate, formally launching trilogue negotiations. Unless an amended text is agreed before 2 August 2026, the original high-risk AI obligations will apply as scheduled. These amendments are part of the “Omnibus VII” package under the EU's broader simplification agenda. This follows the European Council's October 2024 call to address competitiveness challenges and the November 2024 Budapest Declaration urging a “simplification revolution” to reduce regulatory burdens, particularly for SMEs. Since February 2025, the European Commission has introduced multiple Omnibus packages to streamline legislation across key sectors. The Digital Omnibus, presented in November 2025, focuses on simplifying digital laws and harmonised AI rules. Ongoing trilogue negotiations in 2026

reflect efforts to balance regulatory clarity with innovation, aiming to enhance EU competitiveness and create a more efficient, business-friendly digital environment.

ICJ Decision on Guatemala's Application to Intervene in *Belize v. Honduras Case*

The International Court of Justice (ICJ), in a sitting at the Hague on 19th March 2026 delivered its decision on Guatemala's application to intervene in the Sovereignty over the Sapodilla Cayes/Cayos Zapotillos (*Belize v. Honduras*) case. The initial Application was submitted by Belize to the Court for final and binding resolution in accordance with international law the dispute between Belize and Honduras concerning sovereignty over the Sapodilla Cayes. However, later Government of the Republic of Guatemala requested the Court to permit its intervention in the proceedings on the following object: to protect the rights and interests of Guatemala over the Sapodilla Cayes and to inform the Court of the nature and extent of Guatemala's rights, which may be affected by the Court's decision on the issue of sovereignty over the Sapodillas.

Hence, the Court adjudged that Guatemala does have a legal interest in the case and, pursuant to Article 62 of the Statute of the Court, is permitted to intervene as a non-party. Guatemala's intervention is limited to the issue of sovereignty over the Sapodilla Cayes, including fishing rights in the waters surrounding them. The decision advances the process leading to finality of the two sovereignty cases before the ICJ involving Belize, i.e. Guatemala's Territorial, Insular and Maritime Claim (Guatemala/Belize) and Sovereignty over the Sapodilla Cayes/Cayos Zapotillos (*Belize v. Honduras*). Also, the decision does not in any way affect the legal rights or claims of any of the parties. It allows only for each party's claims and counterclaims to be aired as part of the hearings. The Court's judgment that Guatemala has a legal interest to participate in the case does not affect any of the substantive issues that the Court is yet to rule on. Following the judgment, the Court has fixed 19 May 2026 as the deadline for the submission of Guatemala's written statement as a non-party and 20 July 2026 as the deadline for Belize and Honduras to file their respective written observations to Guatemala's statement.

61st Regular Session of the Human Rights Council

The 61st regular session of the Human Rights Council (HRC61) was held from 23 February to 31 March 2026, bringing together member states to address key global human rights issues. A major highlight was the global update delivered by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, on 27 February 2026, outlining pressing challenges and priorities. During the session, the Council conducted six panel debates and reviewed over 80 reports across various agenda items, reflecting a broad engagement with ongoing human rights concerns. It also strengthened its expert framework by appointing 17 new Special Procedures mandate-holders, covering areas such as adequate housing, contemporary slavery, extreme poverty, the right to food, and human rights situations in specific countries like Myanmar and Cambodia. Additional appointments were made to expert mechanisms and working groups. The Council adopted Universal Periodic Review (UPR) outcome reports for 13 countries, including Andorra, Belarus, and Mongolia, among others. In total, 38 resolutions were adopted, marking a 2.6% decrease compared to the previous session (HRC58). Of these, 28 were adopted by consensus, while 10 required a recorded vote, and none were rejected, indicating broad agreement on most issues.

15th Winter Course



15th Winter Course on *Debating International Environmental Law in the 21st Century* was organised by the ISIL on 23-28 December 2024.The five days course covered the areas including International environmental law; Major concepts and principles in International environmental law; state responsibility; climate change regime at the intersection of North-South Divide; climate change and flexibility mechanisms; common elements in ITLOS and ICJ Advisory Opinion on climate change; legal framework of environment protection during armed conflict; Convention on Biological Diversity 1992; Biological Diversity Beyond National Diversity; climate change induced displacements; legal framework relating to marine environment; issues in trade and environment; investment treaties and environment; ICJ and environmental disputes; public health issues and environment; National Green Tribunal; climate change litigation delivered by eminent speakers namely Prof. Manoj Kumar Sinha; Ms Chaya Bhardwaj; Dr Anwar Sadat; Dr Luther Rangreji; Dr U C Jha; Ms. Meena Panicker; Ms Arpita Goswami; Dr Kanika Sharma; Dr Sunil Kumar Agarwal; Prof. James Nedumpara; Prof Prabhas Ranjan; Prof. Ravindra Pratap; Dr Shikhar Ranjan; Dr Sudha Shrotriya; Prof. Navneet Vaibhav. Panel discussion on the topic "Decoding COP 30 on Climate Change" was also organised. Dr Luther Rangraji, Additional Secretary, L&T, Ministry of External Affairs; Sh. Amitabh Sinha, Deputy Director, The Indian Express were distinguished discussant. The course concluded with the valedictory speech and distribution of certificates to the participants

Workshop on Military Law in India and How to Join Armed Forces as Judge Advocate

On 13-14 February, two-day Workshop on *Military Law in India and How to Join Armed Forces as Judge Advocate* was organized at



ISIL. 40 students from different part of the country participated in the workshop. The workshop was inaugurated by Major General BS Negi, Judge Advocate (Army) who was welcomed and felicitated by Dr U C Jha, Secretary General, ISIL. The workshop focused on the topics including Introduction to Military Law delivered by Brig Alok Shukla, Dy, JAG; Trial in Military Courts emphasizing on Court Martial its kind and power and trial procedure by U C Jha & Award of sentence, review, revision and confirmation proceedings by Maj Gen Nilendra Kumar, Former Judge Advocate General; Appellate Forums for the members of the armed forces by Wg Cdr Ajai Bhalla, Former Dy JAG, IAF; and Judicial Arm of the Armed Forces highlighting on role of Judge Advocate during the peace and armed conflict by Brig Alok Shukla, Dy, JAG. The workshop was successfully completed with the valedictory speech on how to Join Armed Forces as Judge Advocate by Hon'ble Justice Rajesh Menon, Chairperson, Armed Forces Tribunal.

Monthly Seminar on Private International Law at ISIL

From January 2026 to March 2026, the Indian Society of International Law (ISIL) conducted a series of academic programmes under its



Monthly Seminar Series on Private International Law. The lectures were organised in hybrid mode at the ISIL premises in New Delhi and formed part of ISIL's continuing institutional commitment to sustained engagement with emerging issues in private international law. On 28 January, Seminar on the theme *Private International Law on Jurisdiction and Party Autonomy in Cross-Border Disputes: Choice of Court and Choice of Seat* was organized.

The session was delivered by Prof. Leila Choukroune, Prof. of International Law, University of

Portsmouth and Dr Sai Ramani Garimalla, Associate Prof., Faculty



of Legal Studies South Asian University, New Delhi

On 25 February, Seminar on *Conclusion of Cross-Border Contracts and Party Autonomy in International Contract Law* was conducted and the session was delivered by Prof. Symeon C. Semeonides, Alex L. Parks, Distinguished Chair in Law and Dean Emeritus, Willamette University College of Law, USA. The topic of his talk was *Party Autonomy: Then and Now.* The other invited speaker was Dr Nidhi Gupta, Associate Professor, NLU Delhi. The session was moderated by Advocate Saju Jakob and Dr Sunil Kumar Agarwal.



In the month of March on 25th lecture was organized on the theme *Private International Law in Sri Lanka and Nepal: A Regional Dialogue* as a part of its broader thematic focus on the Private International Law in South Asia. Held at the ISIL premise in New Delhi, the event addressed the increasing frequency of cross-border disputes involving multiple jurisdictions. The seminar aimed to foster regional dialogue and provide comparative perspectives on developments in Sri Lanka and Nepal, highlighting migration, digital interactions, and trade and fostering within the broader South Asian context. The seminar featured specialized insights from prominent legal experts representing both jurisdictions. Dr. Balram Prasad Raut, Asst. Prof. South Asian University explored the legal framework and emerging jurisprudence in Nepal, highlighting the unique cross-border legal challenges currently facing the nation. Following this, Mr. Priyantha Gamage, Advocate, Supreme of Sri Lanka delivered a presentation on the Sri Lankan perspective, specifically focusing on conflict of laws principles and the recognition & enforcement of the foreign judgements. The session was initiated with opening remarks and introduction by Asst. Prof. Pawan Kumar, Amity University. The seminar was concluded through a dedicated Q&A session that allowed for engagement between the speakers and the audience.

Discussion on Israel-US War against Iran and Questions of International Law

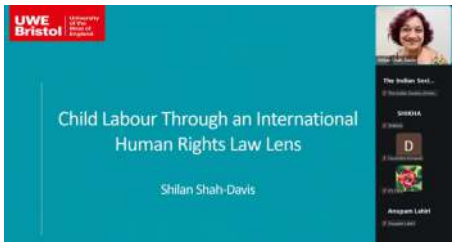


The Indian Society of International Law (ISIL) hosted a high-level hybrid discussion on March 28, 2026, at its premises in New Delhi, titled *Israel-US War against Iran and Questions of International Law.* The session sought to examine the complex legal dimensions and international frameworks surrounding the ongoing conflict, providing a vital platform for academic scrutiny of contemporary geopolitical tensions and their implications for global legal norms. Chaired and moderated by the erudite Vice President of ISIL, Prof. Manimuthu Gandhi, the event featured a detailed presentation by Prof. Chinnasamy Jayaraj, Executive Council Member of ISIL, followed by an impactful address by Dr. Luther Rangreji, Additional Secretary in the Legal and Treaties Division of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India.

During his presentation, Prof. Jayaraj analyzed the legal character of the use of force, specifically addressing whether the military actions by the US and Israel against Iran are permissible under international law. He closely examined the practice of the United States regarding Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter, which strictly prohibits the threat or use of force in international relations. Concluding on a resilient note, Prof. Jayaraj spoke out against the rising nihilistic attitude that international law has lost its efficacy, emphasizing that it can never be destroyed by any force, however evil it might be, as international law remains a fundamental civilizational paradigm.

Dr. Luther Rangreji further enriched the discussion by highlighting the vital importance of international law during both peace and war, noting that the military actions against Iran stand in direct violation of the entirety of Article 2 of the UN Charter, which mandates the peaceful settlement of disputes, non-intervention in domestic affairs, and peaceful conciliation. He pointed out that the strategic aims of this war appear dangerously unfixed and open-ended, expanding from the destruction of nuclear facilities and long-range ballistic missile capabilities toward the broader objective of regime change. Beyond the UN Charter, Dr. Rangreji argued that the attacks breach several International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) circulars, specifically violating protocols on radiological emergencies and provisions governing the safety and protection of nuclear installations and surrounding radiological sites. Furthermore, Dr. Rangreji condemned the comprehensive violations of International Humanitarian Law (IHL), pointing to the unprovoked and merciless killing of individuals, and specifically cited the tragic "MINAB instance" where school-going girls were attacked. He also highlighted breaches against the rules of navigation rights under the Law of the Sea—particularly regarding navigation in vital sea lanes—as well as violations of naval warfare neutrality as laid down under the Hague Rules and read alongside the Geneva Conventions' provisions on self-professed declarations of neutrality. In conclusion, Dr. Rangreji stressed the critical need to evaluate the role of UN Security Council Resolutions and the potential influence of middle powers—including India, Brazil, South Africa, Argentina, Nigeria, and South Korea—in resolving these issues. He warned that the cascading global consequences of the conflict on economic security, energy security, and fertilizer and food supply chains remain dangerously unaddressed. The presentations stimulated a robust and scholarly discussion from the audience, capping off a highly successful event.

Special lecture on *"Child Labour through an International Human Rights Law Lens*



On 31 March 2026, ISIL organized online special lecture on *Child Labour through an International Human Rights Law Lens* by Ms. Shilan Shah-Davis, Director (Academic), Bristol Law School, University of the West of England, UK. She highlighted the combating child labour is a challenging issue especially the emerging forms of child labour in the digital age and involves legal, political, financial and social commitments from all levels of society

Visit of Law Schools



On 4 February, 20 students along with a faculty member from IMS Law College, Greater Noida visited the ISIL. On 4 February, 20 students along with a faculty member from SRM School of Law, Chennai visited ISIL. A group of LLB students along with faculty members from Faculty of Law, University of Kashmir visited the ISIL on 5 February, 2026.



The Secretary General, Dr. UC Jha joined by, Dr. Anwar Sadat, Dr. Kanika Sharma, Ms. Shabnam Khan, and Ms. Yash Sinha engaged with students and faculties to explore the vital role of international law and its potential



as a career path. Students and faculty members were informed in detail about the ongoing and upcoming events conducted at ISIL and were also encouraged to participate in these activities. Students also visited the library.

UPCOMING EVENTS

30 May, 2026	:	One Day Seminar on Biological Weapons Convention: Beyond 50 Years
01-12 June, 2026	:	24th Summer Course on International Law
28 July, 2026	:	One Day Seminar on The Refugee Convention at 75 Years: Then, Now and Beyond in Collaboration with UNHCR, India
1 August, 2026	:	One Day Seminar on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Challenges to the Legal Regime
03-09 August, 2026	:	Seven Days Faculty Development Programme on International Humanitarian Law
8 August, 2026	:	3 Months Certificate Course on Space Laws: Policies and Practice (ONLINE - Saturdays only)

Admission Open Post Graduate Diploma Courses and Certificate Course 2026