

**ESPÓSITO MASSICCI, Carlos; PARLETT, Kate, (Eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to The International Court of Justice*, (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2023)**

Edited by Carlos Espósito, Professor of Public International Law at the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, and Kate Parlett, a British lawyer specialized in public international law and international arbitration, this book offers a plural approach that provides the reader with a thorough understanding of the main judicial body of the United Nations, its functioning and contributions. It achieves this through well-balanced chapters that combine information with in-depth analysis, thus fully fulfilling the objectives of the Cambridge Companions series to which it belongs while offering insights for non-specialist readers, it also raises questions for reflection and debate among experts.

Divided into three parts, the first (chapters 1-5) deals with the role of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the second (chapters 6-13) addresses its work in the peaceful settlement of international disputes, and the third (chapters 14-22) examines the impact of its jurisprudence.

Beginning with the body's role in dispute resolution and the development of international law, as well as its involvement in peacekeeping, all contributions are characterized by an objective examination of the specific dimension under study, openly acknowledging any weaknesses where relevant. It is also worth noting the interest given to certain aspects that tend to receive less attention in other publications. These include the role of the judge and their participation in the decision-making process, the institutional context in which the Court operates, the consideration of evidence and fact-finding procedures, working practices, and the peculiarities of the practice of law before the ICJ are presented.

The usefulness of the chapters on jurisdiction and procedure should also be highlighted, considering that recent human rights and armed conflict disputes before the Court, along with the growing reliance on strategic litigation, are helping to develop the procedural dimension of the Court's jurisprudence, adding new questions of jurisdiction and admissibility, strengthening the practice of provisional measures and encouraging the participation of third states through the intervention mechanism, together with the increasing number of requests for advisory opinions.

Finally, the systematic and precise studies on the jurisprudential contributions to the different sectors of international law provide a comprehensive overview, not only of the existing *acquis* but also of its future directions, with the protection of human rights clearly among them. Precisely, in his address to the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly, delivered on 25 October 2024, Judge Nawaf Salam, President of the International Court of Justice, highlighted the importance of the ongoing trend in the Court's jurisprudence towards a greater recognition of the rights and interests of the individual under international law, not only in its orders indicating provisional

measures, but also in its judgments. This trend reinforces the importance of dialogue with other courts, a topic also addressed in the book.

In the Pact for the Future, adopted by the General Assembly on 22 September 2024 (A/RES/79/1), the ICJ has deserved autonomous consideration, as is to be expected. In the action 17, the Heads of State and Government affirm that 'We will fulfil our obligation to comply with the decisions and uphold the mandate of the International Court of Justice in any case to which our State is a party' and they decide to 'Take appropriate steps to ensure that the International Court of Justice can fully and effectively discharge its mandate'. These references are encouraging because, as Carlos Espósito and Kate Parlett rightly point out at the end of the Introduction, 'Whatever its limitations, the Court is a central, essential and established institution for the peaceful settlement of international disputes and the advancement of the international rule of law'. Books such as this one effectively contribute to highlighting the accuracy of these assessments.

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