

## МІЖНАРОДНЕ ПРАВО

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### THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE SETTLEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS: INTERNATIONAL LEGAL ASPECTS

The article examines the characteristics of contemporary international conflicts and highlights the role of international organizations in ensuring their effective resolution. It investigates the key factors that drive the escalation of such conflicts. The consequences of international conflicts are observed not only in economic and humanitarian crises but also in the destruction of transport infrastructure. For instance, the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine has resulted in the damage of national segments of international transport corridors and the blockage of Ukrainian ports. The sharp reduction in Ukrainian grain exports has significantly undermined food security in several countries.

A key difference between international conflicts across different historical periods lies in the changing typology of participants, the reorientation of their objectives, and the transformation of the scale of confrontation. Traditionally, armed conflicts were aimed at territorial conquest or the overthrow of political regimes. Contemporary conflicts, however, are predominantly non-territorial in nature and are largely driven by ideological, religious, economic, or resource-related factors.

The main challenge in addressing contemporary international conflicts is their multifaceted nature and rapid development—from latent tensions to the open use of force—which requires a broad, multi-level approach to their resolution.

Modern international conflicts increasingly have a non-territorial character and arise under the influence of complex ideological, religious, economic, and resource-based tensions between states and non-state actors. They encompass a wide range of interconnected factors that create a new dynamic of confrontation in the global environment. Importantly, contemporary conflicts are rarely limited to a specific geographical area — their consequences appear in security, economic stability, humanitarian conditions, and international logistics.

The main challenge in countering such conflicts lies in their multifactorial nature, unpredictability, and rapid escalation: a situation can shift from hidden tension to open use of force within a very short period of time. This creates a need for new instruments, broader strategic approaches, and multilayered mechanisms of conflict resolution that take into account both local causes of escalation and the wider global implications for international stability.

**Key words:** international conflicts, institutional mechanism, international organizations.

### **Братко І. В., Каспрук Екмен О. С. РОЛЬ МІЖНАРОДНИХ ОРГАНІЗАЦІЙ У ВРЕГУЛЮВАННІ МІЖНАРОДНИХ КОНФЛІКТІВ: МІЖНАРОДНО-ПРАВОВІ АСПЕКТИ**

У статті проаналізовано особливості сучасних міжнародних конфліктів та визначено роль міжнародних організацій у забезпеченні їх ефективного врегулювання. Досліджено ключові чинники, що зумовлюють ескалацію міжнародних конфліктів. Зазначено, що наслідки міжнародних конфліктів проявляються не лише в економічних та гуманітарних кризах, а й у руйнуванні транспортної інфраструктури. Як приклад, збройна агресія Російської Федерації проти України призвела до пошкодження національних ділянок міжнародних транспортних коридорів та блокування українських портів. Унаслідок різкого скорочення експорту українського зерна рівень продовольчої безпеки у низці держав помітно знизився.

Ключова відмінність між міжнародними конфліктами різних історичних періодів полягає у зміні типології учасників, переорієнтації їхніх цілей та трансформації масштабу протистояння. Традиційно збройні конфлікти були спрямовані на територіальне завоювання або зміну політичних режимів.

Сучасні міжнародні конфлікти дедалі частіше мають нетериторіальний характер і виникають під впливом складних ідеологічних, релігійних, економічних та ресурсних суперечностей між державами й недержавними акторами. Вони охоплюють широке коло факторів, що поєднуються між собою та створюють нову динаміку про-

тистояння у глобальному середовищі. Важливо те, що конфлікти сьогодні рідко обмежуються конкретною географічною територією — їх наслідки проявляються у сфері безпеки, економіки, гуманітарній площині та міжнародній логістиці.

Головна проблема протидії таким конфліктам полягає у їхній багатофакторності, непередбачуваності та високій швидкості розвитку: ситуація може перейти від прихованого напруження до відкритого застосування сили буквально за короткий проміжок часу. Це створює потребу в нових інструментах, ширших стратегічних підходах і багаторівневих механізмах врегулювання, які враховують як локальні причини ескалації, так і глобальні наслідки для міжнародної стабільності.

*Ключові слова:* міжнародні конфлікти, інституційно-правовий механізм, міжнародні організації.

**Introduction.** The modern world requires predictable behavior of states, which cannot be ensured without relying on the strengthening of international law. To understand the role of international law in the development of international relations, it is enough to analyze its "evolutionary map". Historical studies demonstrate that, for extended periods, states predominantly relied on the use of military force as a means of resolving inter-state disputes. At the same time, as O. Schachter noted, states recognize the obligation to "refrain from the threat or use of force in their international relations," which has become a cornerstone principle of the contemporary legal order [1, p. 1620].

For many centuries, aggression and expansion were customary means of defending national interests. For a long time, people perceived no distinction between an aggressor state and a state victim of aggression: their actions were considered equally legitimate. Over time, this was constrained by prohibitions against violating the laws and customs of war. The First and Second World Wars, which drenched the world in blood, once again demonstrated the importance of the development of international law. Professor M. Buromenskyi notes: "Never throughout its entire history has international law enjoyed such a level of trust and respect as it did in the twentieth century" [2, p. 5].

Despite the availability of extensive information, knowledge, and experience, it remains impossible to determine with certainty which factors constitute the primary causes of the international community's inability to reliably anticipate large-scale conflicts and effectively prevent or resolve them, and which factors are secondary. An example of this inability to predict is the Treaty of Versailles of 1919, which ended the First World War and, ostensibly, should have prevented further global conflicts. The key point is that it should have, but it did not. Numerous other examples illustrate the same pattern. It is worth mentioning the German philosopher O. Spengler, who observed that future generations would face considerable difficulty in determining who is to blame for large-scale wars: "Who, by dominating the press and telegraph cables of the whole Earth, has the power to establish in world opinion those truths that he needs for his own political purposes and to maintain them for as long as he needs them?" [3, p. 462]. O. Spengler's obser-

vation highlights that the manipulative potential inherent in information structures can significantly complicate both public understanding of international conflicts and the objective assessment of the actors responsible for their escalation.

**Task.** The purpose of the article is to examine the international legal role, functions, and effectiveness of international organizations in the prevention, management, and peaceful settlement of international conflicts. The study aims to analyze the mechanisms, instruments, and legal frameworks through which these organizations influence conflict resolution processes, as well as to evaluate their contribution to maintaining international peace, strengthening the rule of law, and promoting stability within the global system.

**Research results.** Institutional mechanisms play an important role in the resolution of international conflicts. How is this manifested? First and foremost, international organizations serve as a platform for dialogue at both bilateral and multilateral levels. The United Nations (UN) is the main platform for collective action in conflict prevention and resolution. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has developed a system for early conflict prevention and monitoring. The OSCE helps prevent local disputes from escalating into large-scale conflicts through observation missions, the organization of dialogue forums, and the promotion of human rights and democratic governance [4]. The European Union (EU) plays a significant role in conflict management. Through its programs supporting the rule of law, institutional reform, and democratic governance, the EU promotes stability and security both within its borders and in neighboring regions [5, p. 5-7]. Its efforts include mediation, legal assistance, and capacity-building initiatives that help prevent conflicts and strengthen the resilience of local institutions. Specialized institutions, such as the European Public Law Organisation (EPLO), also play an important role in strengthening international law. The European Public Law Organization is the pen with which numerous legal decisions have been written—decisions that shape the modern foundations of the international public law system and define the standards for the legislation of the EU and the leading countries of the world.

One of the conditions for safeguarding the world order and maintaining the stability of the global map is the prevention of armed clashes between states. This condition is enshrined in the international principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes. The mechanism for implementing this principle exists in the form of a system of international legal means for such settlement. One of the essential conditions for safeguarding the world order and preserving the stability of the international system, as historical experience repeatedly demonstrates, lies in the effective prevention of armed clashes between states. Throughout different epochs, the recurrence of interstate violence has shown how quickly regional disputes can escalate into broader conflicts with global consequences. For this reason, the international community gradually came to recognize that the security of the global system depends not merely on military deterrence or political alliances but on the existence of reliable, institutionalized mechanisms that allow states to address their disagreements before they reach a critical point.

Over time, states have translated this principle into a concrete body of procedures and instruments designed to facilitate dialogue, reduce uncertainty, and create space for compromise even in situations where political positions appear irreconcilable. The mechanism for putting this principle into practice has developed into a multifaceted system of international legal means, encompassing diplomatic negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, and various regionally institutionalized forms of dispute resolution. Each of these methods evolved in response to the recognition that different types of conflicts require distinct approaches and that no single technique can universally address the diverse range of disputes that arise in contemporary international relations. Collectively, however, these mechanisms form the backbone of a legal architecture intended to channel interstate disagreements into peaceful processes, thereby strengthening the resilience and coherence of the international order as a whole.

As is commonly believed, modern international law was established by the UN Charter and dates back to the end of World War II. The Preamble to the UN Charter clearly outlines the goal of creating conditions under which justice and respect for obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained [6]. Modern multilateral cooperation creates new opportunities for the development of international law. One of the conditions for protecting world order and the immutability of the world map, as history proves, is the prevention of armed clashes between states. This condition is enshrined in such an international principle as the peaceful settlement of international disputes. The mechanism for implementing this principle exists in the form of a system of interna-

tional legal means of such settlement. According to Art. 33 of the UN Charter, states that are parties to a dispute, regardless of its scale, if it may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security, "shall, first of all, seek a settlement of the dispute by negotiation, inquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional bodies or agreements, or other peaceful means of their own choice" [7, p.349-363]. However, despite all this, it is still unclear how to prevent conflicts. International conflicts continue to arise and take on new shades.

Today, scholars increasingly refer to the phenomenon of the globalization of international relations, a process that exerts a profound and multifaceted influence on the development and functioning of international law. What implications does this phenomenon carry? This is, first of all, an increase in the interdependence of states, the division of not only positive achievements, such as, for example, the New Silk Road, but also receiving slaps in the form of negative consequences, such as the COVID-19. In view of this, the development of international law is of paramount importance. In this context, it is appropriate to quote Professor Y. Voloshyn, who notes: "Misunderstanding the nature of globalization is one of the reasons why some governments abuse interdependence, using unilateral policies to use it only in their own interests. The normal development of globalization depends on countering such policies through joint efforts of members of the international community. International law is called upon to play an important role in this" [8, p. 89].

However, it should be underscored that the international community still lacks the capacity to prevent either the emergence of conflicts or their subsequent consequences. More accurately, the ability of the international community to avert conflicts remains significantly constrained. Nevertheless, there is reason to believe that the growing number of international governmental and non-governmental organizations involved in conflict prevention and in the dissemination of international legal knowledge may, in the future, contribute to reducing the number of missed opportunities.

At one time, the German philosopher F. Engels expressed the idea that where there is no commonality of interests, there can be no unity of purpose, let alone unity of action. Today, this idea has acquired new dimensions in the words of Professor S. Flogaitis, Director of the European Public Law Organization (EPLO—this is the abbreviated name under which the organization is internationally recognized), particularly regarding the importance of international dialogues. In one of his interviews, the scholar noted: "The Maastricht Treaty was signed at the end of the 1980s, and I considered that it could be use-

ful for Europe's political future... I also believed that it could contribute to the wider dissemination of European values through public law worldwide" [9]. Indeed, law across a vast expanse of the globe is a creative, not destructive, force.

S. Flogaitis's words did not remain merely theoretical or illusory. His seminal remark, "*There is an issue here*", addressed to colleagues Gérard Timsit and David Williams, laid the foundation for the subsequent establishment of the European Public Law Group, which brought together distinguished scholars. The European Public Law Group initiated several projects, one of which was the creation of the EPLO—an international organization established pursuant to an international treaty, designed to accumulate knowledge and subsequently disseminate it from Europe to the wider world through the dialogue of civilizations.

International law, in all its dimensions, is that which, at the very least, if not an absolute guarantee against wars, serves as a qualitative vaccine for their prevention. It is enough to recall the words of the writer Ivan Bahrianyi from his novel *The Man Who Runs Over the Abyss*, which describe the consequences of war: "In the apocalyptic roar of this dark age of despair, which for many seemed a foretold biblical end of the world, they themselves, like everything around them, were destroyed and desolate. They stared into the abyss, pouring intoxicating poison into it, striking it with songs, and burying it with audacious, blasphemous, desperate laughter so as not to howl suddenly into the black void, like primitive wolf souls beneath the cold moon. They sang over the black chaos, over the chasm of horror, savagery, cruelty, and death, so as not to erupt suddenly in burning tears of despair, in the drawn-out cry of the lost, the ruined, the homeless, the utterly solitary human heart" [10].

One of the essential pillars on which contemporary international law rests is the organizational-legal framework, encompassing international organizations and bodies. Various international organizations have been established to carry out different tasks across numerous spheres, yet their common feature is that they play a leading role in the processes of norm-setting and the promotion of the rule of law. Historical and contemporary examples help draw the important conclusion that the activities of international organizations are crucial for the successful implementation of effective democratic governance and the maintenance of peace.

Today, there exist international organizations whose significance is increasing year by year, not only in Europe but also worldwide. It goes without saying—and no proof is necessary, despite the criticisms of detractors, who are few—that the promotion of European values in Ukraine, as well as in other states, should become a strategic priority. At the same time, this does

not imply a mere mechanical imitation of various recommendations, as such an approach often leads to negative outcomes. Rather, the emphasis should be on the prudent adaptation and thoughtful incorporation of foreign experience.

One of the most notable examples is the European Public Law Organization (EPLO), which leverages public law expertise to enhance dialogue between states, support legal capacity building, and promote the rule of law as a means to prevent conflicts. The EPLO, in the form in which it exists today, owes its establishment to the governments of the Hellenic Republic, the Italian Republic, and the Republic of Cyprus, which founded it in 2007 [11]. Thus, it can be stated that for many years now it has served as a universal platform for the study and development of legal thought and public law. From the outset, the Organization was created as an international body and, accordingly, enjoys all the privileges and immunities that follow from this status. Although the institution was formally established in 2007, we can nevertheless speak of more than twenty years of its activity. In this context, it should once again be emphasized that the EPLO cannot be regarded as a *tabula rasa*.

It is also essential to highlight the year 1989—the year of the establishment of the European Group of Public Law, created with the aim of promoting and advancing European public law. This body constitutes a European network of judges, lawyers, legal scholars, and practitioners [12]. The European Group of Public Law introduced a number of ideas that contributed to the founding of the EPLO and now functions as a scientific advisory body, providing recommendations and feedback on the Organization's activities, while evaluating the information gathered in the course of its work in terms of its applicability and its impact on the political and sociological context.

Since its creation, the European Group of Public Law has held annual conferences at which its members present and discuss their reports on a collectively chosen theme. The EPLO engages with a wide range of issues—from the interpretation and comparison of legal systems to offering innovative solutions for institutional development, education, and environmental protection. Attention should also be drawn to the Organization's multi-dimensional research activity in the fields of international law and European public law. It initiates the development of various educational programs, produces studies, and conducts advisory activities. The EPLO is also committed to promoting the rule of law and the spread of democracy across the globe. The Organization encourages the study and application of law and the development of high-quality education in third countries. The map of EPLO's activity is truly impressive: its work is not limited to Europe but extends to the Mediterranean coun-

tries, the Balkan region, the Caucasus and post-Soviet states, the Middle East, Central and South Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Lesser Antilles. In view of this, one may assert that the EPLO is a global network for the development and dissemination of international legal knowledge in the fields of national, comparative, and international public law, as well as for the promotion of European values and democratic institutions worldwide.

Thus, the analysis of the EPLO and other international organizations demonstrates that they play a crucial role in maintaining peace and preventing international conflicts. In this context, a broad spectrum of international organizations—from those with strong authority in security matters to those primarily functioning as platforms for dialogue—collectively contribute to the effective resolution of contemporary international conflicts. For instance, the UN, through the Security Council, can authorize peacekeeping missions, impose sanctions, and coordinate diplomatic negotiations, which enables a rapid response to threats to international security.

The OSCE applies an early-warning model for conflict prevention, monitors regional situations, organizes dialogue forums, and promotes the principles of human rights and democratic governance, which helps prevent local conflicts that may escalate [13, p. 17]. The EU, through programs supporting the rule of law, institutional reforms, and the development of democratic structures, strengthens the ability of states to manage crisis situations effectively and contributes to the stability of neighboring regions [13; 14, p. 15]. EPLO focuses on enhancing the legal competence of states and international institutions through research activities, educational programs, and governmental consultations, which helps reinforce institutional mechanisms for conflict prevention [15, p. 3]. Taken together, the activities of these organizations form a multi-level system of peace support, combining legal, political, and practical means to reduce the risk of escalating violence and ensure long-term stability in international relations.

**Conclusions.** International organizations play a central role in preventing and managing international conflicts by providing both legal and practical mechanisms to support peace and stability in international relations. Their activities include early conflict warning, mediation, provision of legal assistance, and the strengthening of democratic institutions. Organizations such as the UN, OSCE, EU, and EPLO establish a multi-level conflict management system that integrates political, legal, and practical instruments. Although EPLO does not

participate directly in peacekeeping operations, it contributes to the strengthening of international law and the development of the capacities of states and regional institutions through legal education, research, and advisory activities. Collectively, these efforts provide a foundation for more effective conflict prevention and the implementation of international legal obligations.

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