**International Law Glossary and Terms**

This collection provides some commonly used words encountered in international law and used within this website. Complete definitions and latin translations can be found through the comprehensive reference resources listed to the left.

**AMICUS CURIAE**

Friend of the court

Legal document filed with the court by a neutral party generally advocating a particular legal position or interpretation. The plural form is amici curiae.

**AGREEMENT**

The term usually indicates a technical or administrative legal instrument dealing with economic, cultural, scientific, and technical issues. Agreement is also used to denote a regional legal instrument that is part of the implementing framework under a larger treaty. See the UN explanation of how an agreement differs from a treaty.

**COMITY**

The principle by which the courts of one jurisdiction may consent to the laws or decisions of another. The comity of nations refers to the recognition accorded by one nation to the laws and institutions of another.

**CONVENTION**

The term is used interchangeably with treaty, but it can also have a specific meaning as a treating binding a broad number of nations. See the UN explanation of how a convention can differ from a treaty.

**DE FACTO** In fact, in reality. Existing in fact.

**DE JURE** By right, lawful

A situation or condition that is based on a matter of law, such as those detailed in ratified treaties.

**DOLUS SPECIALIS** Special intent

In international humanitarian law, genocide is considered unique because of the special intent to destroy in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.

**EX PROPRIO VIGORE**

By its own strength / of its own force

A law or a treaty may be binding ex proprio vigore, or on its own. If an international law is not binding ex proprio vigore in domestic law, then legislative action is needed. A treaty that requires domestic legislation is referred to as a non-self-executing treaty.

**FORUM CONVENIENS**

Convenient forum

The court is convenient to hear a case and has jurisdiction. The doctrine of forum non conveniens ("inconvenient forum") allows a court to refurse to adjudicate a case on grounds of inconvenience.

**IN PARI DELICTO** Equally wrong

One party is as much at fault as the opposing party.

**IN PARI MATERIA**

On like subject matter; same manner

Typically used in regards to statutes which relate the same thing or person.

**IN PERSONAM**

Against the person

Jurisdiction over the person of an individual.

**INTER ALIA**

Among other things

Used to indicate partial disclosure of details, facts, statements, etc. extracted from a whole.

**INTER ARMA SILENT LEGES**

In time of war, the laws are silent

**INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE**

Also sometimes referred to as the World Court. It is the primary judicial branch of the United Nations. See also a brief summary of the court.

**INTERNATIONAL LAW**

The set of rules and legal instruments regarded and accepted as binding agreements between nations. International law is typically divided into public international law and private international law.

**IPSO FACTO** By the fact itself

Example: when a State joins the United Nations, the nation becomes an ipso facto party to the International Court of Justice, since the ICJ Statute is embodied in the UN Charter . However, UN member states are not ipso facto parties to the ICC, which involves ratification of the Rome Statute separate from the UN Charter. See ipso jure.

**IPSO JURE**

By the law itself

Examples: the ratification of a treaty by a State shall ipso jure bind that State to the obligations of that treaty. See ipso facto.

**JURISPRUDENCE CONSTANTE**

Uniform jurisprudence

**JUS**

Law or the body of law

**JUS AD BELLUM**

Right to War

When and under what conditions is war ever justifiable? Jus ad bellum sets the boundaries for the use of force. War was denounced in the 1919 Covenant of the League of Nations and the 1928 Treaty of Paris (Briand-Kellogg Pact). The UN Charter adopted in 1945 states: "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations." Article 2(4). The Charter authorizes the use of force in self defense. Article 51. See Chapter VII and Chapter VIII for more provisions. Compare jus ad bellum (right to use force) with jus in bello (conduct during war).

**JUS COGENS**

Universal peremptory norms, while not defined in any treaty, include those "higher laws" which no country may disregard. If part of a treaty violates jus cogens, then the entire treaty invalidated. See Articles 53 and 64 of the UN Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (VCLT). Generally, six types of crime rise to the level of jus cogens: genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, crimes of aggression, slavery, piracy, and torture. The first four are included in Article 5 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

**JUS GENTIUM**

The law of nations

**JUS GENTIUM PRIVATUM**

Private International Law

**JUS GENTIUM PUBLICUM**

Public International Law

**JUS IN BELLO**

Justice in War

These principles govern the conduct of parties during the law of war and armed conflict, and in a broader sense define the rights and obligations of neutral parties. The basic legal frameworks include, but are not limited to: the 1907 Hague Conventions and Regulations; Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the 1977 Protocols I and II; the 1925 Geneva Gas Protocol; the 1954 Hague Cultural Property Convention; the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention; the 1980 Conventional Weapons Convention; and the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention. See also jus ad bellum.

**LEX LOCI**

Law of the place

The notion that the rights to a legal proceeding are governed by the law of the place where those rights arose.

**MALE CAPTUS, BENE DETENTUS**

Wrongly captured, properly detained

Commonly used in reference to abductions and irregular renditions. "Wrongly captured" refers to the removal of a person from one jurisdiction to another jurisdiction, such as from one country to another country, without bilateral consent. Absent a protest or demand from the originating country to return the person, the person may be "properly detained" and tried in the new jurisdiction.

**MALUM IN SE**

Inherently wrong

An act that is wrong by its nature, regardless of specific prohibition against it.

**MALUM PROHIBITUM**

Prohibited, as by law

An act that is wrong because it is expressly prohibited by law.

**NUNC PRO TUNC**

Now for then

Refers to actions that may be taken with retroactive effect.

**PACTA SUNT SERVANDA**

Pacts must be respected

A basic and central principle of international treaty law and detailed in Article 26 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties: "Every treaty in force is binding upon the parties to it and must be performed by them in good faith."

**PER CURIAM**

By the court

An opinion written by the court with no identified author.

**PROPRIO MOTU**

By its own motion

Acting with one's own initiative.

**PROPRIO VIGORE**

By its own force

Acting independently.

**PROTOCOL**

A protocol to a treaty can clarify terms, add additional text as amendments, and establish new obligations. These new obligations can be quantitative targets for nations to achieve. See the UN explanation of how a protocol extends a treaty.

**RATIFICATION**

The formal acceptance of the rights and obligations of a treaty. If the treaty has entered into force, the treaty thereafter becomes legally binding to parties that have ratified the treaty.

**REBUS SIC STANTIBUS**

At this point of affairs

Under Article 62 of the UN Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (VCLT), a party may be able to modify or terminate a treaty due to an unforeseeable and fundamental change of circumstances. This principle cannot be used for a treaty defining geographical boundaries and cannot be invoked as the result of a breach of a treaty. See the Gabcikovo-Nagymaros Project (Hungary v. Slovakia, ICJ)(applying Article 62).

**RES COMMUNIS**

Belonging to everyone / law of the commons

Typically used to refer to a territorial category for property and lands incapable of being owned, such as the high seas and outer space.

**RES JUDICATA**

A thing decided

A common law doctrine holding that an adjudicated matter cannot be litigated again by another court.

**SELF-EXECUTING TREATY**

A self-executing treaty may be binding ex proprio vigore, or on its own. If an international law requires domestic legislation, the treaty is referred to as a non self-executing treaty.

**SIGNATORY**

A party that has signed an agreement. In regards to a treaty, a signatory is not yet legally bound by the treaty. Instead, a signatory agrees to an obligation not to defeat the object and purpose of a signed treaty. See ratification.

**SOVEREIGN**

A sovereign state is an independent and self-governing nation with the right to control the land, laws, and governance located within its territorial boundaries.

**STARE DECISIS**

To stand by things decided

The doctrine under which courts adhere to precedent on questions of law.

**IN STATU NASCENDI**

In its original form / in birth status / being just born

Under international law, this term generally is used to refer to a nascent state or a political entity seeking recognition of statehood. It also is used to refer to emergent laws, rules, or principles of customary international law.

**SUCCESSION**

State succession applies when a new state is formed from territory once ruled by another sovereign. Essentially, a new state replaces a former state through annexation, union, dissolution, or separation. Partial succession occurs when a sovereign state partly loses its independence or when a partially controlled state becomes fully independent. The criteria for statehood is controversial, with political and legal divisions over which criteria are declaratory versus determinative of the formation of a legitimate state. Some criteria traditionally considered include: a defined territory, a permanent population, a government recognized by that population, the capacity to enter into relations with other states, and recognition by other states. See also the Vienna Convention on Succession of States in Respect of Treaties and Vienna Convention on Succession of States in Respect of State Property, Archives and Debts.

**TERRA NULLIUS**

Empty land / land of no one

Typically used to refer to a territorial category for land that is not occupied but capable of being occupied.

**TREATY**

A formal agreement entered into by two or more nations. See the UN explanation for terms used in the titles of treaties, such as "Convention," "Agreement," "Protocol," and "Charter."

**TRUST**

Typically used to refer to a territorial category for land that is not subject to the sovereignty of any state because of some special status.

**UBUNTU**

An African term loosely translated to mean "humanity towards others." Ubuntu or "Bantu" law embodies important African cultures values, such as the restoration of equilibrium, reconciliation, and formative justice derived from the community.

**WORLD COURT**

Another name for the International Court of Justice. See also a brief summary of the court.

**Glossary of terms used in international law relating to treaties and conventions. \***

**Accession**

Accession is the act whereby a State that has not signed a treaty expresses its consent to become a party to that treaty by depositing an "instrument of accession". Accession has the same legal effect as ratification, acceptance or approval. The conditions under which accession may occur and the procedure involved depend on the provisions of the relevant treaty. Accession is generally employed by States wishing to express their consent to be bound by a treaty where the deadline for signature has passed. However, many modern multilateral treaties provide for accession even during the period that the treaty is open for signature.

**Adoption**

Adoption is the formal act by which negotiating parties establish the form and content of a treaty. The treaty is adopted through a specific act expressing the will of the States and the international organizations participating in the negotiation of that treaty, e.g., by voting on the text, initialing, signing, etc. Adoption may also be the mechanism used to establish the form and content of amendments to a treaty, or regulations under a treaty.

Treaties that are negotiated within an international organization are usually adopted by resolution of the representative organ of that organization. For example, treaties negotiated under the auspices of the United Nations, or any of its bodies, are adopted by a resolution of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Where an international conference is specifically convened for the purpose of adopting a treaty, the treaty can be adopted by a vote of two thirds of the States present and voting, unless they have decided by the same majority to apply a different rule.

**Convention**

Whereas in the last century the term "convention" was regularly employed for bilateral agreements, it is now generally used for formal multilateral treaties with a broad number of parties. Conventions are normally open for participation by the international community as a whole, or by a large number of States. Usually instruments negotiated under the auspices of an international organization are entitled conventions. The same holds true for instruments adopted by an organ of an international organization.

**Declaration**

Interpretative declaration

An interpretative declaration is a declaration by a State as to its understanding of some matter covered by a treaty or its interpretation of a particular provision. Unlike reservations, declarations merely clarify a State's position and do not purport to exclude or modify the legal effect of a treaty.

The Secretary-General, as depositary, pays specific attention to declarations to ensure that they do not amount to reservations. Usually, declarations are made at the time of signature or at the time of deposit of an instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession. Political declarations usually do not fall into this category as they contain only political sentiments and do not seek to express a view on legal rights and obligations under a treaty.

**Mandatory declaration**

A mandatory declaration is a declaration specifically required by the treaty itself. Unlike an interpretative declaration, a mandatory declaration is binding on the State making it.

**Optional declaration**

An optional declaration is a declaration that a treaty specifically provides for, but does not require. Unlike an interpretative declaration, an optional declaration is binding on the State making it.

**Entry into force**

Definitive entry into force

Entry into force of a treaty is the moment in time when a treaty becomes legally binding on the parties to the treaty. The provisions of the treaty determine the moment of its entry into force. This may be a date specified in the treaty or a date on which a specified number of ratifications, approvals, acceptances or accessions have been deposited with the depositary. The date when a treaty deposited with the Secretary-General enters into force is determined in accordance with the treaty provisions.

**Entry into force for a State**

A treaty that has already entered into force may enter into force in a manner specified in it for a State or international organization that expresses its consent to be bound by it after its entry into force. See article 24 of the Vienna Convention 1969.

**Provisional entry into force**

Provisional entry into force may be allowed by the terms of a treaty, for example, in commodity agreements. Provisional entry into force of a treaty may also occur when a number of parties to a treaty that has not yet entered into force decide to apply the treaty as if it had entered into force. Once a treaty has entered into force provisionally, it creates obligations for the parties that agreed to bring it into force in that manner. See article 25(1) of the Vienna Convention 1969.

**Protocol**

A protocol, in the context of treaty law and practice, has the same legal characteristics as a treaty. The term protocol is often used to describe agreements of a less formal nature than those entitled treaty or convention. Generally, a protocol amends, supplements or clarifies a multilateral treaty. A protocol is normally open to participation by the parties to the parent agreement. However, in recent times States have negotiated a number of protocols that do not follow this principle. The advantage of a protocol is that, while it is linked to the parent agreement, it can focus on a specific aspect of that agreement in greater detail.

**Ratification, acceptance, approval**

Ratification, acceptance and approval all refer to the act undertaken on the international plane, whereby a State establishes its consent to be bound by a treaty. Ratification, acceptance and approval all require two steps:

The execution of an instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval by the Head of State, Head of Government or Minister for Foreign Affairs, expressing the intent of the State to be bound by the relevant treaty; and

For multilateral treaties, the deposit of the instrument with the depositary; and for bilateral treaties, the exchange of the instruments between parties.

Ratification, acceptance or approval at the international level indicates to the international community a State's commitment to undertake the obligations under a treaty. This should not be confused with the act of ratification at the national level, which a State may be required to undertake in accordance with its own constitutional provisions, before it consents to be bound internationally. Ratification at the national level is inadequate to establish the State's consent to be bound at the international level.

**Reservation**

A reservation is a statement made by a State by which it purports to exclude or alter the legal effect of certain provisions of a treaty in their application to that State. A reservation may enable a State to participate in a multilateral treaty that it would otherwise be unable or unwilling to participate in. States can make reservations to a treaty when they sign, ratify, accept, approve or accede to it. When a State makes a reservation upon signing, it must confirm the reservation upon ratification, acceptance or approval. Since a reservation purports to modify the legal obligations of a State, it must be signed by the Head of State, Head of Government or Minister for Foreign Affairs. Reservations cannot be contrary to the object and purpose of the treaty. Some treaties prohibit reservations or only permit specified reservations.

**Signature**

Definitive signature (signature not subject to ratification)

Definitive signature occurs where a State expresses its consent to be bound by a treaty by signing the treaty without the need for ratification, acceptance or approval. A State may definitively sign a treaty only when the treaty so permits. A number of treaties deposited with the Secretary-General permit definitive signature. See article 12 of the Vienna Convention 1969.

Simple signature (signature subject to ratification)

Simple signature applies to most multilateral treaties. This means that when a State signs the treaty, the signature is subject to ratification, acceptance or approval. The State has not expressed its consent to be bound by the treaty until it ratifies, accepts or approves it. In that case, a State that signs a treaty is obliged to refrain, in good faith, from acts that would defeat the object and purpose of the treaty. Signature alone does not impose on the State obligations under the treaty.

**Treaty**

Treaty is a generic term embracing all instruments binding under international law, regardless of their formal designation, concluded between two or more international juridical persons. Thus, treaties may be concluded between States;

International organizations with treaty-making capacity and States; or

International organizations with treaty-making capacity.

The application of the term treaty, in the generic sense, signifies that the parties intend to create rights and obligations enforceable under international law.

The Vienna Convention 1969 defines a treaty as "an international agreement concluded between States in written form and governed by international law, whether embodied in a single instrument or in two or more related instruments and whatever its particular designation" (article 2(1)(a)). Accordingly, conventions, agreements, protocols, and exchange of letters or notes may all constitute treaties. A treaty must be governed by international law and is normally in written form. Although the Vienna Convention 1969 does not apply to non-written agreements, its definition of a treaty states that the absence of writing does not affect the legal force of international agreements.

No international rules exist as to when an international instrument should be entitled a treaty. However, usually the term treaty is employed for instruments of some gravity and solemnity.

**Bilateral treaty**

A bilateral treaty is a treaty between two parties.

**Multilateral treaty**

A multilateral treaty is a treaty between more than two parties.

**Acquiescence**

Action or inaction which binds a person legally even though it was not intended as such.

**Addendum**

An attachment to a written document.

**Aggression**

Unjustified use of force against the territorial integrity of another state.

**Aircraft**

An object used for flight through the air.

**Air Law**

The law of aircraft, their passengers and cargo, and their transit above states and other governed territory.

**Alliance**

A military treaty between two or more states, providing for a mutually-planned offensive, or for assistance in the case of attack on any member.

**al Qaeda**

A terrorist organization, nominally Islamic, and originally based in Afghanistan.

**Ambassador**

The highest ranked diplomat assigned to the sending state's embassy in another state, usually at the receiving state's capital city.

**Angary**

The right of a state at war, in circumstances of necessity, to seize or destroy property belonging to a neutral state.

**Assassination**

The targeted, covert killing of an individual without legal process and usually for reasons of, though not necessarily limited to, political or military expediency.

**Asylum**

A secure place of refuge.

**Attorn or Attornment**

To consent, implicitly or explicitly, to a transfer of a right.

**Bioterrorism**

The release of an infectious agent to cause illness or death against a civilian population.

**Cartel**

An agreement between two or more merchants to create or control a monopoly, to lessen or prevent competition.

**Casus Foederis**

Latin: treaty event.

**Chasing Order**

An order sought by a party seeking return of a child that grants custody of the child to that party after the child has already been removed from the jurisdiction.

**Choice of Law Clause**

A term of a contract which sets the jurisdiction for dispute resolution, or the applicable law, in the event of any dispute between the conrtracting parties.

**Citizenship**

The status of an individual as owing allegiance to, and enjoying the benefits of, a designated state.

**Civil War**

Armed conflict by identifiable faction(s) within a nation which threatens or has broken down an existing government, law and order.

**Communism**

A utopian state of government where specified property or means of production are owned by the state and not citizens or persons, and which may also provide for a form of equal distribution of national production.

**Community Law**

The law of the European Union as established by treaties and cases of the EU courts.

**Complementarity**

The co-existence of two or more equally authoritative systems or sources of law.

**Conflict of Laws**

A specialized branch of law which resolves cases which have an element of conflicting foreign law.

**Consensus**

A decision achieved through negotiation whereby a hybrid resolution is arrived on an issue, dispute or disagreement, comprising typically of concessions made by all parties, and to which all parties then subscribe unanimously as an acceptable resolution.

**Consul**

A representative of a foreign government assigned to another country to promote and protect the commercial interests of the subjects of his government.

**Continental Shelf**

Subsoil and sea bed beneath the high seas but contiguous to the coast and which extends as a natural prolongation of the land into and under the sea.

**Coup d'etat**

French: an often violent, always sudden and unlawful replacement of an existing government.

**Crimes Against Humanity**

An international criminal justice offence; the perpetration of acts of war upon a civilian, non-soldier population.

**Customary International Law**

International law which does not have a treaty base but, rather, exists because of international custom.

**Declaration of War**

An explicit warning from one state to another, in the form either of a reasoned intent to commence hostilities or of an ultimatum which carries the same result.

**Démarche**

A word coined by the diplomatic community and referring to a strongly worded warning by one country to another and often, either explicitly or implicitly, with the threat of military consequence.

**Democracy**

A form of government in which the people freely govern themselves; where the executive (or administrative) and law-making (or legislative) power is given to persons chosen by the population; the free people.

**Deportation**

The removal of a foreign national under immigration laws for reasons such as illegal entry or conduct dangerous to the public welfare.

**Diplomacy**

Peaceful representations between states.

**Diplomat**

An official representative of a state, present in another state for the purposes of general representation of the state-of-origin or for the purpose of specific international negotiations on behalf of the diplomat's state-of-origin.

**Diplomatic Immunity**

Immunity extended to diplomat officers from criminal and civil jurisdiction of their host state.

**Doctrine of Specialty**

A typical requirement in extradition: that the receiving state not prosecute the individual being extradicted but for the offence for which extradition was sought.

**Domicile**

The permanent residence of a person; a place to which, even if he or she were temporary absent, they intend to return.

**Droit d'aubaine**

French: an ancient right to keep the property of any deceased foreign subject.

**Droit de naufrage**

French: an ancient right of any land-owner to claim the wreck and men (as slaves) of any ship which wrecked upon waters adjacent to his land.

**Dual Criminality**

A typical requirement of extradition treaties: that the conduct alleged constitute a crime in both the demanding and the delivering state.

**Dual Sovereignty Doctrine**

A maxim of law which allows the double prosecution of a person by more than one state for the same crime, where both states have jurisdiction for the prosecution, and notwithstanding the double jeopardy rule.

**Erga Omnes**

Latin: towards everyone.

**Espionage**

The practice of playing the spy, or of employing spies.

**Ex Patriate**

A person who has abandoned his or her country of origin and citizenship and has become a subject or citizen of another country.

Expatriation

The voluntary renunciation or abandonment of citizenship.

Extradition

The arrest and delivery of a fugitive wanted for a crime committed in another country, usually under the terms of a extradition treaty.

**Extradition Crime**

Conduct which is a crime in both the state seeking extradition and the state extraditing.

**Fascism**

A form of government which is authoritarian, oppressively conservative, who believe in the supremacy of the stated national group, and which, at least initially, purports to vest law-making and administrative authority in the hands of workers or their organizations.

**FISA Order**

(USA) A court order approving electronic surveillance or a search of a target suspected of acting on behalf of a foreign power or terrorist organization.

**Forum Conveniens**

The court or forum most suitable for the ends of justice.

**Fugitive**

One who runs away to avoid arrest, prosecution or imprisonment.

General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)

Multilateral international trade treaty first created in 1947 and frequently amended.

**Genocide**

Systematic killing of persons because of their ethnicity.

**Government**

Organization of law-making and law enforcement; the form and institutions by which law and order are developed and maintained in a society.

Great Britain

England, Wales and Scotland, since 1707.

Habitual Residence

Ordinary residence.

Hawala

Arabic: a form of international money transfer often used to conduct money laundering.

**High Seas**

A term of international and maritime law; the open ocean, not part of the exclusive economic zone, territorial sea or internal waters of any state.

**Hors de combat**

French: outside of combat. A civilian or a soldier who has relinquished or been extricated from combat status.

**Hostis Humani Generis**

Latin: the enemy of mankind.

**Human Dignity**

An individual or group's sense of self-respect and self-worth, physical and psychological integrity and empowerment.

**Human Trafficking**

The transportation or commercial exchange of an individual by coercion or deception for the purpose of exploitation.

**Immunity**

An exemption that a person enjoys from the normal operation of the law such as a legal duty or liability, either criminal or civil.

**Imperialism**

The absorption of subject states, usually for the purpose of harvesting raw materials, into a federalistic political organization.

**In Personam**

Latin: regarding a person; a right, action, judgment or entitlement that is attached to a specific person(s).

**In Rem**

Latin: regarding a thing; proprietary in nature; a right or judgment related to the use or ownership of an item of property.

**International Convention on Salvage, 1989**

An international treaty which standardizes, for signatories, the rules related to salvage and the compensation thereof.

**International Crime**

Crimes which affect the peace or safety of more than one state or which are so reprehensible in nature as to justify the intervention of international agencies in the investigation and prosecution thereof.

**International Criminal Law**

Offences made criminal in international law and related matters such as jurisdiction, courts and tribunals.

**International Law**

A combination of treaties and customs which regulates the conduct of states amongst themselves, and persons who trade or have legal relationships which involve the jurisdiction of more than one state.

**In Terrorem**

Latin: in terror, fright, threat or warning.

**In tota fine erga omnes et omnia**

Latin: for all purposes, in regards to all and everything.

**Jure**

Latin: by right, under legal authority.

**Jure Gestionis**

The private or commercial acts of a state.

**Jure Imperii**

Latin: imperial authority.

**Jus Ad Bellum**

Latin: the legal authority to wage war.

**Jus Cogens**

Latin: peremptory law.

**Jus Detractus**

Latin: The right to deduct.

**Jus Dispositivum**

Law adopted by consent.

**Jus Ex Injuria Non Oritur**

Latin: a legal right or entitlement cannot arise from an unlawful act or omission.

**Law of Nations**

The body of rules that nations in the international community universally abide by, or accede to, out of a sense of legal obligation and mutual concern.

**Law of the Flag**

A principle of maritime and international law; that the sailors and vessel will be subject to the laws of the state corresponding to the flag flown by the vessel.

**Letters Rogatory**

A request of a judge in one jurisdiction to a court of another, to conduct some litigation-related task such as process service or the examination of a specific witness.

**Lex Causae**

Latin; law of the cause.

**Lex Situs**

A conflict of law rule that selects the applicable law based on the venue or location of something.

**Locus**

Latin: the place; venue.

**Locus Regit Actum**

Latin: The law of the place where the facts occurred.

**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

A document which generally is not intended to be legally binding but, if meeting the other criteria, can be, in law, a contract.

**Mobilia Sequuntur Personam, Immobilia Situa**

Latin: movables follow the person, immovables their locality.

**Modi Vivendi**

Latin: limited force. A temporary and often limited interim agreement between states pending negotiation and ratification of a treaty.

**MOU**

Abbreviation of Memorandum of Understanding. A document intended to become a contract but which, if meeting other criteria, can be recognized, in law, as a contract.

**Muslim**

Muslim law: any person who professes as a religion, that there is but one God and that Mohammad is the prophet of that God.

**Muslim Law**

The body of law derived from the Koran and other recorded sayings of the Muslim prophet Muhammad (570-632).

**Nation**

A distinct group or race of people that share history, traditions and culture.

**National Interest**

A matter which has or could have impact upon all other members of society.

**Nazism**

An aggressive political and militaristic form of government including the use of international deceit and expansionism, the arbitrary suspension of the rule of law, and arbitrary eugenics or genocide.

**Nemo Patriam In Qua Natus Est Exuere, Nec Ligeantiae Debitum Ejurare Possit**

Latin: No one can renounce the country in which he was born nor the bond of allegiance.

**Neutrality**

A state's declared impartiality and non-interference in the declared or de facto war of other states.

**Opinio Juris**

Latin: the sense of legal obligation. In international law, acceptance of a practice as sufficient to create legal obligations.

**Ordinarily Resident**

The place where in the settled routine of an individual's life, he or she regularly, normally or customarily lives.

**Perfidy**

The intentional violation of a promise or of some trust, such as misusing a flag of truce during war in order to facilitate an attack.

**Persona Non Grata**

Latin: an unwelcome person. A diplomat who is no longer welcome to the government to which he is accredited.

**Phillips v Eyre, Rule in**

When a tort has been committed on foreign soil, it cannot be brought on home soil unless it was actionable if it had of occurred on home soil, and without legal justification at the place it occurred.

**Piracy Jure Gentium**

Piracy according to the law of nations.

**Piracy (Maritime Law)**

Violence or depredation on the high seas or in the air, for private ends, using aircraft or vessels.

**Pirate**

A person who engages in piracy.

**Private International Law**

A specialized branch of law which resolves cases which have an element of conflicting foreign law.

**Prize**

Property taken at sea from an enemy.

**Prize Court**

Courts instituted for the purpose of trying judicially the lawfulness of captures at sea.

**Prize Law**

Rules of international law under which in war conditions, property and vessels, including transport ships, and their cargoes, may be seized.

**Proprio Motu**

Latin: of one's own initiative.

**Protocol**

International agreements of a less formal nature than a treaty and which amends, supplements or clarifies a treaty.

**Quam legem exteri nobis posuere, eandem illis ponemus**

Latin: What law is imposed by foreign powers on our merchants, we will impose on their's.

**Qui Jure Suo Utitur Neminem Facit Injuriam**

Latin: he who exercises his legal rights harms no one.

**Racial Pollution**

A prohibition of sexual relations with persons outside of defined races.

**Ratione loci**

Latin: by reason of the place.

**Ratione Personae**

Latin: by reason of his person.

**Rebus Sic Stantibus**

Latin: changed circumstances.

**Reconvention**

A rule of jurisdiction which enables a counterclaim against another who, although otherwise beyond the jurisdiction of the court, has voluntarily submitted to jurisdiction by iniating the principal action.

**REMO**

Abbreviation for reciprocal enforcement of maintenance orders, an international system of enforcement of support orders.

**Retorsion**

Discriminatory actions against the citizens of one state by and within that of another, as a gentle reprisal against some perceived injustice imposed upon their own citizens in and by the targeted state.

**Revolution**

Rebellion, often by organized military action, but always with the support of a significant proportion of the population, aimed at the replacement of an existing government.

**Right of Hot Pursuit**

The right of a state to chase and arrest a vessel which has committed an offense within its waters.

**Sanctuary**

A special criminal law option available in Medieval times to persons who had just committed a crime, allowing them to seek refuge in a church or monastery.

**Sex Trafficking**

The coercion of an individual into, or maintained therein, prostitution.

**Sharia Law**

Muslim or Islamic law, both civil and criminal justice as well as regulating individual conduct both personal and moral.

**Sic Utera Tuo Ut Alienam Non Laedas**

Latin: use your property in such a fashion so as to not disturb others.

**Socialism**

A form or system of government which champions the equal sharing of land and equal return of the product of the land and industry to all citizens.

**Sovereignty**

A state's ability to legislate without legal limitation save as set by themselves and the reach of international law.

**Spy / Spies**

A person who acts clandestinely or on false pretenses to endeavour to obtain information of or within another state with the intention of communicating or selling it to others.

Standard

The technical or performance specifications in regards to a product.

**State**

Groups of people which have acquired international recognition as an independent country and which have a population, a common language and a defined and distinct territory.

**State Immunity**

A principle of international law which exempts a State from prosecution or suit for the violation of the domestic laws of another state.

**Sub Spe Rati**

Latin: in the hope of ratification.

**Territorial Sea**

Waters adjacent to a state's coast and subject to its sovereignty.

**Terrorism**

Violence against civilians intended to intimidate a population or a government from taking or abstaining from an act.

**Torture**

The intentional infliction of pain or suffering on an animal or a person and as for the latter, even if for the purpose of obtaining information such as a confession or the names of accomplices, or as a punishment for crime.

**Treaty**

A formal agreement between two states signed by official representatives of each state.

**Tu quoque**

Latin: you too; a justification in international law that the whatever act is being complained of was also committed by the accusing parties.

**Ultra Petita**

Latin: beyond that which is sought.

**United Kingdom**

England and Wales with Scotland (forming Great Britain), and Northern Ireland.

**United States**

The territory over which the sovereignty of the United States extends.

**Universal Jurisdiction**

Jurisdiction over the offender of a heinous crime that is universally condemned internationally even though neither offender nor victim may be citizens.

**Vana Est Illa Potentia Quae Nunquam Venit In Actum**

Latin: power is vain if never put into action.

**War**

The use of violence and force between two or more states to resolve a matter of dispute.

**War Crimes**

Excessive brutality during war, in contravention of an international treaty or convention.

**Waterboarding**

A criminal investigation interrogation technique whereby a person suspected of having or withholding relevant information is blindfolded and bound on their back, sometimes with the face covered with porous or nonporous material, and subjected to water poured over their mouth and nose such as to simulate drowning and to thus, under duress, elicit information.

**Weapon of Mass Destruction**

Device designed to kill humans through the use of atomic or nuclear energy or the release of chemicals, poisons, biological agents or radioactivity.