

# **A World Without Laws:** the Erosion of International Law in the 21st Century.

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## **Abstract**

Historically, early societies relied on unwritten rules based on shared values, religious beliefs, and practical necessities to maintain order and resolve disputes. However, these societies were often plagued by injustice, bias, corruption, and abuse of power, which stemmed from adherence to what can be described as the “law of the jungle.” Over time, these informal systems evolved into structured and codified legal frameworks that laid the foundation for modern statehood. Nevertheless, the current global landscape reveals a dangerous shift: a decline in the rule of law and an increasing reliance on power and force, which has led to the disregard of laws and agreements established between states after the Second World War. In light of contemporary political events and ongoing conflicts, this study demonstrates how international legal norms have weakened, state sovereignty is increasingly violated, and reliance on force has grown, signaling a return to the primitive “law of the jungle.” Ultimately, the study argues that unless international institutions are strengthened, genuine accountability is enforced, and perpetrators of war are brought to justice, the global order and even the 71-year-old United Nations may not endure.

## Introduction

When we trace back the historical roots of early human societies, it is widely understood that during the so-called “Primitive Age,” there were no formal laws or systems to regulate social order. That era was characterized by what is commonly referred to as the “law of the jungle.” Upon hearing this term, one can easily grasp its meaning and underlying purpose. It was an ancient and rudimentary system through which early societies were governed, where rules were determined by strength and power. Justice, in most cases, was subjective—shaped by the will and interests of those in authority. The strongest individuals or groups prevailed, while the weak were oppressed, lacking rights or recognition. This form of law had no clear structure and offered no protection for individual rights; instead, it primarily served the interests of those in power, such as leaders or self-proclaimed kings.<sup>1</sup>

As human populations expanded and social interaction became increasingly complex, it became necessary to move strategically beyond the “law of the jungle,” as societies came to realize that such a system was not suitable for governing people and could not endure in the long term.<sup>2</sup>

## The Emergence of Laws

Early societies in Mesopotamia took one of the first steps toward civilization, pioneering advancements that laid the foundation for modern governance. They established laws and systems of government to organize and unify the regions they inhabited. Hammurabi, the king of Babylon (1792–1750 BCE), introduced a legal code consisting of 282 articles. Although his code was not the first of its kind, it was among the most advanced and clearly defined, and it significantly influenced the laws and customs of other societies around the world. This code addressed matters such as property, marriage, trade, theft, and other crimes. It marked a turning point in moving away from the “law of the jungle,” which had long hindered early societies and

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<sup>1</sup> By Akshat rai “Comparison Between The "Law Of The Jungle" And Modern Law” -sep-2026.

[Comparison Between The "Law Of The Jungle" And Modern Law](#)

<sup>2</sup> Ahad Abdulmajeed “**How Law Evolved On Earth**”-nov.2025.

contributed to conflict, injustice, and instability, toward the establishment of written laws based on a social contract.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, the ancient Romans were true pioneers in the development of law. They created a highly advanced legal system grounded in reason and order. The Romans introduced the *Law of the Twelve Tables*, an early legal code that systematically regulated fundamental aspects of society, including judicial procedures, citizens' rights, family matters, property and inheritance, as well as crimes and their punishments. Its purpose was to make laws clear and publicly known in order to promote justice and equality, and to prevent bias and abuse of power reflected in principles such as "a person is innocent until proven guilty" and the idea that law should be based on reason and fairness.<sup>4</sup> Over time, legal systems continued to evolve, with growing emphasis on democracy and the concept of the "social contract," strongly influenced by early Greek societies.

## **The 20th Century**

After the progress achieved in the creation and application of laws, and as civilization expanded and humanity advanced into modern innovation, there emerged a troubling tendency to revert to the "law of the jungle," where established laws were increasingly disregarded. The 20th century witnessed deeply tragic events, during which the dignity and lives of many people were gravely violated. It was the century in which the two most brutal and bloodiest wars in human history occurred. This era became marked by the widespread application of the "law of the jungle," where powerful nations acted without restraint, while weaker ones were left vulnerable, and dominance was determined by sheer strength.

In July 1914, the principles of law and peaceful coexistence were abandoned, leading to one of the most devastating events in history. Rival powers competing for dominance in Europe and across the world engaged in full-scale conflict, resulting in the outbreak of the First World War. As widely known, this war caused immense destruction in human life, property, and the environment. The total number of military and civilian casualties in World War I is estimated to be between 15 and 22 million deaths, with approximately 21 million soldiers wounded, making it

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<sup>3</sup> by [Joshua J. Mark](#) "Code of Hamurabi"-24 June 2021.

<sup>4</sup> By ahad Abdulmajeed "How law evolved on earth"-Nov-2025.

one of the deadliest conflicts in human history.<sup>5</sup> Of the total deaths, about 9 to 11 million were soldiers, while civilian deaths ranged from approximately 6 to 13 million. The Triple Entente (Allied Powers) lost around 6 million soldiers, while the Central Powers suffered nearly 4 million military deaths. At least 2 million people died from disease, and around 6 million were reported missing and presumed dead.<sup>6</sup>

After World War I came to an end, the period that followed became known as the “interwar period.” This era can be divided into three phases based on the impact of the war.

- The first phase was marked by widespread realization among affected societies of the severe consequences of the war, including human loss and economic destruction, particularly in Europe. Countries began reconstruction efforts and initiatives to restore their devastated economies, while also engaging in intense negotiations over war reparations and peace agreements such as the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>7</sup>
- The second phase was a period of economic growth and relative political stability, which led to increased consumption and entertainment, especially in major cities. This era became known as the “Roaring Twenties.” However, this progress came to an abrupt end following the Wall Street Crash of 1929, which triggered a worldwide economic crisis.
- The third phase was characterized by severe economic hardship, prompting many governments to adopt protectionist economic policies and direct intervention. At the same time, extremist regimes began to emerge, such as Nazi Germany, ultimately leading to the outbreak of another global conflict, World War II.<sup>8</sup>

Unfortunately, twenty years after World War I, despite a series of agreements—including the Treaty of Versailles, the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, the Treaty of Trianon, and the Treaty of Neuilly-sur-Seine—as well as the establishment of the League of Nations, all failed to restore lasting peace and order in the world or to establish new frameworks of security and the supremacy of law (“Rule of Law”).

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<sup>5</sup> Herbert, Tom (11 November 2018). ["World War I in numbers: The mind-blowing scale of WWI"](#). *The Standard*. Retrieved 24 March 2026.

<sup>6</sup> ["War Losses | International Encyclopedia of the First World War \(WWI\)"](#). *Encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net*. Retrieved 5 December 2021

<sup>7</sup> [Mark Cartwright](#) “treaty of versailles” 23 September 2024. [Treaty of Versailles - World History Encyclopedia](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Augusto Gayubas](#) “Interwar Period” (oct-2023) [Interwar period: what it was, history and stages](#)

After that, a catastrophe unlike anything the world had ever experienced erupted once again. Nations sharpened their knives and pledged to destroy many innocent peoples and communities. World War II became the deadliest conflict in human history. It is estimated that between 60 and 75 million people died, including those who perished due to famine, hunger, and disease.<sup>9</sup> This represented approximately 3% of the world's population, which was estimated at 2.3 billion in 1940. Direct deaths caused by the war (including both military personnel and civilians) are estimated at between 50 and 56 million, while an additional 19 to 28 million people died from war-related disease and famine. Civilian deaths alone reached between 50 and 55 million, whereas military deaths ranged from 21 to 25 million, including nearly 5 million prisoners of war who died in captivity.<sup>10</sup>

It is worth noting that during World War II, Japan experienced an unprecedented tragedy after the United States dropped nuclear weapons on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. The nuclear explosions caused massive loss of life.<sup>11</sup> In Hiroshima, approximately 70,000–80,000 people died instantly, with the total number of deaths reaching nearly 140,000 by the end of 1945 due to injuries and radiation. Similarly, in Nagasaki, about 40,000 people died immediately, while the total death toll rose to nearly 70,000 by the end of 1945.<sup>12</sup>

This is widely regarded as an example of what happens when international laws and agreements are disregarded and when ethics and humanity are cast aside. The loss of life on such a scale is beyond comprehension. After the devastation resulting in the killing of nearly one hundred million people, the destruction of national economies and production systems, and the collapse of legal frameworks that once governed states and societies, there arose a global outcry and deep regret. Every nation was in mourning, as millions of its people had perished, and both military strength and economic capacity had been severely weakened. There was a shared realization of the need to awaken and come to terms with the consequences, to end the war, and to collectively

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<sup>9</sup> Beevor, Antony. *The Second World War*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson. p. 1. [ISBN 9780297844976](#).: Hastings, Max (2011). *All Hell Let Loose: the World at War 1939-1945*. London: Harper Press. pp. 669–670. [ISBN 9780-00-733809-2](#).

<sup>10</sup> Hastings, Max (2011). *All Hell Let Loose: the World at War 1939-1945*. London: Harper Press. pp. 669–

<sup>11</sup> [Paul TibbetsCurtis LeMay](#) “**Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki – 1945**” (June 5, 2014) [Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki - 1945 - Nuclear Museum](#).

<sup>12</sup> [By explorejapan guide](#) “[How many people died in the Hiroshima and Nagasaki attacks?](#)”

reflect on the tragedy. The major powers stepped back from confrontation and sought to regain reason, returning to the negotiating table and to the rule of law.

## **The Re-establishment of Modern International Laws and Agreements**

After World War II ended in 1945, nations were left exhausted and devastated by war, and the world longed for a peace that could erase the destruction and trauma caused by both the First and Second World Wars. The conflict clearly demonstrated the urgent need for international legal systems and agreements capable of safeguarding peace, security, and human rights. Subsequently, representatives from 50 countries gathered at the United Nations Conference on International Organization, held in San Francisco between April 25 and June 26, 1945. Over the following two months, they jointly drafted and signed the United Nations Charter, which laid the foundation for a new international organization—the United Nations—with a strong hope of preventing future global conflicts<sup>13</sup>.

At the same time, new agreements and principles were introduced to define how states should behave and to prevent future wars. These efforts emphasized the prohibition of the use of force and promoted greater international accountability. Thus, the year 1945 marked the beginning of the re-establishment of modern international legal systems and agreements.

Among the most significant instruments highlighted were:

- United Nations Charter – October 24, 1945
- Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations – April 1961
- Paris Peace Treaties – February 1947
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights – December 1948
- Fourth Geneva Convention – 1949
- Genocide Convention – December 1948
- Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness – August 1961

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<sup>13</sup> United Nation “History of united nation” [History of the United Nations | United Nations](#)

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights – December 1966
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – December 1966
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination – December 1974.<sup>14</sup>

These agreements, along with many others, formed the foundation for restoring global peace and ensuring adherence to jointly agreed international laws and treaties. They created responsibilities and obligations for participating states (state parties), aimed at preventing the recurrence of wars and sudden outbreaks of violence across the world. These legal frameworks shaped global political life and governance. In the early stages of these agreements, it was observed that countries implemented them with caution, and each state avoided violating them, recognizing that any breach could have serious consequences. If you would like further details on these agreements, you can read this by clicking this link “([The 10 most important international treaties after World War II – ICRP](#))

For a period of time, the world benefited from these international agreements and their legal systems, which were seen as a boundary regulating both weaker and stronger states alike. Civilization advanced, and direct large-scale wars were largely avoided. However, it cannot be ignored that, over time, threats and tensions between states re-emerged. Competition intensified in economic, military, and even ideological spheres. States seeking to attack others often looked for justifications to bypass United Nations Charter provisions particularly Article 51, which concerns self-defense. They claimed that the targeted state posed a threat to their security, using this as a pretext to justify actions that effectively violated relatively new international agreements that had not even existed for a full century.

Reflecting again, the United States invaded Afghanistan on October 7, 2001, following the September 11 attacks. The operation, known as Operation Enduring Freedom, targeted the Taliban regime that was in power at the time.

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<sup>14</sup> ICRP busapest “ **The 10 most important international treaties after World War II**” (Sep-2020)

The war caused widespread destruction, the deaths of thousands of civilians and soldiers, and the displacement of millions of people, becoming one of the longest wars in U.S. history. Although the Taliban government was initially overthrown, the conflict continued for nearly two decades until 2021, when U.S. and allied forces officially withdrew, allowing the Taliban to regain control of the country. This invasion is widely regarded as a violation of international law, justified by the claim of overthrowing the Afghan government on the grounds that the 9/11 attacks were planned from Afghan territory a rationale similarly used in the case of Iraq.<sup>15</sup>

Likewise, in October 2002, the U.S. Congress authorized the use of military force against Iraq. At dawn on March 20, 2003, Operation Iraqi Freedom began, with approximately 295,000 U.S. and allied troops crossing the Kuwaiti border into Iraq. This operation has been widely considered unlawful and in violation of international law. It is estimated that around 461,000 people died in Iraq as a result of the war between 2003 and 2011, while the financial cost to the United States is estimated at approximately \$3 trillion.<sup>16</sup>

These wars, and others like them, paved the way for the erosion of the international legal order established after World War II—a system that had been created with great hope of bringing lasting peace and stability to the world. However, it became evident that major powers were engaging in military and political interventions that clearly contradicted international law.

## **The General Breakdown of International Law**

As we have seen, the system of international law established after World War II has suffered significant damage. There was a clear need to halt the erosion of these legal frameworks and to ensure compliance with the directives of the United Nations and its affiliated bodies, while also strengthening justice and equality among member states. However, efforts to persuade major powers to stop violating international law proved unsuccessful. Instead, there has been a continued and deliberate disregard for the rules of the United Nations and its institutions. These actions risk triggering a third global conflict—one that could be far more destructive than previous wars, given the world's advanced military capabilities and technological progress.

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<sup>15</sup> [Afghanistan War | History, Casualties, Combatants, Facts, & Timeline | Britannica](#)

<sup>16</sup> BBC News “Why did the US and allies invade Iraq, 20 years ago?” (May-2023)  
[Why did the US and allies invade Iraq, 20 years ago?](#)

On October 7, 2023, Hamas launched an attack on southwestern Israel. This was preceded by ongoing violations and killings attributed to Israel against Palestinians, including displacement and the seizure of Palestinian property. These developments led to the outbreak of a major and intense conflict between Israel and Hamas.<sup>17</sup> The Israeli invasion of Gaza Strip is widely regarded as one of the most brutal assaults carried out against a people and a territory. This war has exposed the extent to which states have harshly violated international law. Beyond the invading state, Israel, there are also major powers that have supported its actions, despite their contradiction with both humanitarian principles and international legal norms. The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has condemned the high number of civilian casualties in the ongoing conflict in Gaza. Its analysis indicated that nearly 70% of the verified deaths during the first six months of the Israeli offensive were women and children.<sup>18</sup>

This points to conduct that falls outside the accepted ethics of warfare and may be interpreted as genocide. It also suggests that the international community, including the United Nations, should have taken decisive action against Israel. However, many states appeared instead to support or even endorse the actions taking place in Gaza. During the first week of the conflict, 94 attacks on healthcare facilities in Gaza were recorded, resulting in the deaths of 29 medical personnel and injuries to 24 others.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, on November 30, the World Health Organization reported 427 attacks on healthcare facilities across the West Bank and Gaza Strip, leading to 566 deaths and 758 injuries.<sup>20</sup>

In addition, in late March 2024, the United Nations recorded more than 200 attacks carried out by Israel on schools in the Gaza Strip, with at least 53 schools completely destroyed.<sup>21</sup>

By July 2024, all 19 universities in Gaza had suffered severe damage. Approximately 80% of university buildings were destroyed, 103 professors and academics were killed, and nearly 90,000

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<sup>17</sup> Published by [Statista Research Department](#), Feb 2, 2026.

[Fatalities & injuries during the Israel-Hamas war](#) | Statista

<sup>18</sup> By Mallory Moench “Nearly 70% of Gaza war dead verified by UN are women and children” November 2024.

[Nearly 70% of Gaza war dead women and children - UN](#)

<sup>19</sup> ["Attacks on health care facilities have increased in past decade, human rights groups say". NBC News. 19 October 2023.](#)

<sup>20</sup> ["Over 420 attacks on healthcare in occupied Palestinian territories since start of war: WHO". Al Jazeera. Retrieved 1 December 2023.](#)

<sup>21</sup> ["Gaza war: 'Direct hits' on more than 200 schools since Israeli bombing began". UN News. United Nations. 27 March 2024. Retrieved 2 April 2024.](#)

higher-education students were unable to continue their studies. <sup>22</sup>Attacks targeting civilian facilities such as healthcare and education are considered a red line under international law and are strongly condemned. The Geneva Conventions, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention, establish that hospitals, medical facilities, and healthcare personnel are entitled to special protection and must not be targeted during armed conflict. During the first week of the war, Joe Biden, Emmanuel Macron, Rishi Sunak, Giorgia Meloni, and Olaf Scholz jointly stated: “Our countries’ leaders will support Israel in its efforts to defend itself and to protect its people from such horrific acts of terrorism.”<sup>23</sup>

Similarly, the former President of the United States, Joe Biden, speaking at an event held at the White House to mark Jewish American Heritage Month, stated: “We will always ensure that Israel has everything it needs to defend itself against Hamas and all its enemies.”

The Israeli offensive has not been limited to the bombardment of civilians. It has also involved blocking humanitarian aid destined for Gaza Strip, especially after the destruction of economic infrastructure, food supplies, and essential resources that the population depended on. This has led to widespread hunger and famine. In October 2024, the United Nations reported that Israel had unlawfully blocked 83% of the aid intended for Gaza over the previous year. The UNICEF confirmed that, during the summer of 2024, more humanitarian workers were killed in Gaza than in any other conflict since the establishment of the United Nations, with at least 278 aid workers killed. Alongside this, there has been a continued targeting of journalists reporting on the war. Al Jazeera estimated that by September 4, 2025, the number of journalists and media workers killed in Gaza had reached 274, of whom 269 were Palestinians, since the war began on October 7, 2023.<sup>24</sup>

In light of the atrocities committed against the people of Gaza Strip, on November 21, 2024, following an investigation into war crimes and crimes against humanity, the International Criminal Court issued arrest warrants against two senior Israeli officials: Benjamin Netanyahu

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<sup>22</sup> Fayoumi, Sondos (26 July 2024). ["Every University in Gaza Has Been Destroyed. So Have These Students' Dreams". The Nation. Retrieved 17 August 2024](#)

<sup>23</sup> By [Matt Wade](#) “Which side? Countries that back Israel – and those that oppose it” October 11, 2023 [Hamas Israel: Which countries support Israel? Which countries oppose Israel?](#)

<sup>24</sup> [by Graham Holton](#)-The Guardian-Issue #2165(October 6, 2025)  
[274 journalists killed in Gaza - CPA](#)

and Yoav Gallant. The ICC accused them of responsibility for the war crime of using starvation as a method of warfare, as well as crimes against humanity including murder, persecution, and other inhumane acts committed during the Gaza war.<sup>25</sup>

Following the ICC's decision, the Prime Minister of Hungary, Viktor Orbán, extended an invitation to Benjamin Netanyahu in November, just one day after the International Criminal Court issued the arrest warrant related to alleged war crimes in Gaza. Orbán pledged that his country, despite being a member of the ICC, would not enforce the warrant, stating that the court's decision constituted "interference in an ongoing conflict" and was driven by political motives.<sup>26</sup>

States that are parties to the International Criminal Court are obligated, under the Court's founding treaty, to arrest any individual for whom the Court has issued an arrest warrant. This is a fundamental provision that states cannot ignore when there are reasonable grounds to believe that a crime has been committed. However, despite the ICC designating the Prime Minister of Israel as an accused person, he arrived in Hungary in early April 2024 without being arrested.

This clearly exposed the limitation of the International Criminal Court in enforcing its decisions and is widely regarded as a violation of international law. The Israeli military offensive in Gaza Strip has, since then, resulted in the deaths of approximately 71,439 Palestinians and the injury of 171,324 others. In addition, thousands of Palestinians have reportedly been held in detention without clear legal basis, where they have faced abuse and torture. Orders and directives issued by the International Court of Justice regarding the prevention of genocide and the cessation of unlawful occupation have reportedly been disregarded. At the same time, freedom of expression and peaceful protests have been restricted, with individuals facing pressure and suppression.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Gritten, David (21 November 2024). "[ICC issues arrest warrants for Netanyahu, Gallant and Hamas commander](#)". *BBC*. Retrieved 21 November 2024.

Drummond, Michael (22 November 2024). "[Arrest warrants issued for Israeli PM Netanyahu and former defence secretary Gallant over alleged war crimes](#)". *Sky News*. *Archived from the original on 2*

<sup>26</sup> Al sharq al awsad "Israel's Netanyahu Arrives in Hungary, Defying ICC Warrant" [Israel's Netanyahu Arrives in Hungary, Defying ICC Warrant](#).

<sup>27</sup> Amnesty international, Report-2024-2025.

[Human rights in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory Amnesty International](#)

Finally, on October 11, 2025, a ceasefire agreement was signed between the parties, following mediation efforts led by Egypt, Qatar, and the United States. This led to a reduction in hostilities and facilitated efforts to ease the severe humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip.<sup>28</sup>

Throughout the conflict, the United States was widely regarded as the primary supporter of the Israeli offensive against the Palestinian people, providing extensive assistance to Israel across multiple domains. Research findings by William D. Hartung, along with a report co-authored by Linda J. Bilmes a specialist in public finance and budgeting at the Harvard Kennedy School—indicate that the United States has spent between \$31.35 billion and \$33.77 billion on Israel since October 7, 2023, with the total continuing to rise.<sup>29</sup>

Such funding is beyond reason and constitutes participation in what is described as genocide and mass atrocities against an entire population. The American public held large-scale protests opposing the financial and military support provided by the United States to Israel. Many citizens viewed this as a grave injustice committed by their country against the Palestinian people, arguing that their tax contributions were being used to kill thousands of Palestinian women and children.

## **Russia and Ukraine**

The Russian invasion of Ukraine officially began on February 24, 2022, although the roots of the conflict trace back to 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea (Annexation of Crimea). The conflict emerged from political and security disagreements, particularly Russia's opposition to Ukraine's aspirations to align with the West and join NATO, as well as its resistance to NATO's expansion. Russia's military actions in Ukraine have been widely regarded as a violation of international law, prompting many countries to impose sanctions in response. The conflict highlights the challenges of enforcing international law—despite it being grounded in treaties, conventions, and

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<sup>28</sup> Published by [Statista Research Department](#), Feb 2, 2026.

<sup>29</sup> William D. Hartung (October 7-2024) "U.S. Military Aid and Arms Transfers to Israel, October 2023 – September 2025 October 7, 2025"

[Hartung Israel Aid Paper w. new Table !!.docx](#)

legal obligations that states undertake when joining international organizations such as the United Nations.<sup>30</sup>

The Russian invasion of Ukraine constitutes a violation of Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter. This provision is a fundamental principle of the Charter, obligating member states of the United Nations to refrain from the use of force or military power against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.<sup>31</sup> The war has had a severe impact on civilians as well as military forces on both sides, and it is widely believed that the conflict has taken a heavy toll on both human lives and the economies of the two countries. According to the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), as reported last month, Russia has suffered approximately 1.2 million casualties—including at least 325,000 deaths—since the start of the full-scale invasion on February 24, 2022 through December 2025. Meanwhile, Ukraine reported that in January 2026 alone, Russian forces incurred an additional 31,680 casualties. CSIS also estimated that Ukraine has suffered up to 600,000 casualties, including around 140,000 deaths.

The United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine reported that 15,168 Ukrainian civilians have been killed and 41,534 others injured during the four years of large-scale war.<sup>32</sup>

## **Iran and Israel**

The attack carried out by Israel against Iran on June 13, 2025 began with unlawful targeted killings of Iranian nuclear scientists, the assassination of senior military officials, the deaths of civilians, and strikes on Iran’s nuclear facilities monitored by the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as military sites across the country.

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<sup>30</sup> y Cecili Zamore “Russia’s Actions: Violating International Law?”-Jan-2025.

[Russia’s Actions: Violating International Law? | LawShun](#)

<sup>31</sup> By John B. Bellenger “How Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine Violates International Law” – Feb.2022.

[How Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine Violates International Law | Council on Foreign Relations](#)

<sup>32</sup> By [John T Psaropoulos](#) “The Ukraine war in numbers: People, territory, money”-feb-2026.

[The Ukraine war in numbers: People, territory, money | Russia-Ukraine war News | Al Jazeera.](#)

The conflict later expanded to include civilian locations such as hospitals and media centers, resulting in more than 400 deaths and over 2,000 injuries. These actions are widely regarded as violations of international law and the United Nations Charter.

Israel argued that its actions constituted “pre-emptive self-defense” under Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, claiming that Iran’s nuclear program posed an existential threat. However, given that Iran does not possess nuclear weapons, is not actively developing them, and has not demonstrated an imminent intent to attack Israel, the assault is widely characterized as a **crime of aggression**, violating Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter. This position has been strongly condemned by experts affiliated with the United Nations, countries in the region, and many states from the Global South.<sup>33</sup>

Referring to Israel’s claim of self-defense, Ben Saul, speaking to Al Jazeera, stated: “This is not lawful self-defense against an armed attack by Iran, nor is it consistent with international law. The United Nations Security Council has not authorized such defensive action.” Under international law, crimes such as genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and the crime of aggression must be met with condemnation, sanctions, and prosecution before international courts rather than being supported blindly for political or military reasons.<sup>34</sup>

A ceasefire agreement between Iran and Israel was reached on June 23, 2025, following a 12-day conflict that began on June 13, 2025. The agreement, brokered by Qatar and the United States, aimed to establish a lasting ceasefire and was ultimately implemented on June 24.

However, after the June 23, 2025 ceasefire, tensions escalated again. On February 28, the United States and Israel launched new strikes against Iran, targeting nuclear, military, and even some civilian sites. The attack resulted in the deaths of many children who were inside a madrasa, most of whom were killed. These attacks were part of a broader and escalating conflict driven by earlier tensions, with explosions reported in multiple cities across Iran. In response, Iranian

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<sup>33</sup> By Seyyed Sadr al-Din Safavi “[The US and Israel’s illegal war against Iran: The violation of the rule of law](#)” [June 22, 2025](#).

[The US and Israel’s illegal war against Iran: The violation of the rule of law - International Peace Studies Centre - IPSC](#).

<sup>34</sup> By Seyyed Sadr al-Din Safavi “[The US and Israel’s illegal war against Iran: The violation of the rule of law](#)” [June 22, 2025](#).

forces carried out retaliatory strikes against Israel and other countries in the Middle East hosting U.S. troops, using missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles (drones), further expanding the regional conflict.<sup>35</sup>

In addition, following the February 28 attack on Iran, Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz, a highly strategic and narrow maritime chokepoint through which approximately 20% of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) supplies pass. Since its closure, gas prices have surged dramatically, and some countries have faced severe fuel shortages or complete supply disruptions. This situation illustrates the consequences of disregarding international rules, as such actions can lead to serious economic hardship and security challenges for civilian populations.

## **Israel's Invasion of Lebanon**

Israel has carried out multiple incursions into Lebanon, claiming the presence of Hezbollah, which is allied with Iran. However, Israel has undertaken actions beyond the limits of international law, constituting significant interference in a sovereign state that is a member of the United Nations. Without authorization, Israel entered southern Lebanon on October 1, 2024 marking the seventh invasion of Lebanese territory since 1978.

Since October 8, 2023, the conflict in Lebanon has resulted in 2,867 deaths and 13,047 injuries. Among the victims were 178 children killed and 1,173 injured. Additionally, 842,648 people were displaced. Between September 17 and October 31, 2024, 36 attacks on healthcare facilities were recorded, leading to the deaths of 85 medical personnel and injuries to 51 others while on duty.<sup>36</sup>

Following the renewed escalation of tensions involving the United States, Israel, and Iran, another military incursion was launched into Lebanon, with Israeli forces entering southern Lebanon. Israel once again carried out attacks in Lebanon, engaging in conflict with Hezbollah, which is supported by Iran. The Government of Lebanon reported that, as of March 2, 2026,

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<sup>35</sup> By aljilabs "US-Israel attacks on Iran: Death toll and injuries live tracker" [US-Israel attacks on Iran: Death toll and injuries live tracker | Conflict News | Al Jazeera](#)

<sup>36</sup> OCHA "Lebanon: Flash Update #40 - Escalation of hostilities in Lebanon, as of 31 October 2024" [Lebanon: Flash Update #40 - Escalation of hostilities in Lebanon, as of 31 October 2024 | OCHA](#)

Israeli forces had killed more than 2,000 people inside Lebanon including medical personnel and journalists—and injured 6,588 others. Additionally, more than one million people were displaced, representing approximately one-fifth of the population, with around 140,682 individuals living in extremely overcrowded camps.<sup>37</sup>

According to Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter, every state is obligated to refrain from the use of force and from violating the territorial sovereignty of another state, and to resolve disputes through peaceful means. These incursions are widely viewed as a clear violation of the sovereignty of a recognized state under international law. At the same time, institutions of the United Nations particularly the Security Council have appeared ineffective, unable to take decisive action.

## **USA and the Capture of Maduro**

An unlawful and sudden operation carried out by the United States on the night of January 3, 2026, resulted in the capture of Nicolás Maduro and his wife. They were transported aboard a U.S. warship to face charges of “narco-terrorism” in New York. This operation was the result of months of planning, involving a large-scale military strike and a covert raid in the capital, Caracas, after which Maduro was flown out of the country to stand trial in the United States.

Recent actions by U.S. forces inside Venezuela including the capture of its president and claims that the United States would “run” the country have raised serious questions about the legality of the operation and its potential consequences. Legal experts have described it as an unprecedented escalation, even more severe than previous U.S. interventions in countries such as Panama and Iraq.<sup>38</sup>

Following Maduro’s capture, U.S. President Donald Trump stated that Washington would “run” Venezuela during a transitional period, a claim widely viewed as falling outside the bounds of

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<sup>37</sup> UNHR “UN experts condemn Israel’s unprecedented bombing in Lebanon after ceasefire announcement, demand immediate halt to hostilities” – April 2026. [UN experts condemn Israel’s unprecedented bombing in Lebanon after ceasefire announcement, demand immediate halt to hostilities | OHCHR](#)

<sup>38</sup> [Lisa Mascaro, Joshua Goodman & Ben Finley](#) “Was Trump’s attack on Venezuela illegal? What international law says about Maduro’s capture” 05 January 2026.

international law and constituting a clear violation of state sovereignty.<sup>39</sup> Jimmy Gurulé, a professor at Notre Dame Law School and former U.S. Assistant Attorney General, commented: “This is clearly a blatant, illegal and criminal act.”

Political analysts argue that although the U.S. justified its actions by accusing Maduro of involvement in drug trafficking, narco-terrorism, corruption, and links to armed groups, many observers believe the intervention was driven by strategic interests particularly access to Venezuela’s vast natural resources, especially oil.

Today, every part of the world is facing security threats. Even neighboring states are on edge across Africa, Asia, Europe, and Americas, insecurity is widespread. Every country is in a state of caution and military preparedness. Provocations have increased, competition over resources has intensified, and legal norms are being bypassed. The use of force has become normalized.

Returning to the central theme of our title, “**A World Without Laws,**” there is little doubt that today’s world is one in which laws are no longer consistently respected, agreements are not reliably upheld, and guarantees can no longer be trusted. All of this reflects how the global order has transformed, how nations sharpen their weapons against one another, exchange threats, exploit the resources of weaker states, and abandon the ethics and mutual respect that once guided coexistence.

## **Conclusion**

When you carefully reflect on the events discussed and examine recent global developments, it becomes clear that international law and its principles have been severely undermined. The use of force has increasingly become the dominant means of resolving disputes, while weaker states are silenced through coercion and violence. In January 2026, Donald Trump argued that he did not need to rely on international law, emphasizing that the only limit on his power was his own personal morality. In an interview with The New York Times, he stated that, as President of the United States, the only constraint on his authority was his own mind and conscience. This serves as a stark illustration of the reality described in this discussion.

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<sup>39</sup> By Sarah Shamim “[What to know about Trump’s plan on Venezuela](#)” (Jan, 2026) [What to know about Trump’s plan on Venezuela | US-Venezuela Tensions News | Al Jazeera](#)

Recall also the statement made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, on January 26, 2026, in front of the Security Council: “Around the world, the rule of law is being replaced by the law of the jungle.”

By this, he meant that the supremacy of law is being replaced by a system driven by power and survival, where ethical standards and peaceful coexistence among states are increasingly abandoned. It is unreasonable and unacceptable for humanity to return to the devastation of the 20th century, where nearly 100 million people were killed. The only viable path to prevent such a catastrophe is to return to the principle of the **Rule of Law**, to collectively resist anything that undermines it, and to uphold and adhere to international legal norms.

## **Recommendations**

This study proposes the following:

- To uphold and strengthen international laws and the treaties derived from them.
- To respect state sovereignty and put an end to the use of force (“Use of Force”).
- To strengthen the United Nations and ensure genuine accountability, enabling it to effectively promote justice and equality among states.
- To enhance global cooperation for peace and to find lasting solutions to conflicts and emerging threats worldwide.
- To bring all individuals involved in war crimes before the International Criminal Court and ensure they are held accountable under international law.
- To modernize long-standing international laws and treaties so they remain relevant to contemporary challenges.
- To convene a global conference aimed at reforming and restructuring the United Nations, ensuring it is updated and better equipped to address modern realities.

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## About The Author



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