



CULTURAL HERITAGE IN ARMED CONFLICT: A MULTIFACETED APPROACH TO CRIMINAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN INTERNATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

This paper investigates the protection of cultural heritage in armed conflict through an interdisciplinary analysis of international legal frameworks. It conceptualises cultural heritage as a universal legal good whose preservation transcends state sovereignty, embodying common human interests and intergenerational rights. The study traces the historical evolution of protective norms within international humanitarian law, with particular attention to instruments such as the 1954 Hague Convention and its Protocols, assessing their development and limitations. It critically assesses key challenges, including the conceptual fragmentation between “cultural property” and “cultural heritage” and the resulting tensions with criminal law’s principle of legal certainty. Adopting both international humanitarian law and international criminal law perspectives, it further examines the shift from state-centred obligations to individual criminal responsibility, considering ICC case law including *Al Mahdi*, *Ntaganda*, and *Al Hassan*. By emphasising the intersecting bodies of law, the paper underscores persistent obstacles to effective enforcement and the need for greater conceptual clarity to support a coherent, rights-based international approach to cultural heritage protection in armed conflict.