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EDITOR'S PICK

Strengthening Environmental Legislation in Sierra Leone: Addressing Environmental Crimes and Promoting Sustainable Development

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Archipelagic Baselines: The Current State Practice and the Legal Effect of Invalid Archipelagic Baselines

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The Perplexities of Law, Culture and Religion Towards the Prohibition of Female Circumcision in Nigeria

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Introduction to IUMJOL Vol.1 Issue. 1



In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

It is with great pride and a deep sense of responsibility that I present the inaugural issue of the IUM Journal of Laws (IUMJOL). This publication marks a significant step in advancing legal scholarship, fostering critical discourse, and addressing contemporary challenges through both Shari'ah and conventional legal perspectives.

IUMJOL aims to serve as a platform for rigorous research, innovative legal thinking, and meaningful dialogue. With a focus on comparative legal studies, Shari'ah principles, and interdisciplinary research, the journal bridges theoretical insights and practical solutions. Its bilingual approach in English and Dhivehi ensures inclusivity and broader accessibility.

Every contribution published here has undergone a rigorous peer-review process, reflecting our commitment to academic excellence and integrity. This issue brings together scholarly articles, case analyses, and reviews that offer valuable insights and address pressing legal issues.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the Vice Chancellor, Dr Ali Zahir, and Deputy Vice Chancellor, Dr Visal Moosa, for their unwavering support. Special thanks also to our Managing Editor, Al-Ustaz Ikram Abdul Sattar, and the entire editorial team for their dedication.

To our contributors, reviewers, and readers, thank you for your trust and engagement. May this journal inspire further research, inform policy, and contribute meaningfully to the evolving landscape of Shari'ah and legal studies.

Dr Mohamed Affan Shafy
Editor-in-Chief
IUM Journal of Laws (IUMJOL)
Islamic University of Maldives

Forword by the Vice Chancellor of Islamic University of Maldives



الحمد لله رب العالمين , والصلوة والسلام على المبعوث رحمة للعالمين، نبينا محمد وعلى آله وصحبه أجمعين.

The launch of the *IUM Journal of Laws (IUMJOL)* marks a proud and significant milestone for the Islamic University of Maldives. This inaugural represents not just the beginning of a scholarly publication but also a bold step towards establishing a platform dedicated to advancing legal research and discourse both nationally and internationally.

The establishment of IUMJOL reflects a commitment to fostering a culture of academic excellence, critical inquiry, and meaningful discourse in both Shari'ah and legal studies. At a time when the complexities of law and governance are ever-increasing, the role of rigorous, peer-reviewed legal research cannot be overstated. This journal aspires to serve as a platform for scholars, researchers, and practitioners to share knowledge, challenge existing paradigms, and propose innovative legal solutions to contemporary issues.

The purpose of IUMJOL aligns with the vision of Kulliyah of Shari'ah & Law (KSL) to actively contribute to the research landscape of the Islamic University of Maldives and fill the significant gap in academic legal publications within the country. The journal aims to provide an essential platform for publishing high-quality legal and Shari'ah research, including comparative studies, case analyses, and critiques of legal principles, fostering academic dialogue at both national and international levels. It will also encourage interdisciplinary studies, bridging Shari'ah and law to address modern challenges effectively.

In addition to its academic goals, IUMJOL seeks to inspire the next generation of legal scholars and practitioners by creating opportunities for meaningful contributions to the field. By adopting a bilingual approach with publications in both English and Dhivehi, the journal ensures inclusivity and broad accessibility, enabling a diverse readership to engage with valuable research insights.

As we embark on this promising journey, the success of IUMJOL will depend on the collective efforts of dedicated researchers, contributors, reviewers, and the editorial team. Their commitment and passion for academic excellence will undoubtedly drive this journal towards becoming a reputable source of legal knowledge and research.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to the team of KSL and everyone who played a role in bringing this vision to life. May this journal serve as a beacon of knowledge, innovation, and progress in the realms of Shari'ah and legal studies.

Dr. Ali Zahir
Vice Chancellor
Islamic University of Maldives

Message from the Deputy Vice Chancellor of Islamic University of Maldives

It is with great honour and anticipation that we mark the publication of the inaugural issue of the IUM Journal of Laws (IUMJOL). This occasion not only marks the achievement of a shared vision and commitment, but it also marks the start of a long-term commitment to furthering legal scholarship and encouraging critical discourse both inside and outside of the academic community.

It has never been more important for the law to serve as a beacon of justice and a tool for maintaining order in a world that is changing quickly. The IUMJOL aspires to be a pillar of critical thinking, in-depth analysis, and creative viewpoints on today's legal issues. In order to ensure its relevance to academia, the legal profession, and society at large, this journal seeks to bridge theoretical insights with practical implications through contributions from researchers, practitioners, and policymakers around the world.

The first issue establishes a standard for the calibre and breadth of scholarship we aim to maintain. It represents a common goal of creating a forum where many viewpoints and ideas can come together to boldly, creatively, and clearly address urgent legal issues.

We would like to express our appreciation to the readers, editorial team, and contributors who have helped us reach this milestone as we set out on this adventure. Together, we will shape IUMJOL into a journal that inspires the transformative potential of law in service to mankind while also documenting the development of legal thought.

May this first issue serve as the cornerstone of a legacy that values impact and excellence.

Dr Visal Moosa
Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation
Islamic University of Maldives

General Overview and Journal Vision

1. Introduction:

IUM Journal of Laws (IUMJOL) is a double-blinded peer-reviewed academic journal published by Kulliyyah of Shairah at the Islamic University of Maldives. The journal is published once a year in both Dhivehi and the English language to allow local and international intellectuals of legal scholarship to disseminate their scholarship. This journal aims to expand legal scholarship by providing an academic platform for scholars and academicians to share and exchange knowledge.

2. Scope and Aim:

IUM Law Journal (IUMLJ) /IUM Journal of Law (IUMJOL) covers a variety of topics in Law and Shariah. The journal aims to publish research papers on law reform, discussions on legal doctrines, academic analysis on case reports, issues relating to the application of law in practice, and comparative legal analysis of different laws and legal systems. Additionally, the journal accepts high-quality original manuscripts of international law, research on Islamic law, and Fiqh of classical and contemporary issues.

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The manuscript **must be submitted online** through the IUMJOL website at the following URL: <http://imjol.iu.edu.mv>. Submissions via hard copy will not be accepted.

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Book

One author

First time citation:

Subsequent citations:

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English Section

اِسْرِي تَحْرِيْو سَوَا شَوَسَر

Strengthening Environmental Legislation in Sierra Leone: Addressing Environmental Crimes and Promoting Sustainable Development

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Abstract

Sierra Leone faces an environmental crisis due to inadequate legislation leading to environmental crimes such as illegal mining, timber logging, and waste dumping. These challenges have detrimental effects on the environment, public health, and sustainable development. The current legal framework, including the Mines and Minerals Act of 2009 and the Environmental Protection Agency Act of 2008, falls short of addressing these issues effectively. This study emphasizes the urgent need to strengthen environmental legislation in Sierra Leone. Through library studies and content analyses of international conventions, statutes, and legislations, the study suggests that a strong legal framework can be developed to mitigate environmental degradation, health crisis, and deteriorating living conditions. Robust enforcement mechanisms and institutional transparency are crucial to investigate and prosecute environmental crimes. The consequences of the regulatory gap are profound, with mining companies operating without accountability, leading to environmental degradation and community displacement. Improper waste disposal worsens health issues. Lack of transparency in political institutions undermines enforcement, leaving affected communities with diminished quality of life and uncertain resettlement status. Prioritizing strengthening environmental legislation will safeguard communities, preserve natural resources, and foster a healthier and sustainable future. Efforts must include effective investigation and prosecution of environmental crimes, transparency, and public participation. Sierra Leone can overcome the environmental crisis and progress towards sustainable development by establishing a more robust and accountable legal and regulatory framework.

Keywords: Strengthen, environmental legislation, crises, environmental crimes, Sierra Leone

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developing countries.⁹ About 92% of these premature deaths occur in low and middle-income countries, particularly in countries with limited environmental policy regulations and enforcement capacity— conditions that extractive industries such as mining have demonstrably exploited regularly.¹⁰

Sierra Leone has grappled with addressing the environmental disaster caused by the mining industry, with many citizens viewing mineral mining as more harmful than advantageous. Continued mining operations have led to the pollution of the Pampana River, which is relied upon by approximately 120,000 people for essential daily activities, including drinking water and other necessities.¹¹

Environmental crime has largely been overlooked or given insufficient attention in Sierra Leone.¹² Between the year 2013-2018, there were no reported seizures of illegally trafficked wildlife by Sierra Leone, however, contraband originating in or passing through Sierra Leone continues to be intercepted by law enforcement officials in other countries. This indicates a significant gap in the capacity of Sierra Leone's wildlife authorities to deter, detect, and prosecute wildlife crime.¹³ In the year 2014, dead seahorses were discovered in the luggage of a passenger who had arrived from Sierra Leone at an airport in France while in transit to China. Also, in March 2016, a specially trained canine unit from the African Wildlife Foundation successfully detected a shipment of 500 kg of pangolin scales being transported from Sierra Leone to Thailand.¹⁴

Furthermore, over the past few decades, Sierra Leone has witnessed a significant rise in the exploitation of its natural resources, leading to the destruction of communities, loss of biodiversity, land degradation, and reduced agricultural potential, thus posing threats to food security and causing animal extinctions.¹⁵ Artisanal mining, in particular, has significantly compromised the integrity of major rivers in the country, rendering them polluted and unfit for human use. The

continuous pollution and contamination of rivers further harm local fish stocks, impacting food availability and nutrition.¹⁶ The mining activities conducted without proper land reclamation or rehabilitation planning have severely impacted the environment, health, and livelihoods of local communities.¹⁷ By conducting library research and analysing relevant acts, legislation, and statutes, this paper highlights the need for enhanced environmental legislation. Moving forward, this paper delves into the laws governing environmental crimes.

2. Overview of the Sierra Leone Environment

Sierra Leone is endowed with a significant number of mineral resources such as bauxite, gold, diamonds, and rutile forest, among others. Despite the significance of these resources, a large school of thought believes that the exploitation of these resources has been unsustainable and is causing irreparable damage to the ecosystem and human health.¹⁸ For instance, the exploitation of diamonds in Sierra Leone dates back to the 1930s, and since then, it has played a major role in the political and economic spheres of the nation, but not without adverse environmental effects.¹⁹ Studies have proven that a clear relationship exists between human insecurity and environmental degradation in Sierra Leone.²⁰ Understanding the environmental, social, and economic consequences of environmental abuse in Sierra Leone is critical to combat future environmental dilapidation.²¹

In a similar vein, environmental sustainability is crucial during mining (large- and small-scale), and it has been the greatest culprit of environmental degradation in Sierra Leone since 1930, followed by shifting agriculture. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) warns that in as much as the government increases its emphasis on economic

⁹ RA Marcantonio, SP Field, PB Sesay and GA Lamberti, 'Identifying Human Health Risks from Precious Metal Mining in Sierra Leone' (2021) 21 *Regional Environmental Change* 1–12

¹⁰ UNDP and UNEP, *Managing Mining for Sustainable Development* (UN Development Programme and UN Environmental Programme 2018)

<https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/poverty-reduction/Managing-Mining-for-SD.html> accessed [NA]

¹¹ RA Marcantonio, SP Field, PB Sesay and GA Lamberti, 'Identifying Human Health Risks from Precious Metal Mining in Sierra Leone' (2021) 21 *Regional Environmental Change* 1–12

¹² T Wyatt, 'Mapping the Links between Conflict and Illegal Logging' in *Environmental Crime and Social Conflict* (Routledge 2016) 57–72

¹³ C Haenlein and ML Rowan Smith (eds), *Poaching, Wildlife Trafficking and Security in Africa: Myths and Realities* (Taylor & Francis 2017)

¹⁴ *Understanding Threats to West African Biodiversity and Linkages to Wildlife Trafficking: Sierra Leone Field Assessment Report* (September 2018) [no publisher or URL provided]

¹⁵ N Engwicht and C Ankenbrand, 'Natural Resource Sector Reform and Human Security in Post-Conflict Societies: Insights from Diamond Mining in Sierra Leone' (2021) 8(4) *The Extractive Industries and Society* 100988.

¹⁶ R Maconachie, 'Dispossession, Exploitation or Employment? Youth Livelihoods and Extractive Industry Investment in Sierra Leone' (2014) 62 *Futures* 75–82

¹⁷ 'Sierra Leone: Environment – Impacts of Illegal Mining Activities: Threat to Water Security, Human Health, and Potential National Public Health Emergency' (AllAfrica, 9 August 2022) <https://allafrica.com/stories/202208090226.html> accessed

¹⁸ LK Zulu and S Wilson, 'Whose Minerals, Whose Development? Rhetoric and Reality in Post-Conflict Sierra Leone' (2012) 43(5) *Development and Change* 1103–1131

¹⁹ SA Wilson, 'Diamond Exploitation in Sierra Leone 1930 to 2010: A Resource Curse?' (2013) 78(6) *GeoJournal* 997–1012

²⁰ K Lubovich and E Suthers, *Improving Environmental Security in Sierra Leone: The Importance of Land Reclamation* (Foundation for Environmental Security and Sustainability 2007)

²¹ FAO, Sierra Leone, (Bioenergy and Food Security Projects) BEFS Country Brief (2013) <http://www.fao.org/3/a-aq167e.pdf> accessed .

growth, it will require sound environmental policies, together with sustainable management, to prevent uncontrolled

environmental damage, mostly caused by mining and agriculture.²² There is virtually no doubt that

natural resources such as bauxite, diamond, gold, and iron ore, among other deposits, can greatly

contribute to the economic growth and development in regions where they are found.²³

The unwise and unsustainable exploitation of the natural environment in Sierra Leone is a course of concern. So far, several essential elements of the environment have been affected and directly affecting public health. Poor water quality is a major threat to public health and aquatic life in Sierra Leone. The main source of this problem appears to be poorly managed and unregulated waste disposal, as well as uncontrolled mining operations. Most disease outbreaks are either water-related or waterborne.²⁴ Additionally, typhoid fever is very common among citizens. Sewage ends up in those water sources through surface runoff and base flow, introducing pathogens that cause the disease.²⁵

Furthermore, there have been recurring instances of waterborne disease outbreaks stemming from inadequate sanitation in Sierra Leone. The Ministry of Health and Sanitation (MoHS) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have documented cholera outbreaks since 1970, when 293 cases were reported.²⁶ These occurrences are particularly common during the rainy season, with the most severe outbreak taking place in 2012. During this period, a staggering 22,885 cases, resulting in 298 fatalities, were recorded. In response, President Koroma declared a state of public health emergency, and international partners collaborated with the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) to address the outbreak effectively.²⁷ These disease outbreaks are a result of unsatisfactory sanitation conditions and behaviours leading to contamination of water sources. According to a WHO report from 2013, in 2010, only 55% of Sierra Leone's population had access to improved water sources, while a mere 13% had access to adequate sanitation facilities. The same report highlights that outbreaks related to poor sanitation tend to surge during the rainy season, coinciding with elevated surface runoff.²⁸

Numerous other environmental devastations have occurred, yet many of these incidents have gone unreported or properly regulated, highlighting the prevalence of unnoticed and unregulated environmental crimes in Sierra Leone. Despite being home to a rich variety of wildlife, including 1,500 plant species, 170 mammal species, and 274 bird types, the country faces significant challenges. It boasts abundant fish stocks and valuable timber resources, integral to both formal and informal trade routes connecting West Africa and global markets. However, Sierra Leone struggles with controlling trade due to approximately 50 unauthorized border crossings.²⁹

Between 2000 and 2016, the most trafficked species were African Grey Parrots (21%) and chimpanzees (15%).³⁰ Sierra Leone was also implicated in seizures of illegal marine wildlife, like shipments of dried sea horses intercepted in Belgium in 2017, intended for Asian markets. Customs, the Environmental Crime Unit, and the Forestry Division lack adequate staff to combat wildlife crime effectively. Insufficient resources hinder Customs' ability to staff all border crossings, some of which are only monitored by untrained national police and army personnel. Additionally, there is a lack of wildlife-specific detection equipment, and existing resources like scanners and canine units at major ports are not utilized for wildlife crime detection.³¹ Crucially, wildlife crime does not receive equal priority across Sierra Leone's enforcement agencies, leading to a lack of interagency coordination at the national level. This absence of a cohesive approach underscores the challenges in addressing wildlife crime comprehensively in Sierra Leone.

Furthermore, illegal logging is considered a lucrative business for many private sectors and unlicensed individuals in Sierra Leone. Deforestation represents an environmental issue that is recognized by a variety of different governmental actors, but any solutions to any agreed issue are ultimately realized through a myriad of power struggles, operating in the context of bureaucratic corruption and political opportunism.³² An undercover report carried out by Al Jazeera English also unravels connivance by key government

²² FAO, Sierra Leone, (Bioenergy and Food Security Projects) BEFS Country Brief (2013) <http://www.fao.org/3/a-aq167e.pdf> accessed .

²³ AK Mensah and others, 'Environmental Impacts of Mining: A Study of Mining Communities in Ghana' (2015) 3(3) *Applied Ecology and Environmental Sciences* 81–94

²⁴ AS Mansaray, J Aamodt and BM Koroma, 'Water Pollution Laws in Sierra Leone—A Review with Examples from the UK and USA' (2018) 9(11) *Natural Resources* 361–388

²⁵ World Health Organization, WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic 2015: Raising Taxes on Tobacco (WHO 2015)

²⁶ R Kahn and others, 'Incubation Periods Impact the Spatial Predictability of Cholera and Ebola Outbreaks in Sierra Leone' (2020) 117(9) *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 5067–5073

²⁷ M Gelormini and others, 'Coverage Survey and Lessons Learned from a Pre-Emptive Cholera Vaccination Campaign in Urban and Rural Communities Affected by Landslides and Floods in Freetown Sierra Leone' (2023) 41(14) *Vaccine* 2397–2403

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ A Fichtelberg, 'Resource Wars, Environmental Crime, and the Laws of War: Updating War Crimes in a Resource Scarce World' in *Environmental Crime and Social Conflict* (Routledge 2016) 177–196

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² PG Munro, 'Deforestation: Constructing Problems and Solutions on Sierra Leone's Freetown Peninsula' (2009) 16(1) *Journal of Political Ecology* 104–122

figures in Sierra Leone on illegal timber trading activities.³³ A 2017 report from Transparency International EU and Global Witness highlighted that corruption serves as a major catalyst for illegal logging and is the key facilitator of the illicit timber trade. Corruption permeates every stage of the timber industry, including timber harvesting, transportation, processing, manufacturing, exporting, importing, and sales.³⁴

Overall, environmental crimes in Sierra Leone stem from a variety of contributing factors, both legal and non-legal. In this paper, we specifically examine key laws targeting major environmental crimes in the country.

3. Related Environmental Laws

Regulating environmental crimes in Sierra Leone involves a complex framework of legislation and institutions. Sierra Leone is aware of the dangers and attacks on the environment and thereby has established several key regulatory bodies, including the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA-SL), National Protection Area Authority (NPAA), and National Commission on Environment and Forestry (NaCEF), aimed at governing environmental activities.³⁵ The cornerstone legislation in this regard is the EPA-SL Act of 2008, amended in 2011, which granted regulatory power to the EPA-SL, especially concerning mining activities.³⁶ Under Section 23 of this Act, mining companies, both small and large-scale, are mandated to obtain an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) License, monitored quarterly to ensure adherence to environmental standards.³⁷ Moreover, the National Protection Area Authority Act of 2012 has fortified Sierra Leone's environmental regulations by imposing penalties, including fines and imprisonment, for violations such as burning vegetation, cutting timber, and introducing domestic animals within protected areas.

The Mines and Minerals Act of 2009 repealed the Mines and Minerals Act of 1994 and the Commission for the

Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development Act of 1999, addressing water quality issues related to mining activities.³⁸ It emphasizes the preservation of freshwater dams and the associated waters upon cessation of operations or termination of a mineral right. The Act prohibits dredging without a permit and imposes fines for violations.³⁹ Section 132 of the Mines and Mineral Act places a duty on mineral rights holders to minimize and manage environmental impacts, but its enforcement by the National Minerals Agency (NMA) has been inadequate.⁴⁰ Moreover, subsection 2 specifies that all mineral rights holders in the country must adhere to environmental protection laws. Section 134 addresses monitoring, particularly concerning industrial waste activities, by mandating mining companies to periodically submit an Environmental Management Program Report.⁴¹

Enforcing environmental protection laws in Sierra Leone has historically been challenging due to the absence of strong legal and government frameworks necessary to mitigate the harmful environmental effects of mining activities. For many years, this situation remained unchanged.⁴² The institutional capacity of departments responsible for environmental protection is questionable in regard to their effectiveness, enforcement and monitoring.⁴³ Existing environmental laws are often outdated and insufficient to address the current issues, necessitating further action.⁴⁴ The failure of existing policies, especially in the mining sector, to prioritize environmental and social concerns is attributed to the lack of specificity in mining legislation, unclear responsibilities of various ministries, inadequate monitoring, and weak implementation of laws and regulations.⁴⁵

Apart from that, Sierra Leone inherently lacks the essential legislative framework required for the full implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).⁴⁶ Additionally, the country faces challenges due to the insufficient capacity of

³³ EA Jackson, 'FLEGT Mandate: Its Applicability and Effectiveness in Sierra Leone' (2015) 4(3) *Journal of Applied Thought* [pages not provided]

³⁴ M Fayiah, 'Uncertainties and Trends in the Forest Policy Framework in Sierra Leone: An Overview of Forest Sustainability Challenges in the Post-Independence Era' (2021) 23(2) *International Forestry Review* 139–150

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ PT Mabey, W Li, AJ Sundufu and A H Lashari, 'Environmental Impacts: Local Perspectives of Selected Mining Edge Communities in Sierra Leone' (2020) 12(14) *Sustainability* 5525

³⁷ R Maconachie and F Conteh, 'Artisanal Mining Policy Reforms, Informality and Challenges to the Sustainable Development Goals in Sierra Leone' (2021) 116 *Environmental Science & Policy* 38–46

³⁸ Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL), *The Mines and Mineral Act, 2009* (2009)

³⁹ AS Mansaray, J Aamodt and BM Koroma, 'Water Pollution Laws in Sierra Leone—A Review with Examples from the UK and USA' (2018) 9(11) *Natural Resources* 361–388

⁴⁰ T Mebratu-Tsegaye, P Toledano and S Thomashausen, 'A Review of Sierra Leone's Mines and Minerals Act' (2020) <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3726420> accessed

⁴¹ The Environmental Protection (Mines and Minerals) Regulations, Statutory Instrument No. 10 of 2013 (Sierra Leone)

⁴² AM Conteh, 'The Legal Environmental Protection Responsibility of Extractive Industries on Attendant Waste: An Analysis of International and Sierra Leone Law' [unpublished or no date provided]

⁴³ *ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ B Biagini, R Bierbaum, M Stults, S Dobardzic and SM McNeeley, 'A Typology of Adaptation Actions: A Global Look at Climate Adaptation Actions Financed Through the Global Environment Facility' (2014) 25 *Global Environmental Change* 97–108

⁴⁶ African Carnivores Initiative (ACI), CMS, *Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals: Convention*

government enforcement agencies responsible for combating wildlife crime. Sierra Leone is categorized as a Category 3 country under the CITES National Legislation Project, indicating that its existing legislative structure does not meet the necessary criteria for CITES implementation.

The core environmental laws in Sierra Leone, namely the Forestry Act, Fisheries Regulations, and Wildlife Conservation Act, do not align entirely with CITES regulatory standards, thus providing a weak foundation for enforcement measures.⁴⁷ Complicating matters further, Sierra Leone lacks clear guidelines for issuing permits. This complexity is exacerbated by unclear and, in some cases, overlapping jurisdictions among key wildlife authorities such as Customs, Police, National Protected Areas Authority, Forestry Division, and the Environmental Crime Unit.

Moreover, the penalties for wildlife crime in Sierra Leone are inadequate as deterrents. Offenses carry a maximum fine of 100 Leones, equivalent to less than one US dollar, or a maximum imprisonment term of six months.⁴⁸ These penalties fall significantly below the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) definition of 'serious crime', which entails offenses punishable by imprisonment for at least four years or a more severe penalty. Furthermore, there is a lack of awareness within Sierra Leone's judiciary regarding wildlife crime, impeding the successful prosecution and conviction of offenders.⁴⁹

Enhancing the capacity of law enforcement agencies is essential for improving regulations. Government officials at various levels, including customs, police, and forestry and wildlife officers, lack a fundamental understanding of CITES requirements and the identification of wildlife species. This knowledge gap is particularly concerning at major entry and exit points like Freetown Seaport and Lungi International Airport, where only a handful of officials have received training on CITES or species identification.⁵⁰ This knowledge gap is particularly concerning at major entry and exit points

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Enforcing environmental laws in Sierra Leone faces several significant hurdles. One challenge is the lack of modern technology, as highlighted by Ijaiya and Joseph.⁵² Additionally, there is a weak judicial response to green culture, as pointed out by Fagbohun.⁵³ The existence of ineffective supra-national adjudicatory institutions for global environmental issues promotes the cross-border movement of waste and toxic chemicals.⁵⁴ Poor political approaches further compound the challenges.⁵⁵

Another noteworthy issue is that a large portion of international multilateral environmental treaties, of which Sierra Leone is a signatory, have yet to be domesticated. This failure to incorporate these treaties into domestic law adds another layer of complexity to Sierra Leone's legal framework for environmental governance.⁵⁶ The absence of a thorough evaluation of forest policies in Sierra Leone is remarkably surprising, especially considering that these policies, whether intentionally or unintentionally, have significantly exacerbated the depletion of forest resources.⁵⁷ Despite being initially devised for commendable purposes such as industrial growth, enhanced agricultural production, job creation, poverty alleviation, and regional development, these objectives have largely gone unmet. Instead, forest policies have become synonymous with enabling potential users to exploit forests without adequate regulation.⁵⁸

One glaring issue lies in the government's practice of selling timber at undervalued rates, leading to a loss of public revenue and the undermining of the value of non-timber products. This approach has inadvertently encouraged rapid, exploitative, and wasteful logging, triggering conflicts among various groups, individuals, and conflicting social and private interests.⁵⁹

on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora [no date or URL provided]

⁴⁷ JN Nakamura and B Kuemlangan, *Implementing the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora Through National Fisheries Legal Frameworks: A Study and a Guide*, vol 4 (Food & Agriculture Org 2020)

⁴⁸ C Ankenbrand, Z Welter and N Engwicht, 'Formalization as a Tool for Environmental Peacebuilding? Artisanal and Small-Scale Mining in Liberia and Sierra Leone' (2021) 97(1) *International Affairs* 35–55

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ M Fayiah, 'Uncertainties and Trends in the Forest Policy Framework in Sierra Leone: An Overview of Forest Sustainability Challenges in the Post-Independence Era' (2021) 23(2) *International Forestry Review* 139–150

⁵¹ MA Peters, 'The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species: An Answer to the Call of the Wild' (1994) 10 *Conn J Intl L* 169

⁵² H Ijaiya and OT Joseph, 'Rethinking Environmental Law Enforcement in Nigeria' (2014) 5 *Beijing L Rev* 306

⁵³ O Fagbohun and Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, *Mournful Remedies, Endless Conflicts and Inconsistencies in Nigeria's Quest for Environmental Governance: Rethinking the Legal Possibilities for Sustainability* (Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies 2012)

⁵⁴ DV Ogunkan, 'Achieving Sustainable Environmental Governance in Nigeria: A Review for Policy Consideration' (2022) 2(1) *Urban Governance* 212–220

⁵⁵ A Budnukaeku, O Chinedu and G Kponi, 'A Review of Development Policies Implementation in Nigeria' (2022) *East African Scholars Multidisciplinary Bulletin* [pages not provided]

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ M Fayiah, 'Uncertainties and Trends in the Forest Policy Framework in Sierra Leone: An Overview of Forest Sustainability Challenges in the Post-Independence Era' (2021) 23(2) *International Forestry Review* 139–150

⁵⁸ EA Jackson, 'Political Economy of Forest Ecology in Sierra Leone: A Focus on the Western Area Peninsular Forest (WAPFoR)' (2018) 9(1) *Postmodern Openings* 63–90

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

Therefore, the problem of forest depletion in Sierra Leone is not just a matter of scarce resources; it is equally a policy and institutional challenge. While the situation is grave, there is still an opportunity for intervention. However, unless there is a significant improvement in forest policies and their effective implementation, Sierra Leone's environment will continue to degrade, making its development efforts unsustainable.⁶⁰

Across the globe, the predominant approach for addressing environmental issues involves implementing relevant regulations. Yet, the Sierra Leone experience with environmental policies has revealed that the conventional command-and-control system has not yielded the intended economic and environmental outcomes.

The above illustrates the government's endeavours to promote environmental planning and protection in Sierra Leone since the early 1990s through policy and legislation. However, despite the existence of environmental laws, paradoxically, environmental issues in Sierra Leone have escalated due to laws and poor implementation, as well as enforcement.⁶¹

The sustenance of Sierra Leone population hinges on efforts to restore natural resources, ensuring the continued availability of livelihood sources. Therefore, political leaders must demonstrate unwavering commitment, understanding that neglecting environmental protection jeopardizes the nation's ability to fulfil people's aspirations. The repercussions of government inaction in the political, social, legal and economic spheres would be exceedingly detrimental for the nation.⁶² According to a study by Bruce and Ken in 2012, the economic well-being of a state is intricately linked to maintaining a healthy environment and ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources and primary industries. This involves overseeing high-risk aspects of their utilization, safeguarding economically significant sectors, aligning with community expectations, and preserving the environment. In regulatory scenarios, individuals tend to fall into different categories: some willingly comply, some do not, and some comply only if they witness others facing consequences for noncompliance.⁶³

Enhancing community engagement is crucial, going beyond the current approach. When entering mining agreements, it is vital to involve not just traditional leaders but also diverse community groups, incorporating their voices and suggestions. Authorities must reevaluate existing mining agreements, ensuring they are more advantageous for the host community.⁶⁴ An example of this proactive approach can be seen in Tanzania, where the central government led the review of mining agreements, leading to increased benefits for both the national and local communities. Other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Ghana and South Africa, are also leaning towards reevaluating mining agreements with the aim of securing improved socioeconomic advantages.⁶⁵ The absence of participation from community groups and communication gaps significantly influenced how respondents evaluated the effectiveness of the mining company.⁶⁶

After determining that the current environmental governance structure in Sierra Leone is insufficient for achieving sustainable environmental management, especially considering the country's political and socio-economic context, the following suggestions are proposed for policy consideration. These recommendations aim to enhance the quality of governance, paving the way for the achievement of a sustainable environment in Sierra Leone, a goal that has proven elusive thus far.

This article brings to light the insufficiencies in Sierra Leone's environmental legislation, paralleled by the instances of pollution, deforestation, and mining regulations. A notable concern with these narrowly defined laws is their detachment from contemporary developments and the evolving realities of our time. Consequently, this paper advocates for a comprehensive review and reformulation of such legislation, aiming to enhance their adaptability and resonance with sustainable development.

To enhance the effectiveness of the related environmental laws, it is essential to harmonize roles and functions, review sanctions, and ensure institutional independence. Emphasizing these recommendations is crucial to strengthen EPA-SL services. A constructive step entails the establishment of a governmental committee tasked with

⁶⁰ MI Bakarr and I Abu-Bakarr, 'A Framework for Application of the Landscape Approach to Forest Conservation and Restoration in Sierra Leone' (2022) 5 *Frontiers in Forests and Global Change* 887365

⁶¹ MY Jalloh, WSA Wan Dahalan and RM Khalid, 'Environmental Awareness and Public Participation: A Driving Force for Environmental Protection in Sierra Leone' (2022) 7(11) *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (MJSSH)* e001989–e001989

⁶² OJ Oyeboode, 'Impact of Environmental Laws and Regulations on Nigerian Environment' (2018) 7(3) *World Journal of Research and Review* 262587

⁶³ AC Salihu and others, 'Analysis of the Factors Affecting Facilities Compliance to Environmental Regulations in Minna–Niger State, Nigeria' (2016) 45(2) *World Scientific News* 174–184

⁶⁴ B Ngocho, Burure, S Magai, 'Mining in Tanzania: Effects of the Mining Legal Framework Overhaul' (DLA Piper, 2020) <https://www.dlapiper.com/en/africa/insights/publications/2020/08/africa-connected-issue-4/6tanzania-mining-legal-framework-overhaul/> accessed [NA]

⁶⁵ SA Wilson, 'Measuring the Effectiveness of Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives in Diamond Mining Areas of Sierra Leone' (2022) 77 *Resources Policy* 102651

⁶⁶ A Dresse, JO Nielsen and I Fischhendler, 'From Corporate Social Responsibility to Environmental Peacebuilding: The Case of Bauxite Mining in Guinea' (2021) 74 *Resources Policy* 102290

reassessing the national environmental legal framework. This effort should especially account for emerging environmental challenges, encompassing activities that currently lack regulation and demand incorporation into state governance. For this committee's efficacy, a composition featuring not only officials from pertinent government bodies and technical experts but also representation from civil society organizations active in the environmental sphere and interested members of the public who can influence the final decision is essential. By facilitating robust involvement from relevant stakeholders, this approach will contribute to the development of more effective and widely embraced environmental laws. These regulations will be better aligned with societal values, fostering increased public compliance and nurturing a culture of environmental responsibility.

The issue of limited public access to environmental information, particularly regarding environmental laws, has been identified as a concern. Recognizing the link between widespread environmental unawareness and the resulting harm, it becomes imperative for the government to uphold its obligations outlined in the EPA earnestly. This responsibility involves ensuring that the general public has adequate access to environmental information, specifically directly related environmental laws. Extensive education is essential, a practice many regions have rightfully embraced.⁶⁷ The people of Sierra Leone must unite before their natural heritage is irrevocably lost. Preserving ecological balance should be a fundamental focus of national policies; otherwise, the opportunity for meaningful action might slip away.

The right to live in a healthy environment is a fundamental natural right, that several countries such as India uphold.⁶⁸ Also, while dealing with biodiversity, the following must be considered: (i) social justice and equity, (ii) rights of future generations, and (iii) rights of animals and other non-human living creatures.⁶⁹ Furthermore, collaboration with pertinent civil society organizations can enable a gradual and comprehensive approach to addressing language barriers for different ethnicities in the country, who may find it difficult to understand the English manuals. This involves initiating a progressive program to translate the laws from English into local languages, making them more comprehensible and inclusive for a broader segment of the population.

Moreover, the analysis conducted above has illuminated incongruent legal strategies employed to address analogous environmental challenges—such as the imposition of varying penalties for identical transgressions through different statutes, and the assignment of identical responsibilities to diverse public entities via separate legislation. These disparities hold the potential to undermine the efficacy of Sierra Leone's environmental legal framework.

In light of these observations, it becomes imperative to undertake a comprehensive review of pertinent environmental laws, ensuring a consistent application of penalties and methodologies in response to similar offenses. Clarity must also be established regarding the specific public entity endowed with regulatory authority in distinct situations. Furthermore, it is worth contemplating the integration of certain elements from different regulatory systems, or the inclusion of provisions in newer regulations that supersede comparable yet possibly obsolete clauses in older ones. These actions collectively work towards presenting a lucid and coherent rendition of the law to both its enforcers and the general populace. Ultimately, this approach can significantly bolster the effectiveness of compliance and enforcement measures.

In relation to the status and efficacy of Sierra Leone's environmental institutions, a notable challenge was identified concerning the insufficiency of adequate human and material resources. Given the paramount importance of the environment in ensuring human well-being and progress, the government must prioritize environmental concerns and extend essential financial and technical support to the relevant agencies to enable their effectiveness. It is recommended that a portion of fines collected from those violating environmental laws should be directly channelled toward equipping these environmental agencies. This allocation should be conducted through a transparent process. This approach could potentially incentivize officials within these agencies to enforce the law more diligently. In contrast, the current practice of depositing fines into a general government account for unrelated purposes hinders progress toward a healthier environment and a robust enforcement mechanism.

The government should prioritize the appointment of proficient environmental experts based on merit, rather than favouring political associates, to lead and collaborate with various environmental agencies. This strategic move is pivotal in ensuring the optimal functioning of these agencies.

Additionally, an analysis revealed that the effectiveness of environmental governance in Sierra Leone's environmental laws was constrained by inadequate implementation of the subsidiarity principle. Integrating the principle of subsidiarity into state environmental laws and governance systems and subsequently executing it diligently could significantly contribute to achieving environmental sustainability. This integration would distribute responsibilities more equitably, freeing up resources at the state level to tackle broader environmental issues, while local government councils address smaller-scale matters within their jurisdictions. Such an approach could enhance the overall effectiveness and

⁶⁷ M.C. Mehta v Union of India AIR 1992 SC 382.

⁶⁸ A D'amato and SK Chopra, 'Whales: Their Emerging Right to Life' in *International Legal Personality* (2017) 393–434

⁶⁹ LL Thurman and others, 'Applying Assessments of Adaptive Capacity to Inform Natural-Resource Management in a Changing Climate' (2022) 36(2) *Conservation Biology* e13838

efficiency of environmental governance by equitably sharing the responsibilities across all levels of government.

Lastly, a deficiency in public transparency and accountability within Sierra Leone's environmental institutions was identified as a potential hindrance to their capacity for delivering effective environmental governance—a cornerstone of environmental sustainability. Addressing this shortfall necessitates improved compliance with environmental laws and its affiliated institutions. This involves establishing an up-to-date website where the public can track the activities of relevant agencies and access pertinent environmental information, including reports, financial records, contracts, and agreements.

Considering these factors, greed and wastefulness are increasingly becoming the standard in consumption habits, as the nation assigns monetary worth to every resource. It's disheartening to observe that a natural resource, especially biodiversity, is considered 'significant' only when it holds an economic value, regardless of how indigenous communities perceive its value.⁷⁰ Adherence to these measures will significantly enhance transparency and accountability within the environmental sector, ultimately fostering a healthier environment for the state. Correspondingly, in accordance with the tenets of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration,⁷¹ markedly improved avenues for public participation and access to justice in environmental matters are pivotal for advancing governance and bolstering the sustainability of Sierra Leone's environment.

4. Conclusion

This paper has revealed that Sierra Leone is confronted with a significant environmental crime problem that has been largely ignored or downplayed despite the existence of legal provisions. The exploitation of natural resources, particularly through mining and illegal logging, has resulted in biodiversity loss, land degradation, and threats to food security and public health. This has also led to the pollution of rivers, water shortages, and contamination of water sources, negatively impacting local communities. The paper further revealed the inadequacies of the existing laws surrounding environmental protection in the country. It is against this backdrop that the call for the enhancement of the existing laws and introduce policy reforms with stricter enforcement mechanisms. Achieving effective environmental regulation and protection requires the involvement of multiple stakeholders, including government agencies, law enforcement, and non-governmental organizations. All in all,

tackling the environmental degradation in Sierra Leone necessitates a multifaceted approach. This includes implementing legal reforms, strengthening institutions, fostering public participation, and collaborating internationally. Also, the rights of local communities should be harmoniously integrated into the conservation strategy. The local communities, particularly in rural areas, are often in a better position to take on the responsibility for the sustainable management of forest resources. Besides there are no specific laws with respect for indigenous people as far as environmental conservation is concerned. By addressing the point out challenges and implementing effective measures, Sierra Leone can better protect its environment, mitigate the impacts of climate change, and promote sustainable development for the well-being of present and future generations.

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⁷¹ T Koy, 'The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development' in *The 'Earth Summit' Agreements: A Guide and Assessment* (Routledge 2019) 85–96

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1. INTRODUCTION

Shariah is sent by Allah through Prophet Muhammad SAW to mankind. Shari'ah is comprehensive, contemporary, and flexible to be applied to all, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The objectives of Shari'ah are to protect individuals living in the world and to ensure that their rights are protected with proper administration, rights mechanism, and legal measures so that *Maslahah*, peace, and justice prevail in society. As time passes, it becomes more important and more challenging for Muslim scholars to continue researching and promoting the timeless aspects of Islamic law, especially Islamic criminal law, so that its applicability in every facet of life can be understood, appreciated, and applied in this modern world. Shari'ah contains various kinds of laws such as family law, evidence, and procedural laws, and criminal laws. Islamic criminal law with fixed crimes and punishment, which is called *Hudud* crimes and hudud punishments. Islamic criminal law together with its Islamic punishments are to provide security and protection to every individual in a society. Islamic punishments, to a certain extent, have been proven to curb the number of crimes happening in one's country. In Islamic criminal law, one of the *hudud* crimes which provide a few punishments is *hirabah*, a crime expressly mentioned in the Quran. Some scholars consider *hirabah* to mean highway robbery and to others it means wider than robbery, that may lead to chaos and destruction of one's country as well its surrounding which include the air and water. The other unique point that exists in the crime of *hirabah* is the aspect of forgiving the *Muharib* (the persons who committed the *Hirabah*) and exempt them from receiving the *hadd* punishments due to the voluntary submission to the authority.

1.1 MEANING

Hirabah can be translated in English as an act of terrorism.⁷² According to Muhammad Hashim Kamali, *hirabah* is also considered to be the nearest legal concept to terrorism.⁷³ *Hirabah* also can be interpreted as any acts of terror.⁷⁴ In the Quran, the act of *hirabah* is literally interpreted as making war or waging war.⁷⁵ Generally speaking, *hirabah* is a form of violence which terrorises the victims and public at large and leaves them in the state of fear and insecurity. The impact of *hirabah* eventually leads to the destruction or mischief to the earth. The word *Fasad* (destruction or corruption) is used in the Qur'an to indicate the impact of

hirabah in terms of security, economy and political instability to one's country.

Classical Muslim scholars have given various definitions of *Hirabah*. Some would say that is a major theft (*Sariqah Kubra*) as opposed to the crime *sariqah*, which entails amputation of the hand. Some would interpret it as highway robbery or brigandage as what happened in the era of the Prophet SAW prior to the revelation of Surah al-Maidah verses 33 to 34. Some jurists see *hirabah* as the act of using armed force, in deserts or otherwise far from habitation, for the purpose of taking property.⁷⁶ According to Abd al Barr, a Maliki jurist defines a *Muharib* as anyone who disturbs free passage in the streets and renders them unsafe to travel, striving to spread corruption in the land by taking money, killing people or violating what Allah has made it unlawful is guilty of *hirabah*, be he a Muslim or a Non-Muslim, free or slave and whether he actually realises his goal of taking money or killing or not.⁷⁷ According to Imam al Nawawi, a Shafei jurist, whoever brandishes a weapon and terrorises a street inside or outside a city must be pursued by the authorities because if they were left unmolested, their power will increase and through their killing and taking of money, corruption will spread.⁷⁸

It is interesting to note that *hirabah* to a certain extent can be seen from a non-criminal aspect that covers any spreading of gross corruption on earth such as the poisoning of drinking water, food, climate change, wreaking great havoc by arson or flood or great criminal damage to the peace and society or economy of a state.⁷⁹ These situations are considered as aggravating circumstances that could lead to the destruction of one's country in terms of economy, society and eventually peace and justice in the country and community.

2.1 INJUNCTION FROM THE QURAN & HADITH

The principal reference to *hirabah* in the Quran is found in Surah al-Maidah verse 33 to 34. The verse reads as follows:

Surah al-Maidah verse 33-34

⁷² Hameedullah Mohd Asri and Muhd Khalil Ruslan, 'The Crime of Hirabah: Approach, Justification & Significance' (2020) 28(3) *Jurnal Syaiah* 410; Sherman A Jackson, 'Domestic Terrorism in the Islamic Legal Tradition' (2001) 91 *The Muslim World* 293, 295.

⁷³ Muhammad Hashim Kamali, 'Terrorism, Banditry and Hirabah: Advancing Shariah New Perspectives' (2017) 8(1) *Islamic Civilisational Renewal* 11.

⁷⁴ Frank E Vogel, 'The Trial of Terrorism under Classical Islamic Law' (2002) 43 *Harvard International Law Journal* 53, 58.

⁷⁵ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Quran: Text and Commentaries* [no publication details provided].

⁷⁶ Vogel (n 3) 58.

⁷⁷ Cited in Jackson (n 1) 295.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*

⁷⁹ Muhammad Ata al Sid, *Islamic Criminal Law: The Hudud* (Al Basheer Publications 1996) 62.

The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Apostle and strive with might and main for mischief through the land is: execution or crucifixion of the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides or exile from the land: that is their disgrace in this world and a heavy punishment is theirs in the Hereafter. Except for those who repent before they fall into your power: in that case know that Allah is Oft Forgiving Most Merciful

In one hadith reported by Anas Bin Malik, some people belonging to the tribe of uraynah came to Allah's messenger in Madinah and found the climate in Madinah unsuitable. So, Allah messenger said to them if you so like you may go to camels of sadaqah and drink their milk and urine. They did so and were recovered. They then fell upon the Prophet SAW. This news reached the Allah's Messenger, and he sent (people) on their track. They were finally (brought) and handed over to the Prophet SAW. He (the Prophet SAW) got their hands and feet cut off. The Prophet SAW also put out their eyes and thrown them on the stony ground until they died.⁸⁰

The above hadith is subject to the interpretation of the jurist in terms of who is Urayniyyun, whether they are Muslims, Non-Muslims, or apostates. Regardless of who is the group of people where the verse was addressed to, the most important significance of the verse (surah al Maidah: 33-34) is the expressive provision on the crime of hirabah and its exceptional case to the Muharib.

These two evidences are among the authorities from the Quran and hadith on the crime of hirabah as well its punishments. These two texts are the proof that *hirabah* is one of the hudud crimes since the crime and punishments are fixed and mentioned in the Quran or in the hadith. Or may be both. For example, the crime of adultery and theft the punishments are mentioned in both Quran and Hadith.

3. PUNISHMENT FOR MUHARIB

As known, controversies and debates over both the concept and execution of Islamic criminal law, particularly

⁸⁰ Cited in Nik Rahim Nik Wajis, 'The Crime of Hiraba in Islamic Law' (PhD thesis, Glasgow Caledonian University 1996) 62; Sahih Muslim, trans Abdul Hamid Siddiqi (Sheikh Muhammad Ashraf) 893.

⁸¹ Etim E Okon, 'Hudud Punishments in Islamic Criminal Law' (2014) 10 European Scientific Journal 227.

⁸² Muhammad Hameedullah Md Asri and Md Khalil Ruslan, 'The Crime of Hirabah: Approach, Justification and Significance' (2020)

hudud, have raged for years. This occurred due to stereotypes claiming that the punishments are inhuman, cruel, and irrelevant to be adopted. In fact, the severity of the Islamic penal system is aimed at discouraging criminal behaviour. If the criminal knows the anguish and pains, he will bring to himself, he or she may abstain from committing the crime.⁸¹ As far as the crime of *hirabah* is concerned, Allah SWT has mentioned its punishment in verse 33 of Surah al-Maidah, which can be translated as,

The punishment of those who wage war against Allah and His Messenger and strive with might and for mischief through the land is: execution, or crucifixion, or the cutting off of hands and feet from opposite sides, or exile from the land: that is their disgrace in this world, and a heavy punishment is theirs in Hereafter.

Unlike other *hudud* crimes, *al-Qur'an* prescribes four punishments against the person liable for *hirabah*: amputation of hand and foot, execution, crucifixion and banishment.⁸² In fact, *hirabah* is a crime that consist of one or a combination of several acts including threatening the road without taking property or committing murder, taking property, committing murder or taking property together with committing murder. As a result, the punishment of this type of crime will depend on which type of illegal act that has been committed before. The punishments in al-Maidah 33 are not prescribed for any crime, but a set of punishments for the crime of *hirabah*. Selection of punishment depends upon seriousness and gravity of crime as other factors.⁸³ The *shariah* court is at liberty to determine the ratio decidendi to suit the crime.⁸⁴ Table 5 shows the difference of opinions from several schools of thoughts pertaining to the punishment of *hirabah*.

TABLE 5: PUNISHMENT OF HIRABAH VIEWED BY SELECTED SCHOOLS OF THOUGHTS⁸⁵

28(3) Jurnal Syariah 383, 384
<https://doi.org/10.22452/js.vol28no3.3> accessed [date].

⁸³ Ibid p. 401.

⁸⁴ Okon (n 10) 234.

⁸⁵ Hendun Abd Rahman Shah and Suraiya Osman, 'The Universality of Hadd Punishment with Special Reference to Piracy and Hirabah' (2017) 3 Malaysian Journal of Syariah and Law 14–15
<https://doi.org/10.33102/mjssl.v3i1.3> accessed [date].

Schools of thoughts/ Offences	Hanafi	Maliki	Syafi'i	Hanbali
Threatening the road	Expelled (an nafyu)	The Ruler to choose the appropriate punishment i.e discretion of the Ruler	Ta'zir or be expelled	Expelled (an nafyu)
Taking the property	Cutting off hands and feet from opposite sides	Discretion of the Ruler but should not choose expelled	Cutting off hands and feet from opposite sides	Cutting off hands and feet from opposite sides
Murder	Be killed as been prescribed under hadd punishment	The Ruler must choose either to kill the offender without crucify or to punish the offender with both	Be killed as been prescribed under hadd punishment	Be killed as been prescribed under hadd punishment
Committed murder together with theft	The Ruler may choose either to cut off the hands and feet on alternate sides and impose death penalty and be crucified after that or not to cut the hands and feet but impose death penalty straight away for that offence	The Ruler may choose either kill or crucify first followed by kill	Death penalty and crucify	Death penalty and crucify

3.1 MAIN ELEMENTS OF HIRABAH

There are four main elements that characterise the act of *hirabah*. The first element is that the act was made publicly,⁸⁶ which means it happened in front of the victim. As opposed to the crime of theft (*sariqah*) where it happened secretly, without the knowledge and consent of the victim. The victim was not aware that his property was taken away until he realised it later. On the other hand, in the crime of *hirabah*. The victim was aware that he was being terrorised since the incident happened before him.

As a result of the act that was made publicly, here comes the second element that is the element of fear. Since it happened in front of the victim, it instilled fear in the victim since the victim has witnessed that he is now the subject of *hirabah*. The third element is the use of force. There must be use of force by the *Muharib* to the victims. The use of force is not limited to the use of weapons. According to Imam Malik, the use of force is not limited to dangerous weapon, but it can be any kind of force including being threatened with his physical power could warrant to use of force.⁸⁷ This is the reason why some jurist classified rape as one type of *hirabah* because of the use of physical force to the rape victim.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Muhammad Hashim Kamali, 'Terrorism, Banditry and Hirabah: Advancing New Shariah Perspectives' (2017) 8(1) *Islam and Civilisational Renewal* 17.

⁸⁷ *Ibid*, Nik Rahim Nik Wajis 63.

⁸⁸ Azman Mohd Noor, 'Punishment for Rape in Islamic Law' (2009) 5 *MLJ* cxiv 1–9.

⁸⁹ Hameedullah (n 11) 386–87.

The next element, which was discussed by the jurists, is on the issue of place where the *hirabah* crime has occurred. Some jurist opined that the place of *hirabah* is in a desert given the fact that the case of *hirabah* that happened in the era of the Prophet SAW took place in a desert. Some jurists opined that it could happen at any place as long as there is no possibility to seek help⁸⁹ One may say that regardless of the place, the most significant aspect here the difficulty for the victim to seek for help, whether it happened in a building, air or water.

Another issue which was discussed among the jurists is the gender of *Muharib*. Majority of the jurists are of the opinion that the *Muharib* can be male or female. However, Imam Abu Hanifah and imam Al Shaybani hold that female *Muharib* is not entitled for the had punishment under *hirabah* due to the incapability (perhaps at that time) to use physical power and spread fear to the victims and public at large.⁹⁰

4. PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Piracy and armed robbery need to be defined for a proper understanding of the act. The definitions are given below.

4.1 Definition of Piracy and Armed Robbery

4.1.1 Statutory Definition

Piracy has a long history and has re-emerged as a security threat in the contemporary period.⁹¹ According to Article 101 of the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), piracy has been defined as-

(a) any illegal acts of violence or detention, or any act of depredation, committed for private ends by the crew or the passengers of a private ship or a private aircraft, and directed:

(i) on the high seas against another ship or aircraft or against persons or property on board such ship or aircraft.

(ii) against a ship, aircraft, persons or property in a place outside the jurisdiction of any State.

(b) any act of voluntary participation in the operation of a ship or of an aircraft, with knowledge of the facts making it pirate ship or aircraft.

(c) any act inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described in subparagraph (a) or (b)

The International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the International Maritime Bureau (IMB) are the two main

⁹⁰ Kamali (n 15) 17–18.

⁹¹ Carolin Liss, *Assessing Contemporary Maritime Piracy in Southeast Asia: Trends, Hotspots and Responses* (Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF) 2014) 2 https://www.hsfk.de/fileadmin/HSFK/hsfk_downloads/prif125.pdf accessed [date].

organisations which are concerned with the issue of piracy.⁹² As a body under the United Nation, IMO, despite adopting the definition of piracy prescribed under UNCLOS, also define armed robbery in Resolution A.1025 (26) “Code of Practice for the Investigation of Crimes of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships” as

(i) any illegal act of violence or detention or any act of depredation, or threat thereof, other than an act of piracy, committed for private ends and directed against a ship or against persons or property on board such a ship, within a State’s internal waters, archipelagic waters and territorial sea;

(ii) any act of inciting or of intentionally facilitating an act described above

Thus, it can be simplified here that the obvious distinguishing factor between both piracy and armed robbery of ships is where the crimes have occurred. Piracy refers to illegal acts of violence committed on international water i.e high seas and areas beyond the jurisdiction of any state, meanwhile, the term ‘armed robbery’ is applicable if the crime occurred on internal water.

4.2 International Legal Framework on Piracy and Statistics

At the international level, anti-piracy measures have been addressed by international conventions and the 1982 UNCLOS gave each state the right to govern piracy under their national legislation.⁹³ In the context of Malaysia, the Courts of Judicature Act of 1964 and the Penal Code shall be used as the pertinent local laws since there is no such specific Act that addresses the crime of piracy in Malaysia in detail. According to the ICC-IMB Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships Report 2021, there have been 132 reported incidents of piracy, including 115 vessel boarded incidents, 11 attempted attacks, five fired at incidents, and one vessel hijacked incident. Table 1 shows the comparison of the type of incidents occurring at the global level from 2017 to 2021. It can be seen that the hijack cases are less in 2019-2021. from table 1. Table 2 on the other hand provides data about the different kinds of arms that were used in incidents from 2017 to 2021. This shows that the nature of piracy is the use of armed force. As far as maritime piracy is concerned, the world has historically paid less attention to Southeast Asia than it has to Somalia, which has caused significant economic damage. The World Bank estimates that over 179 ships were taken

hostage by Somali pirates, who received between US\$335 million and US\$413 million in ransom. However, after the publication of the 2013 IMB piracy statistics which showed that Southeast Asia was again the most pirate-prone region and a spate of attacks on tankers in 2014, piracy in Southeast Asia were back in the news.⁹⁴ Southeast Asia, which consists of eleven countries and is seen in Map 1 below, has been identified by international organisations as one of the world's “hotspots” for issues related to piracy. At present, there are two kinds of maritime pirates in Southeast Asia.⁹⁵ Opportunistic Sea robbers are the first category; they are unorganised, ill-equipped groups of persons and commit crime within small, local areas. Their attacks are not well thought out, and their motives are short-term gains. Cash and items that are simple to carry are the most sought-after loot. The second type of piracy, on the other hand, consists of sophisticated, well-organised pirate groups that meticulously plan their attacks by using advanced technologies to target the cargo ships.

TABLE 1: COMPARISON OF THE TYPE OF INCIDENTS, 2017-2021

CATEGORY	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Attempted	22	34	17	20	11
Boarded	136	143	130	161	115
Fired upon	16	18	11	11	5
Hijack	6	6	4	3	1
Total	180	201	162	195	132

Source: ICC-IMB Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships Report 2021

⁹² A Amri, ‘Combating Maritime Piracy in Southeast Asia from International and Regional Legal Perspectives: Challenges and Prospects’ (Paper presented at the Southeast Asia Rising! Proceedings of the 5th International Conference on Southeast Asia, Kuala Lumpur, Indonesia, 11–13 December 2013).

⁹³ Ibid

⁹⁴ Liss (n 20) 12.

⁹⁵ Lukasz Stach, ‘Neverending Story? Problem of Maritime Piracy in Southeast Asia’ (2017) 7(12) International Journal of Social Science and Humanity 724 <https://doi.org/10.18178/ijssh.2017.7.12.915> accessed [date].

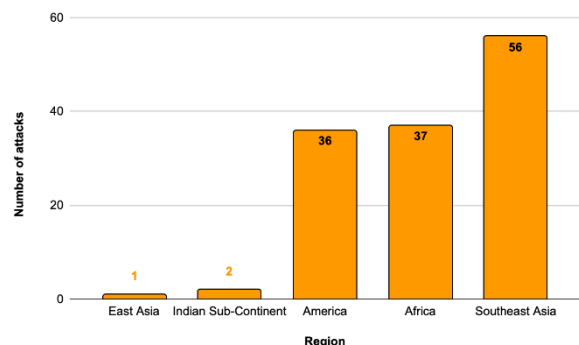
TABLE 2: TYPES OF ARMS USED DURING INCIDENTS, 2017-2021

CATEGORY	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Guns	52	56	47	69	34
Knives	44	36	36	46	38
Not stated	80	104	74	76	56
Other weapons	4	5	5	4	4
Total	180	201	162	195	132

Source: ICC-IMB Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships Report 2021

Based on Table 1, the data reported each year displays a varied pattern, with an upward and downward tendency over the course of five years. The decrease in number however does not affect the percentage of the piratical act committed in Southeast Asian waters.⁹⁶ According to IMO, piracy reports in 2000 and 2001, summarily, the largest number of attacks had occurred in the Malacca Straits and in the Indonesian waters.⁹⁷ The incident totals per region from January to December 2021 are further displayed in Chart A. Southeast Asia has reported 56 out of 132 attacks in 2021. The detailed figure of both acts and attempted incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships in this region has been presented in Table 3 below.

CHART A: TOTAL INCIDENTS PER REGION, JANUARY-DECEMBER 2021

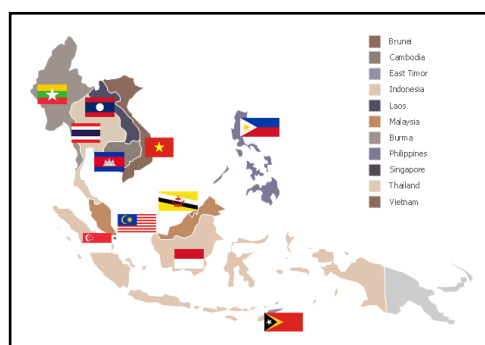


⁹⁶ Amri (n 21).

TABLE 3: ACTS AND ATTEMPTED INCIDENTS OF PIRACY AND ARMED ROBBERY AGAINST SHIPS IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, 2017-2021

LOCATIONS	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Indonesia	43	36	25	26	9
Malacca Strait	0	0	0	0	1
Malaysia	7	11	11	4	2
Philippines	22	10	5	8	9
Singapore Straits	4	3	13	23	35
Thailand	0	0	0	1	0
Total	76	60	54	62	56

Source: ICC-IMB Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships Report 2021



Map 1

Country	CPI Rank	Index score
Cambodia	157/180	23/100
Indonesia	96/180	38/100
Laos	128/180	30/100
Timor-Leste	82/180	41/100
Malaysia	62/180	48/100
Myanmar	140/180	28/100
Philippines	117/180	33/100
Singapore	4/180	85/100
Thailand	110/180	35/100
Vietnam	87/180	39/100

4.3 Factors that Lead Southeast Asia to Become Piracy-prone

There are several reasons that lead the Southeast Asia region to be subjected to maritime piracy and among them is the geographical factor. Huge (and difficult to control effectively) territory, thousands of islands (sometimes with rugged coastlines), many rivers, bays, caves and straits, with land often covered by a dense jungle, is a convenient place for

⁹⁷ Ibid.

piracy. Pirates may not only hide themselves easily somewhere on the coastline, but also be more likely to escape successfully.⁹⁸ The challenge for the authorities to effectively monitor each area is shown in some ways by the fact that this region is made up of thousands of islands. Furthermore, Southeast Asia is home to six of the top 25 busiest ports in the world, including Tanjung Priok in Indonesia, Tanjung Pelepas and Port Kelang in Malaysia, Singapore, Manila in the Philippines, and Laem Chabang in Thailand. Second, it is also important to acknowledge that state corruption contributed to piracy. Nearly every Southeast Asian nation suffers from a serious corruption problem and this somehow will affect the security force, in which it weakens the state's ability to curb maritime piracy and armed robbery. Table 4 below shows the corruption perception index in Southeast Asia. The table makes it evident that only Singapore is ranked above the global average and that the majority of Southeast Asian nations struggle with substantial corruption problems.

TABLE 4: CORRUPTION PERCEPTION INDEX IN SOUTHEAST ASIA COUNTRIES 2021

Country	CPI Rank	Index score
Cambodia	157/180	23/100
Indonesia	96/180	38/100
Laos	128/180	30/100
Timor-Leste	82/180	41/100
Malaysia	62/180	48/100
Myanmar	140/180	28/100
Philippines	117/180	33/100
Singapore	4/180	85/100
Thailand	110/180	35/100
Vietnam	87/180	39/100

Source: Corruption Perception Index 2021

The presence of major ports in Southeast Asia, combined with the region's strategic location, would further contribute to the third reason why this area attracts maritime piracy, which is its maritime traffic. According to the Review of Maritime Transport 2021 by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Asia continued to be the world's greatest supplier of seafarers, indicating its dominance in international maritime trade. Every kind of ship, from tiny fishing boats to supertankers, may be found in this region.⁹⁹ This affirmed the idea that organised gangs and opportunistic marine robbers both find this area to be advantageous.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Stach (n 24) 727.

¹⁰⁰ Nurulizwan Zubir, 'Maritime Violence: Implications to Malaysia' (2012) 5(1) *Arena Hukum* 49

4.4 Impacts of Piracy and Armed Robbery

The international community has come to recognise piracy and armed robbery at sea as a serious danger because of the significant negative effects it has on the economies, environments, and political stability of the affected nations. Regarding economic issues, piracy will make foreign ships reluctant to stay at specific ports because doing so will prolong their route and increase the probability that they will be subject to piracy attacks. As a result, the nation won't be able to collect its customs duty. Furthermore, costs of goods to the customer may have increased due to the losses directly incurred by the attack.¹⁰⁰ This happened because of the fact that once piracy occurs, the shipping company would have to pay for any damage or pay the ransom sought by the pirates, which may force the company to raise the prices of the goods for the customers. In addition, maritime piracy can result in environmental problems including oil spills and water contamination. The attacks that could lead to the consequences could be in the form of taking over ships laden with chemicals without competent seamen, intentionally mishandling the ship or also with the goal to scuttle the ship into an ocean oil rig.¹⁰¹ The quality of the ocean's water will be impacted by the oil spill, endangering the lives of marine life and plants. In addition to physical harms, humans were also victims of adverse economic consequences by environmental disasters.¹⁰² This happened because of the oil spill, which will result in the fishermen losing profit. Additionally, maritime violence like piracy and armed robberies at sea will impact how the governments' political relations are with one another. Foreign investors, especially shipping companies, will be affected by this potential threat to lose confidence in the maritime administration of a particular nation and opt out of using the usual sea routes. When a country's efforts in combating piracy is seen not to have resulted in a decrease trend, other countries would have the perception that the enforcement is corrupted, in the sense that the enforcement agencies are having some kind of collaboration with the pirates.¹⁰³

4.5 ANALYSIS

Based on the foregoing discussion, it is justified to say that piracy and armed robbery at sea are categorised under hirabah in Islamic criminal law. The existence of two significant elements of Hirabah that is the use of force and the act of terrorising the victims and other people in these two crimes. As a matter of fact, these two crimes are the same thing in

<https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.arenahukum.2012.00501.6> accessed [date].

¹⁰¹ Ibid p. 50.

¹⁰² Ibid

¹⁰³ Ibid p. 51.

Islamic law. However in International law, piracy and armed robbery are different due to the where the crime occurred either at international sea or internal (local jurisdiction) sea.

In piracy and armed robbery at sea there was use of force such knives, guns and other weapons. The motive and the criminal intention of these two crimes is to take the property from the victims.

The impact of piracy and armed robbery at sea to one's country, for example in Somalia, is the global economic development as well as efficiency loss due to the rerouting of shipping networks which would be otherwise uneconomical.¹⁰⁴ In South east Asia, negative impacts of maritime piracy is the disruption of the global economy and imposes considerable cost on international commerce and tax payers, thus inhibiting international trade.¹⁰⁵

The element of place which was discussed by some jurists can be ruled out as one of the fundamental elements to constitute hirabah. The impacts of piracy and armed robbery at sea or at any place that could affect the community at large in terms of their safety, peace and harmony is significant to a nation regardless of where those crimes took place.

In terms of the punishment for Muharib, the authority may choose the opinions of some jurists who opined that the punishment to be inflicted to the muharib based on the nature of the criminal act done. How serious the crime would be to the victim and public at large, such as robbing and killing the victims then the punishment would be death penalty. Perhaps, the authority decides to choose the opinion of Imam Malik where the punishment for the muharib is left to the discretionary power of the court

5. CONCLUSION

Both acts of piracy and armed robbery are recognised as serious threats to the international community since they will have a big influence on many important sectors around the world. Southeast Asia is prone to piracy due to a number of factors ranging from the wide income gap among its coastal states to its busy, narrow shipping, all of which makes ships travelling through the region a target for attack.¹⁰⁶ In proposing ideas to combat this issue, it is important to emphasise that complete eradication of maritime piracy in Southeast Asia seems impossible at the moment.¹⁰⁷ This is so

because a variety of factors have made this area favoured with pirate gangs. To ensure the security of this area, all nations in Southeast Asia must work together and make full commitments. The relevant nations must come to an agreement on an appropriate legal framework. Arms race and security dilemma should be set aside.¹⁰⁸ The governments are also urged to address the issues of corruption and poverty since uncertain economic revenues and a serious worldwide economic crisis brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic will likely encourage individuals to engage in unlawful activities like piracy. Last but not least, the maritime agencies as well as ship owner companies need to follow the provided security procedures as well as regularly reviewing the current security strategies. The ship crews are supposed to be well trained in understanding the various types of possible threats at sea and carry out a voyage specific threat and risk assessment prior to entering the region.¹⁰⁹

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¹⁰⁷ Stach (n 24) 727.

¹⁰⁸ Amri (n 21).

¹⁰⁹ 'Piracy and Armed Robbery at Sea' (Gard, March 2022)

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Katsina state is the lowest with only one percent of its women cut.¹¹⁵

Although, the three major tribes in Nigeria are Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo, but there are in Nigeria other tribes that have numerical strength in which the practice of female circumcision is highly entrenched in their tradition, one of such tribe are the Shuwa Arab of Borno state. They are approximately about 2 million people and basically nomadic and herders. They are predominantly Muslims, and cultural orientation is increasingly Arabic because they are from the Arabs extraction, simple geographical circumstances make them Nigerians. The most essential cultural system for socialism of the women and girls in the shuwa cultural society is the female circumcision, and they perceived it through religious dimension, they practice it with passion almost 98 percent of its women and girls are duly circumcised.¹¹⁶ Their cultural persuasion is vibrant, bold and imminently patriarchal and thus the practice of female circumcision is essentially a means to controlling women sexuality, but it has a ritualistic undertone.¹¹⁷

There are quite a number of factors that which supports and perpetuates the practice of female circumcision, but the origin is still obscure, even though some reliable account is worthy to note.

2. ORIGIN OF FEMALE CIRCUMCISION

Although it is quite difficult to trace the period when female circumcision started or its origin, but some scholars opined that it can be traced from period of the ancient Egypt. This is so due to its pharaonic belief attached to the concept of bisexuality of the gods, which same attributes is

reflected in each individual human being.¹¹⁸ This mythology is divinely inspired and claimed that each individual had both soul of male and female in him/her, the male soul in the female is located at the clitoris, while the female soul of the male is located at the prepuce of the penis. Thus in order to engender healthy gender development the male soul must be excise from the female and the female soul also excise from the male, and this is done principally by circumcision.¹¹⁹

According to historians this practice could be traced to 800 years BC from ancient Egypt that it is one cultural practice that is observed with passion and zeal. Whenever their girls reached fourteen or begin to have menstrual flow they promptly circumcised the girl, as a mark of significant cultural practice.¹²⁰ Furthermore according to Wikipedia between 1813 to 1825 doctors were performing female circumcision as a medical remedy in Europe.¹²¹ Also in the united states of America a surgeon in New Orleans was said to have perform this procedure for a different reason, which is connected to the practice of medicine.¹²² Thus it is obvious that female circumcision was a universal practice but different regions perform the procedure for different reasons, while to some is cultural others opined that it is a medical therapy¹²³ to remedy some biological or psychological defects.

It is quite significant to note that female circumcision is prevalent in the regions that defined it as an essential cultural practice.

3. WHAT IS FEMALE CIRCUMCISION

Although, female circumcision was not defined, but female genital mutilation was jointly defined by international institutions which includes the world

¹¹⁵ Op, cit, note 2, P, 351.

¹¹⁶ Umar MA, 'Violence against women: Towards formulating an enforceable legal regime in Nigeria' (unpublished thesis, International Islamic University, Malaysia, 2018).

¹¹⁷ Ibid, at P, 78

¹¹⁸ Assaad MB, 'Female circumcision in Egypt: Social implications, current research and prospects for change' (1980) 11 *Studies in Family Planning* 3–16.

¹¹⁹ Boyle EH, Songora F and Foss G, 'International discourse and local politics: Anti-female-genital-cutting law in Egypt, Tanzania and the United States' (2016) 48 *Social Problems* 524–544.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 526.

¹²¹ Allen PL, *The Wages of Sin: Sex and Disease Past and Present* (1st edn, University of Chicago Press 2002) 112–143.

¹²² Ibid, 128.

¹²³ World Health Organisation, 'Factsheet details on female genital mutilation' (Geneva, March 2019) <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheet/details/female-genital-mutilation> accessed 18 September 2019.

health organisation (WHO), united nations international children emergency fund (UNICEF) among others.¹²⁴ There are quite a number of terms that were proposed to be used to describe female circumcision which includes excision, purification, ritual passage, female genital cutting, among others. But all were rejected for not being comprehensive, certain and appropriate in both meaning, effect or implication. Thus, female genital mutilation was widely used by the United Nation system since 1997 but was officially adopted in 2008 by all UN agencies. Therefore, according to Susan Raafat¹²⁵ ‘FGM’ was first coined by the famous feminist campaigner Fran Hosken in 1979, and this major breakthrough is underscored by therapeutic reasons which explained that the procedure is against acceptable medical practice.¹²⁶

Thus, female genital mutilation (FGM) is defined as the world health organisation (WHO) as any procedure perform which involves the partial or substantial removal of external female genitalia or inflicted an injury on the female genital organ whether for traditional purposes or for any non-medical reasons.¹²⁷ Conversely term ‘FGM’ was adopted in Africa by the inter-African committee on traditional practices (IAP) since 2005 and declared as harmful traditional practices and abhorring category of violence against women in Africa.¹²⁸ This study will hereinafter referred to female circumcision with FGM interchangeably, but this will be done carefully so as not to offend those that practice it as cultural expression or traditional identity.

The global concerted efforts to stem the tide of the FGM menace was first at the world health assembly at Geneva in 1994 under the auspices of the world health organisation, participating states resolved that FGM is harmful traditional practice and state parties are obligated to eradicate it through the promulgation of domestic policies and programmes.¹²⁹ Nigeria was prominently participated at the 47th world health assembly and undertook the obligation to eradicate this FGM absolutely and completely¹³⁰. The procedure is mostly performed by traditional circumcisers who were usually birth attendants and in the related services. There is no health benefit accrued for the performance of FGM, in fact there is serious adverse health consequences and implications which may lead to death as a result of FGM.¹³¹

4. TYPE OF FEMALE CIRCUMCISION/MUTILATION

There are four major known type and procedure of performing female circumcision and they all adversely affect the health being of the woman or girl. The four different types are practiced in Nigeria some severe while others are less severe but still have its adverse dimensions.¹³² The first type is popularly called ‘clitoridectomy’ is the partial or total removal of the clitoris and in very rare cases the removal of fold of the skin surrounding the clitoris. The second type is called ‘excision’ or ‘Sunnah’¹³³ which involved a partial or total removal of the clitoris and the inner fold of the vulva with or without removal of the outer fold or skin of the vulva. Accordingly, the type three form

¹²⁴ World Health Organisation, ‘Factsheet details on female genital mutilation’ (Geneva, March 2019) <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheet/details/female-genital-mutilation> accessed 18 September 2019.

¹²⁵ Raafat Y, ‘Controversial term “Female genital mutilation”’ <www.28toomany.org/fgm-controversial> accessed 18 September 2019.

¹²⁶ www.endviolencenow.org/female-genital-mutilation/un-women accessed on 18/09/19

¹²⁷ Op, cit, note 16.

¹²⁸ ‘Declaration: on the Terminology FGM’ (6th IAC General Assembly, 4–7 2005, Bamako/Mali) (The Bamako declaration).

¹²⁹ World Health Organisation, ‘WHA47.10, 47th World Health Assembly: Resolutions and Decisions’ (Geneva, 1994) 10.

¹³⁰ Okeke TC, Anyaehie USB and Ezenyeaku CCK, ‘An overview of female genital mutilation in Nigeria’ (2012) 2 *Annals of Medical and Health Sciences Research* 70–73.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Op cit, T.C. Okeke et al.

¹³³ Op cit, Boyle EH, Songora F and Foss G, 526. The term ‘Sunnah’ used to make reference to type two is borrowed from Islam meaning the traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW), but neither of the scholars make reference to Islam permitting female circumcision or specifically the practice of type two as explained herein above.

of female circumcision is often called ‘Infibulation’ and its involve a severe procedure of narrowing of the vaginal opening through the creation of a covering seal. The seal is form by cutting and repositioning of the inner skin or outer skin of the vulva, through stitching with or without excision of the clitoris. While type four involves piercing, incising, cauterizing and pricking the female genital area, or any other harmful procedure to female genitalia for non-medical purpose.¹³⁴

However, the most extreme form of female circumcision will be followed by stitching or sewing together of the raw vulva so that a small opening will be preserved for the purposes of passage of urine and menstrual fluid.¹³⁵ Consequently time will come when de-infibulation may be necessary required that is when a woman is infibulated and there is need for smooth sexual intercourse or to facilitate child birth.¹³⁶ Therefore, those women that were cut by infibulation suffer two injuries at the first time when it was super imposed on them and secondly when they were about to deliver a child.

5. RATIONALE FOR FEMALE CIRCUMCISION/FGM

The practice of female circumcision is deeply rooted in culture and some traditional belief.¹³⁷ Thus frequently the proponents of female circumcision are obscenely disturbed when phrase female genital mutilation is used to refer to female circumcision, largely due to the fact that it is their cultural expression and traditional identity. This sentiment as expressed by the proponent should be carefully and wisely addressed in order to achieve holistic eradication of FGM. The influence and significance of culture and traditional belief in the lives of the people should be imminently respected, preserve and promoted.

Thus, the Supreme court held in the case of *Ojiogu Vs. Ojiogu*¹³⁸ that a custom is way of life of the people and based on their belief, therefore, it cannot be said to be repugnant to natural justice, equity and good conscience especially if the people professed it and agreed to be bound by its application. Therefore, government must involve the inhabitants of this cultural practice in order to get it totally eradicated. An honest woman was quoted to have said that people are resistant to stop the practice and female circumcision persisted due to their believe in it as significant cultural orientation.

“Female children are still being subjected to this mutilation, people will say it openly that don’t do it, they do it, they are still doing it..... and they are still in favour of it because they believe that the female ones will become promiscuous.”¹³⁹

This sentiment as ventilated above is largely held by many tribes and ethnic groups in Nigeria which the national demographic surveys usually do not include in its report because they are minority. But the minorities put together are in the majority, for example, the Edo people in the south-south Nigeria believe the religio-cultural significance of female circumcision. These superstitious believes includes, an uncircumcised female is filthy, unclean and a taboo, because babies die during delivery when contact is made with the clitoris.¹⁴⁰ Certainly there is still no empirical nor scientific evidence to justify this myth it was just superstitious believe that was transmitted from generations to generations, sadly majority of the adherents of this practice were increasingly presented mild and severe obstetrics complications.¹⁴¹ More worrisome is that the women whom were the victims of this patriarchal tradition justify the practice and insist that their

¹³⁴ Op cit, note 15.

¹³⁵ Boyle EH, Songora F and Foss G, ‘International discourse and local politics: Anti-female-genital-cutting law in Egypt, Tanzania and the United States’ (2016) 48 Social Problems 527.

¹³⁶ Op, cit note 15

¹³⁷ Olomjobi Y, Human Rights on Gender, Sex and the Law in Nigeria (Princeton Publishing Company 2015) 81–82.

¹³⁸ (2009) 9 North Western Law Review (pt. 1198) 1, S.C

¹³⁹ Op cit, Olomjobi Y, 82.

¹⁴⁰ Osifo DO and Evbuonwan I, ‘Female genital mutilation among the Edo people: The complications and patterns of presentation at a paediatric surgery unit, Benin city’ (2009) 13 African Journal of Reproductive Health 17–26, 22.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 23.

daughters must be circumcised,¹⁴² at which period the daughters might be too young or in case of women might be illiterate to negotiate their basic human rights.

The rationale for the observance of this practices varies from society to society and ethnic community to ethnic community, but increasingly in Nigeria reasons for the persistence of the practice include protection of the girls not to delve in to promiscuity, retention of virginity, conservation of girls fertility and control woman's sexual functions in competing with man, among others.¹⁴³ FGM also connotes cleanliness because non-circumcision of females will mean the woman retains impurities in her body. Paradoxically traditional circumcisers who indulge in the practice as trade or business are persistently engaged in the practice secretly and performing it underground.¹⁴⁴ Therefore it is noted with concern that the religio-cultural dimension of the practice and the myth or superstitious believe, the traditional circumcisers who make fortune or eke out a living out of it, are some of the reasons why the practice persisted despite impactful international and domestic outcry against it.

Conversely it was reported that Network against female genital mutilation,¹⁴⁵ 73 traditional circumcisers were promised soft loan to start a new business in order to stop FGM, they accordingly obliged and surrender their tools to the district commissioner. Unfortunately, the promised could not be fulfil they threaten to resume their trade and ultimately resumed.¹⁴⁶ This has challenge the potency of statutory prohibition alone, whether it is capable of eradicating the practice without the corresponding support and involvement of the inhabitants that profess it as their paramount traditional practice. In other words, unless inclusive

strategic eradication programme must be sourced and developed by government FGM will persistently exist and continue unabated.

Although, many scholars have suggested for "medicalisation" or "clinicalisation" of the female circumcision as risk reduction strategy.¹⁴⁷ But the world health organisation (WHO) have since 1982 issued proclamation declaring it unethical for any health official to perform female circumcision either in the hospital or any other health establishment.¹⁴⁸ Similarly the international federation of gynaecology and obstetrics have in 1994 passed a resolution obligating all medical doctors not to perform female circumcision.

However, there are historical account which revealed that ancient medical and scientific therapeutic and clinical management includes female circumcision in the treatment and control of some specific ailments, for example, the treatment of insanity, nymphomania and masturbation.¹⁴⁹ Erstwhile, it was also revealed that in 1866 in UK the then president of the medical society Isaac Baker Brown was the first to opined that for the treatment of masturbation or abnormal irritation the cutting of the clitoris is the only solution.¹⁵⁰ Even though, majority of medical practitioners at that time mounted stiff opposition to this perception and openly condemn the proponents as quackery, which lead to expulsion from certified medical practitioners.¹⁵¹ Therefore scientific medical proof has consistently oppose the practice of female circumcision.

6. FEMALE GENITAL COSMETIC SURGERIES

This involves multiple but different procedures performed largely for non – therapeutic reason, the commonest and popular procedure includes vulvo-

¹⁴² Op cit, Osifo DO and Evbuonwan I, 22.

¹⁴³ Op cit, Olomajobi Y, 82.

¹⁴⁴ Op cit, Osifo DO and Evbuonwan I, 25.

¹⁴⁵ A non-governmental organisation (NGO) domiciled in Tanzania attempts to discourage the practice FGM by offering incentives to the traditional circumcisers but for some unforeseen circumstances failed.

¹⁴⁶ Boyle EH, Songora F and Foss G, 'International discourse and local politics: Anti-female-genital-cutting law in Egypt, Tanzania and the United States' (2016) 48 Social Problems 527.

¹⁴⁷ Shell-Duncan B, 'The medicalization of female "circumcision": harm reduction or promotion of a dangerous practice?' (2001) 52 Social Science and Medicine 1013–1028.

¹⁴⁸ World Health Organisation, Female Circumcision: Statement of WHO Position and Activities (World Health Organisation 1982).

¹⁴⁹ Rodriguez SB, Female Circumcision and Clitoridectomy in the United States: History of a Medical Treatment (University of Rochester 2014) 149. University of Rochester, (2014) p, 149

¹⁵⁰ Op cit, Allen PL, 98.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, Rodriguez SB, 148.

plasty or labio-plasty otherwise referred to as vaginal rejuvenation, labia minora hypertrophy or clitoral hypertrophy.¹⁵² The basis of this surgical procedure is to enhance the image of the female genitalia to reflect the most influenced image and advertisement by the playboy magazines, or other social media outlets, often on video streaming website, You Tube page of famous photographer Nick Karras.¹⁵³ Among others. Western styled women are very much concerned about the attractiveness and appearance of their vagina seek to achieve idealised female body particularly with the appearance of their genitalia similar to those of the female super stars in the entertainment industry. There are also claimed of enhance sexual relations and the desire to achieve orgasm as some of the reason of labio-plasty, while to others is the apparent need to satisfy their sex or intimate partner with the kind of genital image of his taste, especially among those involved in oral sex activity.¹⁵⁴ Thus there are other outstanding claims which underscored the purpose of these surgeries it also include clitoral hood reduction, G-spot amplification and hymenoplasty, ultimately the objective of labio-plasty includes the following:

Reduction in the hypertrophic

Preservation of the introitus which means vaginal entrance

Minimal invasiveness

Maintenance of neurovascular supply, among others.¹⁵⁵

However, non – therapeutic labiaplasty is accessed inappropriately for cosmetic reasons rather than clinical indications, sometimes due to inconvenience in physical exercises, protruding clitoral or labia tissues which make them uneasy at the beach or swimming pool, or uneasy while on

bicycle. Women in modern western societies want petite and non-protruding clitoral hood.¹⁵⁶ Interestingly Zambian women are culturally conditioned to prefer elongated clitoral hood because is a sign of good Zambian woman who is ready for marriage. As such Zambian women used weight or pulling strategy with a view to elongating the clitoris as it will increase sexual pleasure.¹⁵⁷ There are quiet several different techniques use in conducting clinical surgeries of labia-plasty, they are about eleven techniques that were identified. But broadly speaking these different categories of techniques are group into three main techniques they as follows:

Edge resection this involves the removing of the excess tissue of labia minora by resecting the most protruding part and re-design it in either ‘W’ or ‘S’ shape or to even curve it, but necessarily the excess tissues are flatly removed and no protruding of the genitalia.¹⁵⁸ The Edge resection is virtually the most popular performed surgery.

Wedge resection this involves various modification techniques with a view of preserving the shape of the vagina and to prevent loss of function and sensation. It is otherwise called wedge reduction technique because the labia cannot be removed too much, thus it allows for conveniences while wearing underwear, no dryness or vaginal introitus.¹⁵⁹

Central resection techniques otherwise called central reduction method seek to modify the genitalia into triangle shape or bicycle helmet shape by preserving the original texture, maintaining the contours and pigmentation of the labia edge. Usually, the inner and outer surface of labia minora are sutured separately without touching the erectile tissue between them.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵² Vulvoplasty Report 2014 (MBS Review, Australian Government Department of Health)

¹⁵³ Ozer M et al, ‘Labioplasty: Motivations, Techniques and Ethics’ <https://www.researchgate.net/publications/322963990> accessed 25 April 2021.

¹⁵⁴ ‘Labioplasty with stable labia minora retraction – butterfly-like-approach’ <http://www.journal.iww.com/prsgo/fulltext/2020/04000/labiaplasty.aspx> accessed 28 April 2021.

¹⁵⁵ Op cit, Vulvoplasty Report 2014.

¹⁵⁶ Michael A, ‘Protruding Labia Minora: Abnormal or Just Uncool’ (2011) 32 *Journal of Psychosom, Obstetrics, Gynecology* 154–156.

¹⁵⁷ Mubanga PG, ‘Zambian Women in South Africa: Insight into Health Experiences of Labia Elongation’ (2015) 52 *Journal of Sex Research* 857–867.

¹⁵⁸ Op cit, Ozer M et al, ‘Labioplasty: Motivations, Techniques and Ethics’.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, Ozer M et al, ‘Labioplasty: Motivations, Techniques and Ethics’.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

However, whatever technique or method adopted it still involved the reduction or modification of the female genitalia by pricking, excision, cutting of the excess labia tissue. The outcome of these surgeries is largely less complication or not at all, because those complications reported resolved themselves without the need for revision of procedure. This conclusion was reached due to increase in the number of women seeking labio-plasty services in the western highly developed societies.¹⁶¹ It was noted with deep concern that normal anatomic variations is used as the excuse necessitating medical intervention, thus exposes otherwise healthy women to unnecessary cosmetics surgery.¹⁶² They are essentially worried with genital self-image based on deceptive marketing and industry generated diagnosis and biological conditions that are largely untrue. Therefore, the women seeking such services are largely victims of patriarchal advertisement.

Meanwhile, according to world health organization the prohibition of FGM is fundamentally underscored by the principle of human rights, which include rights of women and the girl-child, right to health and bodily integrity and right to non-discrimination based on sex. Thus, the world health organisation noted with dismay that some practices such as female genital cosmetic surgery and hymen repair, which are legally accepted in many western countries and generally considered FGM, actually falls within the definition of FGM.¹⁶³

7. INTERNATIONAL LEGAL PROHIBITION OF FEMALE CIRCUMCISION/FGM

The international community have proposed and proclaimed a number of reforms towards ensuring human rights to all without discrimination based on sex. These reforms are centred around the

promotion and preservation of women's human rights and the eradication of violence against women in all ramifications. Essentially, violence that is rooted in culture, tradition and religion, and reference was made to harmful traditional practices. Therefore, since 1993 the global acceptable minimum is the eradication of any conflict between women's rights and harmful customary practices, cultural prejudices and religion extremism. Conversely, all existing laws should be repealed to eliminate traditional and cultural practices which discriminate and causes harm to women and girl-child.¹⁶⁴ This commitment was reiterated in 1995 when the world converged in China and emphatically maintained that any harmful traditional, customary and modern practices which violates the rights of women should be prohibited and eliminated, particularly FGM should be eradicated.¹⁶⁵

Thus, the famous women's right treaty has obligated governments of respective states that are signatories to the convention to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women.¹⁶⁶ Nigeria has signed and ratified this convention, thus she is obligated to repealed all laws, stereotypes, practices and prejudices which impair women's well-being and enjoyment of human rights. Interestingly the definition of discrimination by the convention has scoped FGM in prominent detail. It provides that any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and

¹⁶¹ 'Elective Female Genital Cosmetics Surgery', The American College of Obstetrician and Gynecologist (ACOG), clinical committee opinion, No. 795 (January 2020).

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ World Health Organisation, Eliminating Female Genital Mutilation: An Interagency Statement (WHO, Department of Reproductive Health and Research, Geneva 2008) 8–10.

¹⁶⁴ Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights 1993, S II (B) (3) para 38 & 49.

¹⁶⁵ Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) paras 39, 107, 113, 124, 232, 224 & 277.

¹⁶⁶ Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Art 2.

fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.¹⁶⁷

Therefore, the perplexities of FGM is too much too many, but broadly speaking it means different things to different people or region. It is opined that it is all about women's sexuality, in which the society seek to control women's sexuality by reducing their sexual fulfilment.¹⁶⁸ It is believed that when the erectile part of the female genitalia is cut it will prevent her from being promiscuous. Furthermore, it is about social pressure, thus in a community where women circumcision is the norm it will create an environment in which the practice of female circumcision is a pre-requisite for social acceptance, and non-observing the practice is deemed a taboo. It is also said to be cultural and traditional practices, because the society which professes the practice of FGM maintain their custom and preserve and promote their cultural expression and identity through persistence of the practice.

Meanwhile, the main perplexity is that it is religious, whether viewed through cultural or traditional lens it is a cultural practice that is binding and assumed the status of native law and custom of the people. But it is said to be practice by the orthodox religion of the Jews, Islam and Christianity.¹⁶⁹ To a large extent it could be true of Islam, due to remarkable identification of one form and method of female circumcision called '*SUNNI CUT*' this suggested that its foundation is in Islam. Accordingly, in a purposive interview one of the respondents claimed that it is Islamic and narrated that during the life time of the prophet Muhammed an old woman who is identified as the circumciser was brought to the Holy Prophet and he said don't cut too deep but cut little of the clitoris.¹⁷⁰ Thus based on this he said the people of Shuwa Arabs

extraction embraced the practice as part of the religious recommendatory practice in Islam.

Although, the practice of FGM is not restricted to girl-child other elderly women could be victim of this heinous but endemic practice. Most particularly to the girl-child it is pathetic due to the absent of informed consent before the procedure is accordingly perform. The girl-child subjected to FGM is exposed to health hazards and bodily injuries due to inflicting severe pain as a result of the procedure. This is tantamount to violation of the convention against torture,¹⁷¹ which Nigeria has signed on 28th July 1988 and ratified for national implementation on 28th June 2001. According to the convention i.e, UNCAT torture is defined as "Torture" to mean any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or third party information or confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.¹⁷² It does not include pain or suffering arising only from. Inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions.

Meanwhile, the international community have dedicated a convention to address the overwhelming challenges militating against the rights of children around the world. The convention particularly emphasised that no child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment.¹⁷³ Accordingly, the child convention imposed on state parties the obligation to take all effective and appropriate measure with a view to abolishing traditional practices prejudicial

¹⁶⁷ Art 1 of CEDAW.

¹⁶⁸ Alade EA, *Women's Rights and the Nigerian Customary Law with Global Perspectives* (Obafemi Owolowo University Press 2018) 155.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 155.

¹⁷⁰ Idris AGG, interview by author, Mashamari ward, off Bama Road, Jere Local Government Area, Borno State, 24 March 2021.

¹⁷¹ United Nations Convention against Cruel Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT 1984).

¹⁷² Art 1, UNCAT 1984.

¹⁷³ Art 37(a) of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) (child convention).

to health of children.¹⁷⁴ It was opined that FGM is equally violation of right to life as enshrined in the famous bills of rights of the United Nations.¹⁷⁵ The civil and political rights covenant interprets provision on right to life as obligating governments to adopt 'positive measure' to preserve life.¹⁷⁶ FGM can be seen to violate right to life in the rare cases in which death occurred as a result from the wrongful and quackery procedure. Thus, the right to physical integrity, while often associated with the right to freedom from torture, encompasses a number of broader human rights' principles, including the inherent dignity of the person, the right to liberty and security of the person and the right to privacy. Therefore, acts of violence that threatens a person's safety, such as FGM, violates a person's right to physical integrity.¹⁷⁷

There are quite a number of regional instruments that focused attention on human rights and proclaimed the prohibition of FGM, these African treaties were more specific due to the fact that the cultural practice of FGM is deeply rooted in African culture and tradition. The African states and governments were required to take all appropriate measures towards the elimination of harmful social and cultural practices that are inimical to the welfare, dignity and normal growth and development of the child, most particularly those cultural practices that are prejudicial to the health and life of the child, and those that are discriminatory to child on ground of sex.¹⁷⁸ In the same vein the African protocol on women's rights has explicitly prohibits the cultural practice and call on state parties to prohibits and condemn it through the prohibition of all harmful practices which negatively affect the human rights of women and which are contrary to all international standards.¹⁷⁹

Accordingly harmful practices is defined to mean all behaviour, attitudes and practices which negatively affect the fundamental rights of women and girls, such as their rights to life, health, dignity, education and physical integrity.¹⁸⁰

Furthermore, the Maputo protocol has emphatically obligated the state parties to prohibit with the promulgation of domestic legislations backed by sanctions all forms of FGM scarification, medicalization and para-medicalization of FGM with a view of eradicating the practice.¹⁸¹ Conversely due to the fact that FGM involves invasive procedure on otherwise healthy tissues without therapeutic necessity, and which likely may result in to severe physical and mental injuries, it is therefore a flagrant violation of right to health as recognised and imposed on the state parties to recognise the right of everyone without any form of discrimination to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.¹⁸²

Therefore, the physical and mental health of women and girls are of paramount consideration and governments of respective countries are urged to initiate policies that will mainstream the health needs of women and girls due to their vulnerability to traditional practices such as FGM.¹⁸³ Although, argument may be converse that right to health as elaborated by the plethora of international treaties, instruments and convention is equally elaborated under the 1999 constitution of Nigeria.¹⁸⁴ This right is conceived as objective and purpose of government and that government must direct it policy toward planning and provision of sufficient medical and health facilities for all persons.

8. DOMESTIC LEGAL PROHIBITION OF FEMALE CIRCUMCISION/FGM

¹⁷⁴ Art 24 (3) of the child convention 1989.

¹⁷⁵ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) 1966, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) 1966 and The United Nations Charter 1948.

¹⁷⁶ Op cit, Alade EA, 156.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 157.

¹⁷⁸ African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child 1990 (ACRWC), Art 21(1)(a & b).

¹⁷⁹ Protocol on African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa 2003 (Maputo Protocol), Art 5.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, Art 1(g) of the Maputo Protocol, 2003.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, Art 5(b) of the Maputo Protocol, 2003.

¹⁸² International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) 1966, Art 12(1).

¹⁸³ General Recommendation No.24 of the CEDAW Committee, 20th session, 1999.

¹⁸⁴ Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, S 17, Part II, Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State.

Although, there is no national legislation prohibiting the practice of FGM, this is largely due to Nigeria's unique federal arrangement which stipulates that such issues of FGM is within the concurrent legislative list, whereof both the federal government and federating units can legislate on it. Therefore, the federal government had in 2015 passed in to law a women specific legislation with the objective and purpose of eliminating violence against women in Nigeria.¹⁸⁵ This legislation has elaborated provision which criminalises the practice of female circumcision and female genital mutilation with adequate corresponding punishment in the following categories of persons.

Any person who either perform or commission another to perform is liable on conviction to 4 years imprisonment or fine of N200,000 only or both

Any person who attempts to perform this criminal act is equally liable on conviction to 2 years imprisonment or N100,000 only fine or to both

Any person who incites, abets, aids or encourage and support another person to commit this prohibited conduct is liable on conviction to 2 years imprisonment or to N100,000 only fine or to both.¹⁸⁶

However, this elaborate provision is fulfilling and aligned itself to the global acceptable minimum towards eradication of this endemic malaise, yet the legislation is not of national application. The jurisdiction of VAPP, Act 2015 is limited to the Federal capital territory, Abuja¹⁸⁷ and all respective states are enjoined to domesticate same within their legislative competence in other to enthroned national coverage and application. Sadly, there are about 13 states so far that have legislated legal prohibition on FGM in Nigeria.¹⁸⁸ This is the only dedicated legislation which seek to eradicated FGM

in Nigeria, but there elaborated constitutional provision that no person shall be subjected to any form of torture, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment.¹⁸⁹ The constitutional provision is huge commitment toward the elimination of FGM practice, but the constitution is often contain a solemn declaration without corresponding punishment. Therefore, the constitutional elaboration can be described as barking without biting.

Erstwhile, federal ministry of health has source and developed a policy guideline reiterating the remarkable commitment of government in eradicating FGM, by expressing concern and raising awareness on the dangers of FGM to women and girl-child. This worthy document identified and defined harmful traditional practices against reproductive health to include FGM and group circumcision among other endemic malaise.¹⁹⁰ The document also identified 'Zurgu' cut, 'Angurya' cut and 'Gishiri' cut, as the prevailing types of FGM in Nigeria, and maintained that religion and culture are the fulcrum which persistently reinforce the FGM practice and undermine the effort of government in eradicating it.¹⁹¹ The document ultimately emphasised government's undertaking to subscribed to the policy declaration; to wit formulation and enforcement of legal instruments aimed at supporting the elimination of FGM practices through intensified public awareness and health care providers.¹⁹²

Certainly, Nigeria has domesticated the child's rights convention and enacted the child's rights Act,¹⁹³ which sadly, has limited jurisdictional application. The application of the Act is restricted to Abuja and respective states government were urge to consider and domesticate same in their

¹⁸⁵ Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015 (VAPP 2015).

¹⁸⁶ Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, S 6, VAPP Act 2015.

¹⁸⁷ Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, S 47, VAPP Act 2015.

¹⁸⁸ Nnamdi US, 'FGM in Nigeria: Combative Legislation and the Issues Impact on the Economic Growth of Women' (June 2019) <www.impakter.com/female-genital-mutilation-in-nigeria-legislation> accessed 20 April 2021.

¹⁸⁹ Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, S 34 (as amended).

¹⁹⁰ National Reproductive Health Policy and Strategy to Achieve Quality Reproductive and Sexual Health for All Nigerians, Federal Ministry of Health, Abuja, Nigeria (2001) 1.2.2.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Policy Declaration, National Reproductive Health Policy, 2.2 (2.7).

¹⁹³ Child's Rights Act 2003, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria.

territorial jurisdiction. However, some states have since heeded to this call while others due religious and cultural reasons are yet to domesticate it nor enact their unique legislation on child's rights. Consequently, the Act prohibited any form of torture against a child or inhuman and degrading punishment or treatment.¹⁹⁴

9. DUE DILIGENCE OBLIGATION FRAMEWORK

The due diligence obligation principle is a normative component of 5Ps which implicates the state as bearing responsibility towards prevention and responding to human rights violations committed by state and non-state actors or private individuals. These 5Ps are prevention, protection, prosecution, punishment and provide remedy/compensation.¹⁹⁵ The origin of due diligence principle might be traced from the CEDAW committee general comments, where it elaborated that states may be responsible for private acts if they failed to act with due diligence to prevent the violation of human rights or to investigate and punish acts of violence.¹⁹⁶

In the same vein the UN declaration on elimination of violence against women reiterated that the states should exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and in accordance with national legislation, punish acts of violence against women, whether those acts are perpetrated by the states or private persons.¹⁹⁷ Although Nigeria has promulgated a legislation but has not contained the magnitude of the endemic malaise due to its limited territorial jurisdiction. Thus, Nigeria has failed to discharge its international obligation of eliminating violence against women most especially FGM.

Paradoxically while government claimed to have enacted legal prohibition adherents of the FGM practice are largely unaware of the prohibition, and government did not operate an inclusive and participatory process while sourcing and

developing the legal framework for the prohibition of FGM. There should be effective and efficient campaign for awareness raising on the associated dangers and health consequences of the FGM practice.

10. FINDINGS

This paper ultimately found that there is prevalence of the FGM practice in Nigeria and the practice is largely cultural and religious. The adherents of the practice spread across different cultural divide, they are in almost all cultural and traditional societies. Nigeria has signed and ratified international instruments prohibiting FGM practice and yet there is no national legislation prohibiting this endemic practice, but government demonstrated commitment in eradicating FGM by promulgating VAPP Act 2015 this is in addition to Child's rights Act 2003 and National reproductive health policy 2001. The legal prohibition of FGM practice is largely due to its associated health consequences and violation of human rights of women and the girl-child. The FGM practice persisted due to cultural and religious undertones and to a large extent lack of adequate awareness of the prohibition and health consequences.

Nigerian government did not involve and call for the participation of the adherents of the practice in sourcing and developing the legal framework for the prohibition of FGM. It became crystal clear that there is FGM practice that is Islamic because Sunni cut is one type of FGM practice, and this paper also found one prophetic tradition that gave tacit approval for the practice. Accordingly, the paper found that genital cosmetic surgery is FGM, but it is largely found in the western developed societies. Finally, FGM practice is violence against women and girl-child and Nigeria has failed in its due diligence obligations.

¹⁹⁴ Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, S 11, Child's Rights Act 2003.

¹⁹⁵ Goldsheid J and Liebowitz DJ, 'Due Diligence and Gender Violence: Parsing Its Power and Its Peril' (2015) 48 Cornell International Law Journal 305.

¹⁹⁶ General Recommendation No.19, CEDAW Committee, 19, U.N. Doc. A/47/38 (1992).

¹⁹⁷ Art 4, United Nations Declaration on Elimination of Violence against Women 1993.

11. CONCLUSION

The ambivalence of the plural interpretation and the purpose and or aim of the practice of FGM there is still the legal prohibition by the international human rights regime. The traced the normative purpose of the practice, the meaning and types of FGM and the platform upon which the practice stand and persisted. The World health organisation is the global health as the global health regulator is absolute in its prohibition of the FGM practice and clearly stand against medicalisation of it. The United Nations system has condemned the practice and urged the respective state government to initiate domestic policy and enact legislation to eradicate the practice.

Thus, in African cultural societies and Nigeria in particular the practice FGM persisted because of its traditional and religious undertones, but in the western developed society women are largely dissatisfied with genital image seek labio-plasty, they are largely influence by the internet and social media which encouraged them to seek genital cosmetic surgeries, which ultimately is FGM, according to world health organisation. Ironically, respective governments in Europe prohibited FGM but permitted labio-plasty, whereas in Nigeria government only demonstrated commitment to eradicating it.

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Female Circumcision: Statement of WHO Position and Activities (World Health Organisation 1982).

'Female genital mutilation/un-women' <www.endviolencenow.org/female-genital-mutilation/un-women> accessed 18 September 2019.

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experiential learning, simulated learning and case studies related to real-world ESG challenges, the legal education providers will not be able to instil the skills and knowledge to apply theoretical and practical ability to address these complex situations²⁰⁴ for law students.

Furthermore, legal education providers must review their overall objectives, which traditionally relied on producing lawyers who are competent and have traditional legal skills. Rather, it is important to change the objectives to produce well-rounded legal professionals who are able to contribute positively to society by addressing these concerns²⁰⁵. A culture of ethical practice, environmental stewardship and social responsibility within legal education should be developed and nurtured. It should be noted that the integration of ESG considerations into legal education and practice is a fundamental shift and adapting to impart students with the required knowledge and skills through legal education is imperative for the advancement of a more sustainable, ethical and just world.

Research Objectives

The significance of integrating ESG considerations into the legal sector has become a significant aspect in the contemporary legal landscape. This poses challenges for the traditional modality of legal education, however at the same time offers opportunities as well. Despite this, there is limited doctrinal research on the best practices and inclusion of these considerations into legal education. As the primary objective this study evaluates the application of the legal education curricula in the preparation of future lawyers who are able to navigate through the complexities of ESG issues. Thus examining the competency and future adaptability of imparting with necessary skills and knowledge of ESG considerations, of Kulliyah of Shari'ah and Law at IUM in terms of course content, pedagogy and overall objectives would be the primary goal of this study;

This study examines the extent and manner in which Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) considerations are integrated into the curricula at Kulliyah of Shari'ah and Law (KSL) at the Islamic University of Maldives. This involves assessing how ESG topics, such as environmental sustainability, social justice, and corporate governance, are incorporated into both law and non-law subjects, as well as identifying areas where these topics are either fully, partially, or not integrated at all. By evaluating the curriculum structure, the research aims to understand the depth of ESG integration

and identify potential gaps in the current approach. The second objective focuses on exploring the teaching methodologies employed at KSL to impart ESG-related knowledge and skills. This involves assessing the effectiveness of various teaching methods, including lectures, case studies, simulations, and experiential learning. By evaluating the pedagogical approaches used to teach ESG topics, the study determines how well these methodologies help students understand and apply ESG principles in practical legal scenarios. Additionally, it examines whether these methods foster the critical thinking and problem-solving skills necessary for navigating complex ESG issues.

Additionally, the study explores the perceived importance of ESG education in shaping future legal professionals. By gathering insights from both faculty and students, the research aims to highlight strengths, challenges, and opportunities for further development in integrating ESG into legal education at KSL.

Methodology

This study aimed at evaluating the integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) considerations into legal education at Kulliyah of Shari'ah and Law (KSL), employed a doctrinal methodology. This approach is well-suited for legal research, as it involves an in-depth qualitative analysis of legal texts, academic literature, and policy documents, specifically focusing on the integration of ESG topics within legal education curricula. By analyzing these sources, the study will assess the current state of ESG education at KSL and its alignment with the growing need for future lawyers to address ESG challenges in their practice.

This research will provide valuable insights into the evolving nature of legal education and its responsiveness to contemporary challenges, particularly in light of the increasing relevance of ESG considerations in the legal profession. The findings will help law schools develop robust curricula that effectively incorporate ESG topics, ensuring that future legal professionals are well-equipped to navigate these complex issues. Furthermore, this research will contribute to a broader understanding of how legal education can adapt to meet changing societal and professional demands. Ultimately, it aims to offer recommendations for KSL to better prepare its students for the challenges and opportunities presented by ESG concerns, helping shape a more sustainable, ethical, and just legal practice.

²⁰⁴ Walker, C. (2017). Tomorrow's leaders and today's agents of change? Children, sustainability education and environmental governance. *Children & Society*, 31(1), 72-83.

²⁰⁵ Silk, D. M., & Lu, C. X. (2023). Environmental, Social & Governance Law. *ICLG-Environmental, Social and Governance Law*, 23-30.

Findings and Discussion

Table 1: ESG Integration in KSL Curriculum

ESG Topic	Degree of Integration (%)
Environmental Sustainability	10
Social Justice	70
Corporate Governance	60
Environmental Policy	30

This study examined how ESG topics are integrated into the legal curriculum at KSL. The model includes key ESG areas such as Environmental Sustainability, Social Justice, and Corporate Governance, and their degree of integration into various law subjects. The degree of ESG integration into KSL's curriculum is evaluated across four major ESG topics: Environmental Sustainability, Social Justice, Corporate Governance, and Environmental Policy. The findings show the results mapped to varying degrees of integration across different components of the curriculum.

Environmental Sustainability has the lowest level of integration, particularly within the Law courses, where only 10% of the curriculum addresses ESG-related issues. This is not in line with global trends that emphasize the growing importance of environmental law as countries around the world adopt stricter environmental regulations. Legal education providers are increasingly expected to prepare students to navigate the evolving landscape of environmental sustainability, especially with regard to climate change legislation, regulatory compliance, and international environmental agreements²⁰⁶. The significant lack of integration of environmental sustainability in the curriculum at KSL fails to reflect the growing recognition of environmental law's importance in contemporary legal practice.

Social Justice is also reasonably integrated, with 70% of the curriculum focusing on relevant ESG issues such as labour rights, inclusion, and equality. Social justice issues are becoming more prominent in legal education as societies increasingly demand fairer and more inclusive systems²⁰⁷.

²⁰⁶ McKeown, A. (2021). "The Role of Environmental Law in Sustainability Education." *Journal of Environmental Law*, 33(1), 98-112.

²⁰⁷ Nwabueze, U. (2021). "The Rise of Social Justice in Legal Education." *Law and Society Review*, 52(3), 134-145.

Social justice education, particularly concerning discrimination, labour rights, and human rights, is a crucial area for future lawyers to be well-versed in, especially as ESG concerns gain prominence in both corporate governance and public policy.

Corporate Governance is moderately integrated (60%), with a focus on business ethics. This suggests that while KSL recognizes the importance of governance in ESG, more emphasis could be placed on teaching students about corporate social responsibility (CSR), ethical business practices, and the role of governance in ensuring sustainability and accountability within organizations. As corporate governance becomes an area of increasing scrutiny, especially in multinational corporations, understanding ESG factors in corporate decision-making processes is essential for future lawyers²⁰⁸.

Environmental Policy, however, has the lowest level of integration (30%) within the law modules. This highlights a gap in incorporating key environmental governance topics into foundational legal courses. As environmental issues become more central to global governance, integrating environmental policy into constitutional law and other fundamental legal subjects should be a priority to ensure students gain a comprehensive understanding of the legal frameworks that support environmental governance²⁰⁹.

To improve the integration of ESG topics, KSL should enhance the incorporation of Environmental Policy into Constitutional Law and other legal subjects. Introducing cross-disciplinary modules combining law with environmental science, sociology, and ethics could further strengthen the curriculum's ESG focus.

Table 2: Application of Teaching Methodologies for ESG at KSL

Methodology	Application Rating
Lectures	5
Case Studies	4
Simulations	3
Experiential Learning	2

²⁰⁸ Harrison, J. (2021). "Corporate Governance and ESG: A Critical Overview." *Corporate Governance Review*, 15(3), 45-59.

²⁰⁹ Barton, B. (2020). "Environmental Law and Policy in a Changing World." *Environmental Law Journal*, 18(2), 109-125.

Internships	1
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This table shows the application of different teaching methodologies used to impart ESG knowledge in legal education. The methods assessed include lectures, case studies, simulations, experiential learning, and internships. The study also assessed the application and incorporation of various teaching methodologies used to convey ESG knowledge and skills to students at KSL. The results reveal that despite experiential learning and simulations are the most effective teaching methods for ESG education as these methods are widely recognized for fostering critical thinking and practical application, key components for addressing the complex challenges posed by ESG issues²¹⁰, the incorporation of these methods at KSL are relatively lower than other less effective models of delivery. It can be seen that at KSL lectures are utilised at a maximum of 5. While lectures remain a fundamental teaching tool, they may not provide sufficient opportunities for students to engage deeply with ESG issues or to apply their knowledge in real-world contexts.

Case Studies whilst receiving a 4 and Internships received a 1, indicating that these methods however invaluable for linking theoretical knowledge to practical experience are utilised disproportionately at KSL. Case studies allow students to explore real-world scenarios, while internships provide an immersive experience that enables students to directly engage with ESG-related legal issues in professional settings. It can be seen that KSL should prioritise experiential learning and simulations, which provides a higher effectiveness than case studies alone. By incorporating more hands-on opportunities, such as internships and real-world case studies, KSL can provide students with the practical skills necessary to navigate ESG issues.

4.1 Faculty and Student Perspectives

An examination of faculty and student views on ESG at KSL highlights differing levels of self-assessed expertise. Faculty members, on average, report a higher degree of ESG knowledge, whereas students assess themselves lower. This gap reflects broader discussions in the academic literature

²¹⁰ Harvard Law Review. (2022). "Teaching Legal Education in the ESG Era." *Harvard Law Review*, 135(4), 672-690.

²¹¹ Jill E Fisch, 'Making Sustainability Disclosure Sustainable' (2019) University of Pennsylvania, Institute for Law & Economics Research Paper No 19-39 https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3469933 accessed 12 November 2024.

²¹² UNESCO, *Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning Objectives* (2017) <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000247444> accessed 14 October 2024.

concerning the challenges of introducing sustainability and governance principles into legal education.

It has been previously noted that successful curricular integration of ESG requires not only substantive course content but also engagement with pedagogical methods that encourage critical thinking and practical application of sustainability-related legal issues²¹¹. In particular, education experts at UNESCO underscore the importance of aligning teaching strategies with sustainability goals, emphasising the need for interdisciplinary approaches and active student participation²¹². Such methods can bridge the knowledge gap identified at KSL, fostering deeper student engagement and understanding.

Despite the disparity in knowledge levels, both faculty and students rate the importance of ESG highly. This alignment in perceived importance mirrors a wider trend in legal education, where ESG is increasingly regarded as essential for producing practitioners capable of navigating complex socio-environmental challenges²¹³. Furthermore, previous research suggests that incorporating ESG-oriented content can enhance critical legal reasoning and bolster students' readiness to advise clients in areas such as climate-related regulation, social responsibility, and corporate governance²¹⁴.

Addressing the existing knowledge gap between faculty and students will likely require enhanced training and development for both groups. Additional ESG-focused workshops, seminars, and experiential learning opportunities such as clinical programmes or moot courts with an ESG dimension can strengthen students' competencies. Likewise, professional development initiatives for faculty can ensure they remain abreast of evolving ESG regulations and practices, which in turn will help them to guide students effectively. By prioritising comprehensive faculty development and student-focused learning experiences, KSL can better integrate ESG into the legal curriculum, thus preparing graduates for the expanding ESG responsibilities they will encounter in modern legal practice.

4.2 Barriers to ESG Integration in Legal Education

The study identified several significant challenges to the effective incorporation of ESG principles into the curriculum at KSL, including financial constraints, curriculum rigidity, a

²¹³ Ioannis Ioannou and George Serafeim, 'Corporate Sustainability: A Strategy?' (2012) Harvard Business School Working Paper https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2155636 accessed 20 November 2024.

²¹⁴ Gordon L Clark, Andreas Feiner and Michael Viehs, 'From the Stockholder to the Stakeholder: How Sustainability Can Drive Financial Outperformance' (2015) https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2508281 accessed 14 October 2024.

lack of ESG expertise among faculty members, and institutional resistance. These barriers emerge consistently in research on education for sustainable development, which highlights the multifaceted obstacles that universities face when seeking to embed sustainability-oriented content within established academic structures²¹⁵.

Financial Constraints

Financial constraints were found to pose a notably high level of impact on KSL's efforts to integrate ESG. Such difficulties often arise because introducing ESG into the curriculum necessitates additional resources, including new teaching materials, enhanced faculty development programmes, and collaborative endeavours with ESG-focused organisations. Recent studies underscore the importance of targeted funding for effective sustainability integration, emphasising that institutions with limited budgets frequently struggle to implement substantive curricular reforms; resource scarcity can hamper sustainability initiatives and propose collaborative alliances with the private and public sectors to secure funding and expertise²¹⁶. The cost of securing relevant expertise, updating educational materials, and creating active learning opportunities can prove prohibitively expensive without external support or innovative funding strategies.

Curriculum Rigidity

Curriculum rigidity was also identified as a significant impediment. Existing course structures do not readily accommodate the interdisciplinary character of ESG topics, which often span law, environmental science, social science, and ethics. Previous studies have pointed out that rigid or siloed curricula can obstruct the integration of holistic and cross-cutting concepts such as sustainability, thereby limiting student exposure to essential legal and policy dimensions of ESG²¹⁷. Adopting a more flexible curriculum design that promotes collaborative teaching, problem-based learning, and thematic modules can help break down these silos and foster deeper understanding of sustainability issues. The significance of flexible curricular design for advancing sustainability

objectives is emphasised in a comparative European study by Lozano et al., which indicates that interdisciplinary, problem-based, and collaborative teaching methods are essential for instilling sustainability competencies in higher education²¹⁸.

Lack of ESG Expertise Among Faculty
The barrier with the highest impact concerns the lack of ESG expertise among faculty members. Academic commentators consistently highlight the pivotal role that suitably trained and knowledgeable instructors play in delivering high-quality sustainability education²¹⁹. The importance of faculty expertise is explored by previous studies argue that educators' proficiency and confidence in sustainability areas directly influence student engagement and learning outcomes²²⁰. Recruiting staff with an ESG background or offering faculty development programmes can therefore be instrumental in bridging knowledge gaps. Without sufficient expertise, faculty are less likely to weave ESG themes seamlessly into core legal modules, and students may receive fragmented or superficial exposure to pressing sustainability challenges. Hiring new faculty with ESG-related experience, establishing professional development initiatives, and incentivising research on sustainability topics are practical steps that can enhance staff capabilities and ensure more robust integration of ESG throughout the curriculum.

Institutional Resistance

Although IUM is deemed to have no negative resistance towards the implementation of ESG in the curriculum, even any unintended minor, institutional resistance nonetheless presents a hurdle to effective ESG implementation. Even when financial and expertise-related challenges can be addressed, some institutions remain hesitant to modify established processes or longstanding curricular frameworks. Institutional culture and governance structures can either facilitate or obstruct systemic change in higher education, meaningful progress often depends on coordinated strategies at multiple levels of university administration²²¹. Resistance may stem from concerns about diluting traditional legal teaching, uncertainties regarding the value of interdisciplinary instruction, or reluctance to shift existing institutional priorities. Addressing such resistance often requires

²¹⁵ Kanyimba, A. , Hamunyela, M. and Kasanda, C. (2014) Barriers to the Implementation of Education for Sustainable Development in Namibia's Higher Education Institutions. *Creative Education*, 5, 242-252. doi: 10.4236/ce.2014.54033.

²¹⁶ Montiel I and Delgado-Ceballos J, 'Defining and Measuring Corporate Sustainability: Are We There Yet?' (2014) 27(2) *Organization & Environment* 113

²¹⁷ John C. Dernbach, 2011. "Legal Education for Sustainability," *Journal of Education for Sustainable Development*, vol. 5(2), pages 225-232, September.

²¹⁸ Lozano R, Barreiro-Gen M, Lozano FJ and Sammalisto K, 'Teaching Sustainability in European Higher Education Institutions: Assessing the Connections Between Competences and Pedagogical Approaches' (2021) 13(6) *Sustainability* 3154

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Cebrián G and Junyent M, 'Competencies in Education for Sustainable Development: Exploring the Student Teachers' Views' (2015) 7(3) *Sustainability* 2768

²²¹ Barth M and Rieckmann M, 'State of the Art in Research on Higher Education for Sustainable Development' (2016) 8(3) *Higher Education Studies* 240

leadership support, stakeholder engagement, and a demonstration of the tangible benefits both educational and reputational of strengthening ESG components in legal education provided by KSL.

5. Recommendations

The findings of this study highlight the importance of integrating ESG considerations into legal education at KSL. While significant progress has been made in integrating environmental sustainability and social justice into the curriculum, there are areas for improvement, particularly in environmental policy and corporate governance. The study also emphasizes the effectiveness of experiential learning and simulations in teaching ESG topics and identifies several barriers, including financial constraints and the lack of ESG expertise among faculty. To overcome these challenges, KSL should prioritize interdisciplinary education, expand faculty training, and seek external funding to enhance ESG integration in its legal education programs.

Based on the findings of this study it is recommended for KSL to enhance the integration of ESG topics by introducing cross-disciplinary modules that incorporate legal studies with environmental science, sociology, and ethics. Such an approach would enable students to develop a broader and more holistic understanding of ESG issues, preparing them more effectively for real-world legal challenges. Furthermore, embedding elements of Environmental Policy into constitutional law and other core courses could enrich the curriculum and ensure that students receive a well-rounded education in ESG principles.

In addition, experiential learning and simulations should be prioritised to immerse students in the practical aspects of ESG-related legal issues. These hands-on teaching methods are crucial for helping future lawyers develop the skills and confidence necessary to address complex global challenges. Expanding opportunities for internships with organisations focused on sustainability and corporate social responsibility would also grant students direct exposure to ESG-oriented legal work, thereby fostering deeper engagement with the subject matter. To overcome existing barriers, IUM should seek external funding options and partnerships with organisations specialising in ESG, thus alleviating financial constraints. At the same time, revising the current curriculum structure to accommodate more flexibility and interdisciplinary teaching would facilitate better integration of ESG content. Recruiting faculty members who possess expertise in ESG-related fields, or offering specialised training to existing staff, could further mitigate the shortage of in-house expertise and strengthen the institution's capacity to deliver high-calibre ESG education.

Finally, in acknowledging the gap in student knowledge, KSL could offer a range of additional ESG-focused workshops and faculty development programmes. Enhancing

faculty expertise would invariably improve the overall quality of instruction in this area. Providing students with further opportunities for independent learning and direct engagement through seminars, guest lectures, and projects in collaboration with ESG-focused organisations would serve to bridge any knowledge gaps and equip graduates with the competencies required for contemporary legal practice.

6. Conclusion

This study reveals that while ESG content is increasingly present within legal curricula, challenges remain in ensuring that these topics are taught effectively and comprehensively at KSL. In particular, evidence points to the importance of teaching methods that emphasise experiential learning and case-based instruction. Such interactive approaches not only advance student engagement but also bolster practical understanding, equipping future lawyers with the competences necessary to navigate complex ESG-related legal challenges in professional practice.

Nonetheless, the persisting gaps in ESG knowledge among students highlight the need for more robust curriculum design and targeted support initiatives. This study indicates that deeper instruction and diverse learning opportunities such as interdisciplinary modules, simulations, and external internships are required to close the knowledge gap. Further, financial constraints, insufficient faculty expertise, and rigid curricular structures have been identified as notable barriers that inhibit the full integration of ESG. These obstacles underscore the institutional dimension of curriculum reform, suggesting that a multi-pronged strategy involving external funding, partnerships with ESG-focused organisations, and dedicated faculty development is essential.

Crucially, both faculty and student perspectives emphasise the significance of ESG topics within legal education, reflecting the broad consensus that a more comprehensive integration of sustainability, social justice, and governance considerations is critical for contemporary legal practice. This support provides a foundation for implementing reforms, such as recruiting or training faculty with ESG specialisms, adopting innovative pedagogies, and realigning programme structures to accommodate interdisciplinary learning.

Taken together, these findings demonstrate that an ongoing process of adaptation is imperative if legal education is to respond effectively to the rapidly evolving demands of ESG. As societal and regulatory pressures increasingly prioritise sustainability and responsible governance, legal education providers like Islamic University of Maldives must continue to refine their curricula, teaching methodologies, and institutional cultures. In doing so, they will better prepare graduates not merely to recognise ESG-related issues, but also to apply their legal expertise meaningfully and ethically in a world where ESG considerations are swiftly becoming the norm in both public and private sector practice.

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the end of the 19th century. It examines their evolution through the Hague Codification Conference, the works of the International Law Commission and the three United Nations Conferences on the Law of the Sea. Secondly, the article analyses the detailed provisions outlined under Part IV of the Convention concerning the definition of archipelagic States and the establishment of archipelagic baselines. Subsequently, this paper analyses the current archipelagic baseline practices by categorising the States according to the year they claimed archipelagic status or established their archipelagic baselines. Notably, this analysis is only confined to the State practice of archipelagic States in relation to their archipelagic status and archipelagic baselines and, therefore, excludes considerations with respect to archipelagic sea-lane passage and navigation. Nevertheless, the recent *Mauritius v Maldives Maritime Boundary Delimitation Case* is closely examined in order to identify any new jurisprudence which can facilitate the clarification of the archipelagic baseline rules. The paper then concludes with the findings of the analysis and the legal effects of invalid archipelagic baselines.

EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPTS OF ARCHIPELAGIC STATES AND ARCHIPELAGIC BASELINES

The prospect of a special status for archipelagos had entered the international arena as early as the late nineteenth century.²²⁴ However, the archipelagic issue was comparatively sidelined in relation to the delimitation of territorial waters. In fact, during the Conferences of the International Law Association,²²⁵ the issue of archipelagos was viewed as too

complex to attempt codification.²²⁶ States officially acknowledged the distinctive nature and specific needs of archipelagos during the 1930 Hague Codification Conference.²²⁷ Regrettably, the Hague Codification Conference²²⁸ failed to reach a consensus with respect to the matter of the territorial waters of the archipelagos.²²⁹ The majority of States still chose to maintain the status quo of only allowing territorial waters around each island, with high sea corridors in between islands further apart in an archipelago.²³⁰

The landmark ruling of the 1951 *Anglo-Norwegian Fisheries Case* is widely recognised as the crucial turning point in the legal recognition of the archipelagic problem.²³¹ For the first time, it was internationally recognised that certain coasts required exceptional baseline methods apart from the general low-water line rule, consequently strengthening the archipelagic baseline concept.²³² As a result, some governments, drafters, and publicists began the effort to apply the rules prescribed in the judgment to the issue of mid-ocean archipelagos.²³³

Nevertheless, the geographical factors unique to archipelagos continued to pose substantial complications, mainly because the traditional international law of the sea was only familiar with the rules related to continental land masses.²³⁴ Hence, the formulation of adequate legal rules for diverse archipelagos required extensive deliberation and decision-making. These challenges, along with the lack of technical information, led to the reluctance of the drafters at

²²⁴ Alexander Proelss and others (eds), *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea: A Commentary* (CH Beck, Hart, Nomos 2017) 338.

²²⁵ International Law Association, 'About Us' https://www.ila-hq.org/en_GB/about-us accessed 4 July 2023.

²²⁶ International Law Association, 'Report of the Neutrality Committee' (International Law Association Reports of Conferences 34 1926) 60, 61, 66; Jens Evensen, 'Certain Legal Aspects Concerning the Delimitation of the Territorial Waters of Archipelagos' (1958) Extract from the Official Records of the United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, Volume I (Preparatory Documents) 291.

²²⁷ Charlotte Ku, 'The Archipelagic States Concept and Regional Stability in Southeast Asia' (1991) 23 *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law* 463, 466 <http://scholarlycommons.law.case.edu/jil/vol23/iss3/4>.

²²⁸ International Law Commission, 'League of Nations Codification Conference' <https://legal.un.org/ilc/league.shtml> accessed 10 July 2023.

²²⁹ Michael A Leversen, 'The Problems of Delimitations of Baselines for Outlying Archipelagos' (1972) 9 *San Diego Law Review* 733,

738

<https://digital.sandiego.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2286&context=sdlr>; CF Amerasinghe, 'The Problem of Archipelagos in the International Law of the Sea' (1974) 23 *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 539, 541 https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/S0020589300032097/type/journal_article accessed 11 December 2022.

²³⁰ League of Nations, 'Territorial Waters - Volume II of Bases of Discussions for the Conference, 1930, Drawn by the Preparatory Committee.' (League of Nations 1930) 48–50 <https://archives.ungeneva.org/947m-cab2-tny8> accessed 11 July 2023; Netherlands, Germany, Japan, Latvia, *ibid*.

²³¹ *Anglo-Norwegian Fisheries Case (1951) ICJ Rep. 133 (hereinafter Anglo-Norwegian Fisheries Case)*.

²³² Michael A Leversen (n 8) 741; Alexander Proelss and others (eds) (n 3) 339–340.

²³³ Mohamed Munavvar, 'Ocean States: Archipelagic Regimes in the Law of the Sea' (PhD thesis, Dalhousie University Halifax 1993) 102; Alexander Proelss and others (eds) (n 3) 340.

²³⁴ HP Rajan, 'The Legal Regime of Archipelagos' in Hugo Caminos (ed), *Law of the Sea* (Ashgate Publishing Limited 2001) 137.

the International Law Commission²³⁵ to take a firm stance on the issue of the territorial waters of mid-ocean archipelagos.²³⁶

Subsequently, the first and the second United Nations Conferences on the Law of the Sea (hereinafter UNCLOS I²³⁷ and UNCLOS II,²³⁸ respectively) were also unsuccessful in effectively resolving the archipelagic issue.²³⁹ However, these conferences did expose that this issue had gradually garnered substantial attention on a global scale. Moreover, they revealed the need to harmonise the interests of the major maritime States and the interests of the increasing number of archipelagos gaining independence.²⁴⁰

Eventually, the archipelagic regime began evolving as a separate legal subject during the preparatory work for the third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS III).²⁴¹ The Seabed Committee²⁴² acknowledged that it was crucial to create a special regime dedicated to resolving the issues faced by archipelagic States²⁴³ and finally included it in the list of subjects and issues to be discussed at UNCLOS III.²⁴⁴ Nine draft articles or working papers submitted by States included references to archipelagic States and archipelagos.²⁴⁵ Inevitably, a clear division surfaced between the major maritime States that were hesitant to surrender their commercial and maritime navigational interests to creeping maritime claims and the group of newly independent

archipelagic States determined to utilise the archipelagic concept to preserve their economic, geographic, and territorial unity. Furthermore, certain continental States with mid-ocean archipelagos made attempts to expand the archipelagic concept to encompass their dependent archipelagos.²⁴⁶ Despite these efforts, the concept of dependent archipelagos failed to be legally recognised under the newly established archipelagic regime.²⁴⁷

After considerable discussion, debate, compromise, and revision, UNCLOS III eventually established a consensus on the new regime for archipelagic States. By the end of the Conference, several delegations, including the Bahamas, Cape Verde, the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, and even the Netherlands Antilles, had shown their intention to claim archipelagic status.²⁴⁸ During the Final Session of UNCLOS III, numerous States made statements addressing the remarkable achievement gained by legalising the archipelagic principle under the framework of the LOSC.²⁴⁹

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²³⁵ International Law Commission, 'International Law Commission' <https://legal.un.org/ilc/> accessed 13 July 2023.

²³⁶ United Nations, Yearbook of the International Law Commission (1956) Volume II 270 https://legal.un.org/ilc/publications/yearbooks/english/ilc_1956_v2.pdf; Jens Evensen (n 5) 293; Mohamed Munavvar (n 12) 152; Alexander Proelss and others (eds) (n 3) 340.

²³⁷ United Nations Office of Legal Affairs Codification Division, 'United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (Geneva, 24 February - 27 April 1958)' https://legal.un.org/diplomaticconferences/1958_los/ accessed 1 August 2023.

²³⁸ 'United Nations, 'Second United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (Geneva, 17 March — 26 April 1960)' https://legal.un.org/diplomaticconferences/1960_los/ accessed 7 August 2023.

²³⁹ DOALOS, Archipelagic States - Legislative History of Part IV of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (United Nations Publications 1990) 2.

²⁴⁰ United Nations, 'Summary Records of the 6th to 10th Meetings of the First Committee - United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea' (1958) A/CONF.13/C.1/SR.6-10 14 https://legal.un.org/diplomaticconferences/1958_los/docs/english/vol_1_3/sr_6_10.pdf.

²⁴¹ 'Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (1973–1982)' https://legal.un.org/diplomaticconferences/1973_los/ accessed 7 August 2023.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Mohamed Munavvar (n 12) 168; Alexander Proelss and others (eds) (n 3) 344.

²⁴⁴ DOALOS, Archipelagic States - Legislative History of Part IV of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (n 18) 5; Myron H Nordquist and others (eds), United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982: A Commentary, vol II (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers 1993) 401.

²⁴⁵ DOALOS, Archipelagic States - Legislative History of Part IV of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (n 18) 5–13.

²⁴⁶ Sophia Kopela, 'The Status of Dependent Outlying Archipelagos in International Law' (PhD thesis, The University of Bristol 2008) 40 <https://research-information.bris.ac.uk/files/34503773/495653.pdf>; United Nations, 'Ecuador: Draft Article on Archipelagos - Extract from the Official Records of the UNCLOS III, Volume III (Documents of the Conference, First and Second Sessions)' (1974) A/CONF.62/C.2/L.51 227 https://legal.un.org/diplomaticconferences/1973_los/docs/english/vol_1_3/a_conf62_c2_151.pdf.

²⁴⁷ Sophia Kopela (n 25) 45; Myron H Nordquist and others (eds) (n 23) 403.

²⁴⁸ Myron H Nordquist and others (eds) (n 23) 403.

²⁴⁹ DOALOS, Archipelagic States - Legislative History of Part IV of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (n 18) 106–115.

The archipelagic regime is outlined under Articles 46 to 54 of Part IV of the LOSC.²⁵⁰ The benefits and privileges granted to archipelagic States derive from their ability to abide by these provisions.²⁵¹ In the *Mauritius v Maldives Maritime Boundary Delimitation Case*,²⁵² the Special Arbitral Tribunal recognised the special status and benefits extending from this status by detailing the following:

“Under Part IV of the Convention, an archipelagic State enjoys a special status in two respects. First, it is allowed to draw straight archipelagic baselines joining the outermost points of an archipelago instead of drawing baselines around each island in the archipelago. Second, the sovereignty of an archipelagic State extends to the waters enclosed by the archipelagic baselines described as “archipelagic waters”, the air space over such waters, as well as their bed and subsoil, and the resources contained therein.”²⁵³

Article 46 serves as the definition of the terms archipelagic States and archipelagos. Article 46(a) defines an archipelagic State as: “a State constituted wholly by one or more archipelagos and may include other islands.” According to Article 46(b), an archipelago means “a group of islands, including parts of islands, interconnecting waters and other natural features which are so closely interrelated that such islands, waters and other natural features form an intrinsic geographical, economic and political entity, or which historically have been regarded as such.”

It is important to note that, under the final archipelagic regime established under the LOSC, not all archipelagos qualify as archipelagic States. Article 46 encompasses the

legal criteria for an archipelago to gain the legal status of an archipelagic State.²⁵⁴ Overall, three criteria can be construed from the definition in Article 46: geographical, political, and economic unity.

Closely interrelated geographical features:

Two or more islands,²⁵⁵ including parts of islands²⁵⁶ interconnecting waters²⁵⁷ and other natural features, are to be geographically situated in the ocean in a manner that allows them to be considered as an interconnected single entity.²⁵⁸ According to this definition, even two islands can be referred to as an archipelago, as there is no specific numerical limit mentioned in the definition. Yet, some degree of closeness is required for the islands to be considered a group, thus essentially excluding remote islands.²⁵⁹

The inclusion of ‘other natural features’ in the definition signifies the allowance for the practical geographical circumstances of the archipelagos.²⁶⁰ Although there is no explicit definition of this phrase in the LOSC, there are some references in the LOSC to potential features that may fall under this notion.²⁶¹ Article 47 refers to ‘drying reefs’, ‘atolls’,²⁶² ‘fringing reefs’ and ‘low-tide elevations’.²⁶³ The Tribunal in the *Mauritius v Maldives Maritime Boundary Delimitation Case* determined that drying reefs are indeed included within the phrase ‘other natural features’ by asserting that:

“... such drying reefs amount to ‘other natural features’ within the meaning of article 46(b) of the Convention and, together with a group of islands and interconnecting waters, form the Chagos Archipelago.”²⁶⁴

²⁵⁰ United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (n 1) was adopted and opened for signature on 10 December 1982 and entered into force on 16 November 1994. See ‘Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea (1973–1982)’ (n 20).

²⁵¹ Mohamed Munavvar (n 12) 207; Alexander Proelss and others (eds) (n 3) 335.

²⁵² *Dispute Concerning the Delimitation of the Maritime Boundary Between Mauritius and Maldives in the Indian Ocean (28 April 2023) ITLOS Case No. 28 (hereinafter Mauritius v Maldives Maritime Boundary Delimitation Case)*.

²⁵³ *Mauritius v Maldives Maritime Boundary Delimitation Case*, para 179.

²⁵⁴ United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (LOSC) art. 47.

²⁵⁵ United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (LOSC) art. 121(1).

²⁵⁶ The phrase ‘parts of islands’ was included because some archipelagic States share parts of islands with other countries. For Instance, Indonesia shares the island of New Guinea with Papua New Guinea and the islands of Borneo with Malaysia and Brunei. See Victor Prescott and Clive Schofield, *The Maritime Political Boundaries of the World* (2nd edn, Martinus Nijhoff 2005) 169; Proelss and others (n 3) 347, 349. However, this phrase does not refer

to circumstances where parts of a State are on the mainland, and the other part is as an archipelago. See Munavvar (n 12) 215.

²⁵⁷ This phrase was included in the definition to signify that the waters in between and surrounding these islands are a source of connection rather than a cause of disruption to the unity of the State. See Munavvar (n 12) 215; Nordquist and others (n 23) 413.

²⁵⁸ Rajan (n 13) 144.

²⁵⁹ Munavvar (n 12) 214. Nevertheless, whether an island is remote or not can be construed using the technical criteria under Article 47.

²⁶⁰ *ibid* 217.

²⁶¹ *ibid* 216.

²⁶² The word Atoll is derived from the Maldivian language, ‘Dhivehi’, from the phrase ‘atholhu’ used to refer to groups of coral islands in the Maldivian archipelago. See *ibid* 88; ‘Atoll Definition & Meaning’ (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*) <<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/atoll>> accessed 4 September 2023.

²⁶³ LOSC, art. 47.

²⁶⁴ *Mauritius v Maldives Maritime Boundary Delimitation Case*, para 245.

Political entity:

Under Article 46 (b), the next criterion an archipelago must meet in order to qualify as an archipelagic State is being a single political entity. This requirement disqualifies mid-ocean archipelagos under the sovereignty of continental States.²⁶⁵ The distinction in this regard is of sovereignty, control and authority over all persons and things within its boundaries, including the capacity to enter into international relations, declare war, and make peace with other States.²⁶⁶

Economic entity:

The third criterion is that the archipelago must be an intrinsic economic entity with a relative economic relationship between the land and the water.²⁶⁷ This requirement indicates that the inhabitants of the archipelago should have been dependent on the economic resources of the surrounding oceans for a considerable period of time.²⁶⁸

Finally, Article 46 also accommodates the historical factor by providing that, in any situation where the requirements mentioned above are not presently met, as long as they were historically regarded as being ‘an intrinsic geographical, economic and political entity’, that archipelago also qualifies as an archipelagic State. The insertion of this alternative criterion appears to be strange but can be linked to the uncertainty of the legal status of the archipelagic regime during UNCLOS III.²⁶⁹

²⁶⁵ Richard Barnes, ‘Revisiting the Legal Status of Dependent Archipelagic Waters from First Principles’ in James Kraska, Ronan Long and Myron H Nordquist (eds), *Peaceful Maritime Engagement in East Asia and the Pacific Region*, vol 25 (Brill | Nijhoff 2023) 181 <<https://brill.com/view/title/62957>> accessed 16 April 2023. Also see Proelss and others (n 3) 347.

²⁶⁶ Nancy Barron, ‘Archipelagos and Archipelagic States under UNCLOS III: No Special Treatment for Hawaii’ (1981) 4 *Hastings International and Comparative Law Review* 515.

²⁶⁷ Proelss and others (n 3) 351.

²⁶⁸ Amerasinghe (n 8) 565.

²⁶⁹ Proelss and others (n 3) 352.

²⁷⁰ Alina Miron, ‘The Archipelagic Status Reconsidered in Light of the South China Sea and Düzgüt Integrity Awards’ (2018) 15 *Indonesian Journal of International Law* 306, 312 <<https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/ijil/vol15/iss3/2>> accessed 14 April 2023. This was also indicated in the judgment of the *Case Concerning Maritime Delimitation and Territorial Questions Between Qatar and Bahrain* (hereinafter *Qatar v. Bahrain*), where the ICJ ruled that Bahrain did not have the right to use archipelagic baselines on its coast due to Bahrain’s failure to declare itself an archipelagic State before the delimitation case. See *Qatar v. Bahrain*, 2001 ICJ Rep. 40, para. 183, 214.

²⁷¹ *ibid* 311; J Ashley Roach and Robert W Smith, *Excessive Maritime Claims* (3rd edn, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers 2012) 206.

Archipelagic status needs to be claimed by a formal, international proclamation or the adoption of national legislation establishing a system of archipelagic baselines, as it is not a status that exists *ipso facto*.²⁷⁰ However, the LOSC does not determine an explicit timeframe for claiming archipelagic status. To date, 22 States are reported to have declared themselves archipelagic States.²⁷¹ They are Indonesia, the Philippines, Maldives, Mauritius, Sao Tome and Principe, Fiji, Jamaica, Bahamas, Cape Verde, Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, Seychelles, Antigua and Barbuda, Comoros, Grenada, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Marshal Islands, and Kiribati.²⁷²

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Article 46 and Article 47 are to be viewed as a package that collectively determines an entity’s archipelagic status.²⁷³ The archipelago needs to have proclaimed itself as an archipelagic State in accordance with Article 46 in order to benefit from the drawing of archipelagic baselines.²⁷⁴ Article 47 establishes a comprehensive framework of legal and technical rules for drawing archipelagic baselines.²⁷⁵ These rules uphold the validity of the archipelagic baselines and the archipelagic status.²⁷⁶

²⁷² These are the States that have been mentioned in the list of archipelagic States in the UNDOALAS ‘Table of Claims to Maritime Jurisdiction’. See Miron (n 49) 311. However, (as of 15th May 2024) this page is shown as ‘temporarily unavailable / under review’. See UNDOALOS, ‘Table of Claims to Maritime Jurisdiction’ <<https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/claims.htm>> accessed 15 May 2024.

²⁷³ Sora Lokita, ‘The Role of the Archipelagic Baselines in Maritime Boundary Delimitation’ (Thesis for the Fellowship Programme 2009 -2010, Nippon Foundation 2010) 17.

²⁷⁴ Coalter G Lathrop, J Ashley Roach and Donald R Rothwell, ‘Baselines under the International Law of the Sea - Reports of the International Law Association Committee on Baselines under the International Law of the Sea’ (2019) 2 *Brill Research Perspectives in the Law of the Sea* 1, 122 <https://brill.com/view/journals/rpls/2/1-2/article-p1_1.xml> accessed 4 October 2023; Proelss and others (n 3) 337.

²⁷⁵ These provisions seem to have been inspired by the Indonesian ‘prototype’ archipelagic baselines. See Martin Tsamenyi, Clive Schofield and Ben Milligan, ‘Navigation through Archipelagos: Current State Practice’ in Myron H Nordquist, Tommy Koh and John Norton Moore (eds), *Freedom of Seas, Passage Rights and the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention*, vol 13 (Brill | Nijhoff 2009) 420. See also JRV Prescott, *The Maritime Political Boundaries of the World* (1st edn, Methuen 1985) 163.

²⁷⁶ Tsamenyi, Schofield and Milligan (n 54) 6; Nordquist and others (n 23) 401.

According to Article 47, six essential requirements provide the objective standard for drawing archipelagic baselines.²⁷⁷ First, the baselines should be drawn connecting the outermost points of the outermost islands and drying reefs, and the main islands of the archipelago must be included.²⁷⁸ Second, the baselines should not depart to any appreciable extent from the general configuration of the archipelago.²⁷⁹ Third, the enclosed area of water within the baselines should be at least as large as the area of enclosed land, including atolls. However, the enclosed area of water should not be more than nine times larger than the enclosed land area. This means that the ratio of water to land should be between 1:1 and 9:1.²⁸⁰ Fourth, only 3% of the total number of baseline segments are allowed to exceed 125 nm. The rest of the segments are to be below 100 nm in length.²⁸¹ Fifth, according to Article 47(5), the archipelagic baselines should not cut off the territorial sea of a neighbouring State from the high seas or an exclusive economic zone (hereinafter EEZ).²⁸² Last but not least, the baselines should not be drawn to and from low-tide elevations. The exceptions to this rule are if the low tide elevation is situated wholly or partly within the territorial sea of the nearest island or if a lighthouse or a similar installation has been built on the feature.²⁸³ All of these requirements are to be met for the successful formation of valid archipelagic baseline systems.

The remaining provisions under Article 47 relate to protecting the traditional and treaty-based rights and interests of the immediate neighbouring States.²⁸⁴ Along with the requirements concerning the publication of the relevant charts and coordinates demonstrating the archipelagic baselines.²⁸⁵

Practically speaking, the utilisation of these requirements may vary based on distinct geographical circumstances or divergent interpretations.²⁸⁶ For instance, the phrase ‘main islands’ under Article 47(1) and the phrases: ‘appreciable

extent’ and ‘general configuration of the archipelago’ under Article 47(3) may be subject to varying interpretations.²⁸⁷ The main islands might include the most densely inhabited, the largest, the most historically or culturally significant, or the most economically productive islands.²⁸⁸ The confusion with regard to this varying interpretation is evident from the *Mauritius v Maldives Maritime Boundary Delimitation Case*. In this case, Maldives submitted that the archipelagic baselines claimed by Mauritius depart to an appreciable extent from the general configuration of the Chagos Archipelago because Mauritius excludes the Great Chagos Bank and Nelson’s Island from its archipelagic baselines. According to the Maldives, they are core features of the Chagos Archipelago. Conversely, Mauritius maintained that Nelson’s Island was excluded as they did not regard it as a ‘main island’ by virtue of its small size and lack of recorded human habitation and hence does not result in Mauritius’ archipelagic baselines departing to any appreciable extent from the general configuration of the archipelago.²⁸⁹ Similarly, the requirement that only 3% of the total number of baseline segments are allowed to exceed 125 nm in length can be bypassed by altering the total number of baseline segments.²⁹⁰

Part IV also provides for the delineation of separate archipelagic baseline systems around distinct archipelagos under the sovereignty of a State. However, each of these baseline systems needs to meet the criteria specified under Article 47. They can also exclude some islands from the archipelagic baseline system to which normal and straight baselines can be applied.²⁹¹ Furthermore, a rock under Article 121(3), being a naturally formed area of land that is permanently above water at high tide, is considered to be an island for the purpose of generating baselines. Therefore,

²⁷⁷ Nordquist and others (n 23) 418.

²⁷⁸ LOSC, art. 47(1).

²⁷⁹ LOSC, art. 47(3).

²⁸⁰ LOSC, art. 47(1).

²⁸¹ LOSC, art. 47(2).

²⁸² LOSC, art. 47(5).

²⁸³ LOSC, art. 47(4).

²⁸⁴ LOSC, art.47(6), See Nordquist and others (n 23) 418.

²⁸⁵ LOSC, art. 47(8), (9).

²⁸⁶ Tsamenyi, Schofield and Milligan (n 54) 6; Kevin Baumert and Brian Melchior, ‘The Practice of Archipelagic States: A Study of Studies’ (2015) 46 *Ocean Development and International Law* 60, 75.

²⁸⁷ Tsamenyi, Schofield and Milligan (n 54) 7.

²⁸⁸ UNDOALOS, *The Law of the Sea. Baselines: An Examination of the Relevant Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*. (United Nations Publications 1989) 37; Lathrop, Roach and Rothwell (n 53) 123.

²⁸⁹ *Mauritius v Maldives Maritime Boundary Delimitation Case*, para 160.

²⁹⁰ Munavvar (n 12) 255; Tsamenyi, Schofield and Milligan (n 54) 421; Fedelyn A Santos, ‘Beating the Deadline: Archipelagic State Compliance under UNCLOS Article 47’ (Dissertation for the Degree of Master of Science in Maritime Affairs, World Maritime University 2008) 26 <https://commons.wmu.se/all_dissertations/165>; Yoshifumi Tanaka, *The International Law of the Sea* (4th edn, Cambridge University Press 2023) 142.

²⁹¹ *The Law of the Sea. Baselines: An Examination of the Relevant Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*. (n 67) 38.

archipelagic states can also use rocks as basepoints, provided that the other requirements under Article 47 are fulfilled.²⁹²

Article 48 of the LOSC stipulates how to measure the maritime zones of an archipelagic State and states that: “The breadth of the territorial sea, the contiguous zone, the exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf shall be measured from archipelagic baselines drawn in accordance with article 47.”²⁹³ This provision upholds that archipelagic baselines have the same function as normal and straight baselines.²⁹⁴ Overall, the provisions under Part IV are now viewed as part of customary international law, which makes them binding on all States,²⁹⁵ including States that are not parties to LOSC.²⁹⁶

STATE PRACTICE RELATED TO ARCHIPELAGIC STATUS AND ARCHIPELAGIC BASELINES

The development of the State practice related to archipelagic States began prior to the adoption of the LOSC in 1982. The literature on the state practice of archipelagic States has been steadily developing with the growing number of States that claim archipelagic status.²⁹⁷ To date, 22 States are known to have claimed archipelagic status.²⁹⁸ The Limits of the Seas Series conducted by the United States also includes 22 individual studies on archipelagic States.²⁹⁹ Nonetheless, the analysis of the State practice of archipelagic States remains crucial as their practice continues to evolve.³⁰⁰

The following analysis of the State practice of archipelagic States with regard to their archipelagic State proclamations and the establishment of their archipelagic baselines is demonstrated by classifying the archipelagic States into three categories. They are

States that claimed archipelagic status and enacted legislation concerning archipelagic baselines prior to the entry into force of the LOSC,

States that enacted legislation establishing archipelagic baselines without a prior proclamation of archipelagic status,

States that claimed archipelagic status but enacted legislation concerning archipelagic baselines years after the LOSC entered into force.

The distinct case concerning Palau's archipelagic status is also investigated. During the analysis, the invalidity of some of the archipelagic baselines established by the archipelagic States is discussed in detail. It is important to note that this paper is only concerned with the State practice of archipelagic States in relation to their archipelagic status and archipelagic baselines. Thus, the practice of archipelagic States in relation to archipelagic sea-lane passage and navigation will not be included in this analysis.

States that Claimed Archipelagic Status and Enacted Legislation Concerning Archipelagic Baselines Prior to the Entry into Force of the LOSC

There are twelve States that claimed archipelagic status and established their archipelagic baselines before the LOSC even came into force on 16th November 1994. These

²⁹² The use of rocks as basepoints can be observed from the State practice of the Bahamas, Grenada, Jamaica, Mauritius, Papua New Guinea, and Trinidad and Tobago. See Lathrop, Roach and Rothwell (n 53) 108, 109.

²⁹³ LOSC, art. 48.

²⁹⁴ Nordquist and others (n 23) 434. See also *Mauritius v Maldives Maritime Boundary Delimitation Case*, para 186.

²⁹⁵ Robin R Churchill, Alan V Lowe and Amy Sander, *The Law of the Sea* (4th edn, Manchester University Press 2022) 190.

²⁹⁶ Baumert and Melchior (n 65) 61.

²⁹⁷ In Mohamed Munavvar's thesis, he analysed 9 Archipelagic States which had claimed archipelagic status at the time, though he predicted that 25 to 35 States could potentially meet the archipelagic definition under LOSC. The States that had claimed archipelagic Status at the time were Antigua and Barbuda, Cape Verde, Fiji, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sao Tome and Principe, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. See Munavvar (n 12) 245; John RV Prescott, ‘Straight and Archipelagic Baselines’ in Gerald Henry Blake (ed), *Maritime Boundaries and Ocean Resources* (Rowman & Littlefield 1987) 46 <<https://books.google.com.my/books?id=Uv8WwsnLhsC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>>. Sophia Kopela, Martin Tsamenyi, Clive Schofield, Ben Milligan and Lokita Sora's analysis of archipelagic States does not include Grenada and Mauritius. Kevin

Baumert and Brian Melchior's 2015 research on the practice of archipelagic States excludes Kiribati and the Marshall Islands. See Kopela (n 25); Tsamenyi, Schofield and Milligan (n 54); Lokita (n 52); Baumert and Melchior (n 65). More recent assessments of archipelagic state practice can be found in Lathrop, Roach and Rothwell (n 53); Miron (n 49).

²⁹⁸ Lathrop, Roach and Rothwell (n 53) 102; Proelss and others (n 3) 335.

²⁹⁹ United States Department of State, Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs in the Department of State, ‘Limits in the Seas’ <<https://www.state.gov/limits-in-the-seas/>> accessed 13 December 2022. See No. 98 Sao Tome and Principe (1983), No. 101 Fiji (1984), No. 125 Jamaica (2004), No. 126 Maldives (2005), No. 128 The Bahamas (2014), No. 129 Cabo Verde (2014), No.130 Dominican Republic (2014), No.131 Trinidad and Tobago (2014), No. 132 Seychelles (2014), No. 133 Antigua and Barbuda (2014), No.134 Comoros (2014), No.135 Grenada (2014), No.136 Solomon Island (2014), No.137 Vanuatu (2014), No.138 Papua New Guinea (2014), No.139 Tuvalu (2014), No. 140 Mauritius (2014), No. 141 Indonesia (2014), No. 142 Philippines (2014), No. 144 Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (2019), No. 145 Marshal Islands (2020), No. 146 Kiribati (2020).

³⁰⁰ Baumert and Melchior (n 65) 75.

States are Indonesia, the Philippines, Dominican Republic, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Sao Tome and Principe, Vanuatu, Antigua and Barbuda, Trinidad and Tobago, Cape Verde and Grenada. Some of the archipelagic baselines constructed by these States were incompliant with the LOSC provisions and thus received protests from other States. Subsequently, some archipelagic States have revised their archipelagic baselines, while some archipelagic baselines of States still require further revision.

Indonesia

The archipelagic State proclamations began when Indonesia and the Philippines declared themselves as archipelagic States through domestic legislation in 1960 and 1961, respectively.³⁰¹ Afterwards, both States revised their archipelagic baselines with new legislation.³⁰² Indonesia's current archipelagic baselines are specified under Government Regulation No. 37 of 2008, which was a revision of Government Regulation No. 38 of 2002.³⁰³ The revised Indonesian archipelagic baselines are consistent with Article 47 of the LOSC.³⁰⁴

The Philippines

The Philippines archipelagic baselines have gone through two legislative revisions. The current archipelagic baselines are defined under Republic Act No. 9522,³⁰⁵ enacted

on 10th March 2009, which was an Act to amend certain provisions of Republic Act No. 3046 of 17th June 1961,³⁰⁶ as amended by Republic Act No. 5446 of 18th September 1968.³⁰⁷ The Philippines archipelagic baselines are composed of 101 segments, 3 of which exceed 100 nm but do not exceed 125 nm. Likewise, the water-to-land ratio is within the LOSC criteria.³⁰⁸ Therefore, the revised Philippines archipelagic baselines are in accordance with Article 47 of the LOSC.³⁰⁹ Previously, the 1961 Philippines baseline system had a segment which exceeded the 125 nm limit.³¹⁰

Apart from the baselines, the domestic law on the Philippine archipelagic regime was scrutinised due to the provision stipulated under the Constitution of the Republic³¹¹ that referred to the waters enclosed by the Philippine baselines as internal waters instead of archipelagic waters.³¹² This provision, in essence, excludes the right of innocent passage and archipelagic sea lane passage through these waters.³¹³ A 2011 decision of the Philippines Supreme Court also noted this inconsistency with the LOSC. It ruled that the Philippines did have sovereignty over the enclosed waters within the baselines, provided that the sovereignty is exercised subject to international rules and principles, including the rules on navigation.³¹⁴ Subsequently, a Bill named 'An Act Declaring the Maritime Zones under the Jurisdiction of the Republic of

³⁰¹ Indonesia adopted Act No. 4 concerning Indonesian Waters in 1960, and the Philippines adopted Republic Act No. 3046, 'An Act to Define the Baselines of the Territorial Sea of the Philippines' in 1961. See DOALOS, *Practice of Archipelagic States* (United Nations Publications 1992) 45–53, 75–83.

³⁰² Lokita (n 52) 22.

³⁰³ The List of Geographical Coordinates of Points of the Indonesian Archipelagic Baselines based on Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 38 of 2002, as amended by the Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 37 of 2008, available at <http://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/DEPOSIT/idn_mzn67_2009.pdf>

³⁰⁴ United States Department of State, 'Limits in the Seas No. 141 - Indonesia: Archipelagic and Other Maritime Claims and Boundaries' (Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, US Department of State 2014) 11.

³⁰⁵ Republic Act 2009 (Act 9522) available at <https://lawphil.net/statutes/repacts/ra2009/ra_9522_2009.html>

³⁰⁶ Republic Act 1961 (Act 3046) available at <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/PHL_1961_Act.pdf>

³⁰⁷ Republic Act 1968 (Act 5446) available at <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/PHL_1968_Act.pdf>

³⁰⁸ United States Department of State, 'Limits in the Seas No. 142 - Philippines: Archipelagic and Other Maritime Claims and Boundaries' (Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, US Department of State 2014) 3.

³⁰⁹ *ibid* 4.

³¹⁰ Tsamenyi, Schofield and Milligan (n 54) 442.

³¹¹ The Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines 1987, available at <<https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/constitutions/1987-constitution/>>

³¹² Article 1 of the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines 1987 states: "... The waters around, between, and connecting the islands of the archipelago, regardless of their breadth and dimensions, form part of the internal waters of the Philippines."

³¹³ Tsamenyi, Schofield and Milligan (n 54) 442; 'Limits in the Seas No. 142 - Philippines: Archipelagic and Other Maritime Claims and Boundaries' (n 87) 4; Baumert and Melchior (n 65) 71.

³¹⁴ Prof. Merlin M. Magallona, et.al. v. Hon. Eduardo Ermita, in his capacity as Executive Secretary, et al. G.R. No. 187167, 16 July 2011, en banc (Carpio, J.) available at <https://lawphil.net/judjuris/juri2011/aug2011/gr_187167_2011.html>

the Philippines' was prepared by the Philippine Congress with the aim of clarifying the geographical extent of the Philippines' maritime zones.³¹⁵ Under Section 4 of this Act, the internal waters of the Philippines refer to (a) the waters on the landward side of the archipelagic baselines not forming part of archipelagic waters under Section 5 of this Act and delineated in accordance with Article 50 of the LOSC, and (b) the waters on the landward side of the baselines of the territorial sea of territories outside of the archipelagic baselines, drawn in accordance with Article 8 of the LOSC.³¹⁶ Meanwhile, the archipelagic waters of the Philippines refer to the waters on the landward side of the archipelagic baselines except as provided for under Section 4 of this Act. According to this Act, the Philippines exercises sovereignty and jurisdiction over its archipelagic waters and airspace, as well as its seabed and subsoil, in accordance with the LOSC and other existing laws and treaties. The proposed provisions under this Bill appear to be more in line with the LOSC. Both Houses of the Philippines Senate passed the bill on 19th March 2024.³¹⁷

Dominican Republic

The archipelagic status of the Dominican Republic is uncertain. The Dominican Republic has also revised its former legislation, Act No. 186 of 13th September 1967,³¹⁸ with Act 66-07 of 22nd May 2007.³¹⁹ Nevertheless, according to the analysis of the United States in the Limits in the Seas Series, even the amended archipelagic baseline system fails to comply with the requirements mentioned under the LOSC.³²⁰ It was

previously predicted that the Dominican Republic would not be able to meet the water-to-land requirement due to the size of its main island.³²¹ In order to sidestep the water-to-land ratio and increase the enclosed maritime area, the Dominican Republic has now placed basepoints on three low-tide elevations which have no lighthouses or similar installations and exceed the breadth of the territorial sea from the nearest island.³²² This way of low-tide elevation use as basepoint is contrary to Article 47(4). Hence, the archipelagic status of the Dominican Republic has been protested by the United States, the United Kingdom and Japan.³²³

Some commentators hold a different opinion and consider that drying reefs under Article 47(1) are not subject to the conditions stipulated under Article 47(4). According to this theory, archipelagic States can thus draw baselines from drying reefs even though they are not situated within the 12 nm limit.³²⁴ The Special Chamber of the ITLOS considered this issue during the *Mauritius v Maldives Maritime Boundary Delimitation Case* when Mauritius argued that Article 47(4) did not apply to the drawing of its archipelagic baselines on Bleinheim Reef, which can also be categorised as a drying reef under 47(1).³²⁵ Conversely, Maldives maintained the opposite. The Tribunal's decision pronounced that the inclusion of the term 'drying reef', as opposed to 'low-tide-elevation' under Article 47(1), did not necessarily mean that Article 47(4) was not applicable to Article 47(1).³²⁶ The ITLOS specified that:

"The use of the different terms in paragraphs 1 and 4 may be understood to mean that paragraph 1 permits only drying

³¹⁵ '19th Congress - House Bill No. 7819 - Senate of the Philippines' (*Senate of the Philippines*) <https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/lis/bill_res.aspx?congress=19&q=HB N-7819> accessed 27 April 2024.

³¹⁶ An Act Declaring the Maritime Zones under the Jurisdiction of the Republic of the Philippines (House Bill No. 7819), available at <<https://legacy.senate.gov.ph/lisdata/4190338159!.pdf>>

³¹⁷ '19th Congress - House Bill No. 7819 - Senate of the Philippines' (n 94).

³¹⁸ Act No. 186 of 13 September 1967 on the Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone, Exclusive Economic Zone and Continental Shelf available at <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/DOM_1967_Act.pdf>

³¹⁹ Act 66-07 of 22 May 2007 (Proclaiming Archipelagic Status of the Dominican Republic and containing the lists of Geographical Coordinates of Points for Drawing the Archipelagic Baselines and the Outer Limits of the Exclusive Economic Zone) available at <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/DOM_2007_Act_frombulletin65.pdf>

³²⁰ United States Department of State, 'Limits in the Seas No. 130 - Dominican Republic, Archipelagic and Other Maritime Claims and Boundaries' (Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs, Bureau of Oceans

and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, US Department of State 2014) 3.

³²¹ Tsamenyi, Schofield and Milligan (n 54) 440; Lokita (n 52) 23.

³²² 'Limits in the Seas No. 130 - Dominican Republic, Archipelagic and Other Maritime Claims and Boundaries' (n 99) 3.

³²³ Roach and Smith (n 50) 24; 'Limits in the Seas No. 130 - Dominican Republic, Archipelagic and Other Maritime Claims and Boundaries' (n 99) 2; Miron (n 49) 318; Baumert and Melchior (n 65) 61; Lathrop, Roach and Rothwell (n 53) 104.

³²⁴ See Sophia Kopela, '2007 Archipelagic Legislation of the Dominican Republic: An Assessment' (2009) 24 *The International Journal of Marine and Coastal Law* 501, 510–515 <<https://brill.com>> accessed 21 September 2023; Prescott and Schofield (n 35) 170; Ricardo Paredes, 'Analysis of the Legitimacy of the Declaration of the Dominican Republic as an Archipelagic State and Its Legality under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the International Law' (Thesis for the Fellowship Programme 2017-2018, Nippon Foundation 2018) 45–49.

³²⁵ *Mauritius v Maldives Maritime Boundary Delimitation Case*, para 220.

³²⁶ *ibid* para 224.

reefs, not all low-tide elevations, to be eligible for drawing straight archipelagic baselines, but that such drying reefs are subject to the requirements of paragraph 4, as every drying reef is also a low-tide elevation.³²⁷

The Tribunal also maintained that the structure of Article 47 reinforced this view because Paragraph 1 outlines the general provision for drawing archipelagic baselines, while the subsequent paragraphs detailed the specific requirements.³²⁸ Consequently, ITLOS found that the requirements under Article 47(4) regarding low-tide elevations should also apply in the drawing of archipelagic baselines in accordance with Article 47(1).³²⁹ Therefore, this new jurisprudence also reveals the inaccuracy of the archipelagic baselines drawn by the Dominican Republic and adds to the doubts regarding the entitlement of the Dominican Republic to its archipelagic status.

Papua New Guinea

Papua New Guinea claimed archipelagic status through The National Seas Act of 7th February 1977.³³⁰ Later on, the official archipelagic baselines were established under 'The Declaration of the Baselines by Method of Coordinates of Base Points for Purposes of the Location of Archipelagic Baselines', which was issued on 25th July 2002.³³¹ The archipelagic baselines of Papua New Guinea under that Declaration were not consistent with LOSC.³³² The starting and ending points of its archipelagic baseline system did not connect with the island of New Guinea, making the baseline system contrary to Article 47(1), which requires that 'the

outermost points of the outermost islands and drying reefs of the archipelago' are joined. Besides this error, one baseline segment was 174.78 nm. This length was longer than the maximum allowable limit of 125 nm specified under Article 47(2).³³³ These basepoints have since been reviewed,³³⁴ and the updated archipelagic baselines of Papua New Guinea are now defined under The Maritime Zones Act of 2015.³³⁵ The revised archipelagic baselines are now in accordance with the LOSC.³³⁶

Solomon Islands

The Solomon Islands proclaimed archipelagic status on 21st December 1978 via The Delimitation of Maritime Waters Act No. 32.³³⁷ The coordinates of the Solomon Islands archipelagic baselines were publicised under The Legal Notice No. 41 of 1979: Declaration of Archipelagic Baselines.³³⁸ According to the Limits in the Seas study, one of the five archipelagic baseline systems of the Solomon Islands did not conform to the water-to-land ratio under Article 47(1).³³⁹ The rest of the baseline systems of the Solomon Islands are consistent with Article 47.³⁴⁰

The remaining archipelagic States that had claimed archipelagic status and designated archipelagic baselines before the LOSC entered into force are Cape Verde, Sao Tome and Principe, Fiji, Vanuatu, Antigua and Barbuda, Trinidad and Tobago and Grenada. The archipelagic baselines of Cape

³²⁷ *Mauritius v Maldives Maritime Boundary Delimitation Case*, para 224.

³²⁸ *ibid* para 223.

³²⁹ *ibid* para 229.

³³⁰ National Seas Act 1977 (Act 7) available at <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/PNG_1977_Act7.pdf> An interim delimitation of archipelagic waters was conducted under Schedule 2 of this Act in 1977.

³³¹ Declaration of the Baselines by Method of Coordinates of Base Points for Purposes of the Location of Archipelagic Baselines 2002 available at <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/PNG_2002_Declaration.pdf>

³³² United States Department of State, 'Limits in the Seas No. 138 - Papua New Guinea: Archipelagic and Other Maritime Claims and Boundaries' (Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, US Department of State 2014) 3; Baumert and Melchior (n 65) 63, 65.

³³³ 'Limits in the Seas No. 138 - Papua New Guinea: Archipelagic and Other Maritime Claims and Boundaries' (n 111) 3.

³³⁴ 'Papua New Guinea-Pacific Maritime Boundaries Dashboard' (*Pacific Data Hub*) <<https://pacificdata.org/dashboard/maritime-boundaries/papua-new-guinea>> accessed 27 September 2023.

³³⁵ Maritime Zones Act 2015 (Act 47) available at <http://www.paclii.org/pg/legis/num_act/mza2015175.pdf>

³³⁶ Malakai Vakautawale (Maritime Boundaries Advisor for the Geoscience, Energy and Maritime Division of Pacific Community, personal communication during the CIL-ANCORS Workshop on Maritime Boundary Delimitation held from 27th to 28th February 2024.

³³⁷ Delimitation of Marine Waters Act, 1978 (Act 32) available at <http://www.paclii.org/sb/legis/consol_act/domwa293/>

³³⁸ Legal Notice No. 41 of 1979: Declaration of Archipelagic Baselines available at <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/SLB_1979_Notice.pdf>

³³⁹ United States Department of State, 'Limits in the Seas No. 136 - Solomon Islands: Archipelagic and Other Maritime Claims and Boundaries' (Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, US Department of State 2014) 3.

³⁴⁰ *ibid* 4.

Verde,³⁴¹ Sao Tome and Principe,³⁴² Fiji,³⁴³ Vanuatu,³⁴⁴ Antigua and Barbuda,³⁴⁵ Trinidad and Tobago³⁴⁶ and Grenada³⁴⁷ are all reported to be valid under Article 47.

³⁴¹ In 1977, Cape Verde proclaimed archipelagic baselines with the Decree-Law No. 126/77, available at <<https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/cvi8269E.pdf>>. However, this Law was deemed inconsistent with Article 47 and, therefore, was revised by Law No. 60/IV/92 of December 21, 1992, available at <https://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/CPV_1992_Law.pdf>. The Limits in the Seas analysis of Cape Verde is based on the later Law and claims that apart from failing to specify the geodetic datum for the coordinates as required in Article 47(8), the Cape Verde archipelagic baselines are now consistent with LOSC. See United States Department of State, 'Limits in the Seas No. 129 - Cabo Verde - Archipelagic and Other Maritime Claims and Boundaries' (Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, US Department of State 2014) 3.

³⁴² Sao Tome and Principe established straight baselines and claimed sovereignty over the enclosed archipelagic waters within the straight baselines through Decree-Law No. 14/78 (Repealed by Decree-Law No. 148/82), available at <<https://www.fao.org/faolex/results/details/en/c/LEX-FAOC004349/>>. Limits in the Seas analysis on Sao Tome and Principe conducted in 1982 was based on Decree-Law No. 14/78, see United States Department of State, 'Limits in the Seas No. 98 - Archipelagic Straight Baselines: Sao Tome and Principe' (Office of the Geographer Bureau of Intelligence and Research 1982) 2. This Law was repealed by Law No. 1/98 on the Delimitation of the Territorial Sea and the Exclusive Economic Zone of 1998, available at <https://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/STP_1998_Law.pdf>. It appears that the geographical coordinates have not been changed. See Baumert and Melchior (n 65) 76.

³⁴³ Fiji established itself as an archipelagic state by the Marine Spaces Act 1977 (Act 18) as amended by the Marine Spaces (Amendment) Act 1978 (Act 15) available at <https://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/FJI_1978_Act.pdf>. Subsequently Fiji published the geographical coordinates of its archipelagic baselines via the Legal Notice No. 117 of 1981 titled the Marine Spaces (Archipelagic Baseline and Exclusive Economic Zone) Order, see DOALOS, 'Law of the Sea Bulletin - No. 66' (United Nations 2008) 67 <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/doalos_publications/LOSBulletins/bulletinpdf/bulletin66e.pdf> accessed 17 October 2023. For the validity of Fiji's archipelagic baselines, see United States Department of State, 'Limits in the Seas No. 101 - Fiji's Maritime Claims' (Office of the Geographer Bureau of Intelligence and Research 1984) 3.

³⁴⁴ Vanuatu first established its archipelagic baselines via The Maritime Zones Act 1981 (Act 23), available at: <http://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/VUT_1981_Act.pdf>. The Limits in the Seas analysis of Vanuatu was based on Vanuatu's Maritime Zones Act [CAP 138],

States that Enacted Legislation Establishing Archipelagic Baselines without a prior Proclamation of Archipelagic Status
Unlike the other States, some of the current archipelagic states established their archipelagic baselines

Amendments of the Schedule, Order No. 81 of 2009, available at <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/DEPOSIT/vut_mzn78_2010.pdf>. Mathew Island and Hunter Island's sovereignty is disputed between France and Vanuatu; however, as Vanuatu draws normal baselines around them, the archipelagic baselines are not affected by this dispute. United States Department of State, 'Limits in the Seas No. 137 - Vanuatu: Archipelagic and Other Maritime Claims and Boundaries' (Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, US Department of State 2014) 2.

³⁴⁵ Antigua and Barbuda established archipelagic baselines via Maritime Areas Act 1982 (Act 18), available at <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/ATG_1982_18.pdf> also at DOALOS (n 80) 1. For the validity of its archipelagic baselines, see United States Department of State, 'Limits in the Seas No. 133 - Antigua and Barbuda: Archipelagic and Other Maritime Claims and Boundaries' (Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, US Department of State 2014) 2.

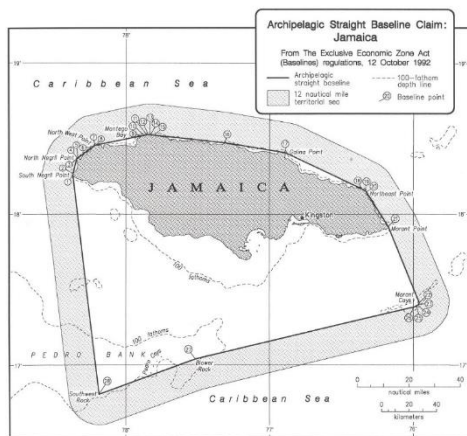
³⁴⁶ Trinidad and Tobago declared archipelagic status through Archipelagic Waters and Exclusive Economic Zone Act 1986 (No. 24) available at <http://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/TTO_1986_Act.pdf> and established its archipelagic baselines via Archipelagic Baseline of Trinidad and Tobago Order, 1988 (Notice No. 206) available at <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/TTO_1988_Order.pdf>. For the validity of its archipelagic baselines, see United States Department of State, 'Limits in the Seas No. 131 - Trinidad and Tobago: Archipelagic and Other Maritime Claims and Boundaries' (Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, US Department of State 2014) 3.

³⁴⁷ Grenada claimed archipelagic status via The Grenada Territorial Seas and Maritime Boundaries Act 1989 (Act 25) available at <https://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/grd_act_25_1989.pdf>. Subsequently, the Grenada Territorial Sea and Maritime Boundaries (Archipelagic Baselines) Order of 1992 set forth coordinates for Grenada's archipelagic baselines and bay closing lines. See DOALOS, 'Law of the Sea Bulletin - No. 71' (United Nations 2010) 36 <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/doalos_publications/LOSBulletins/bulletinpdf/bulletin71e.pdf> accessed 17 October 2023. For the validity of Grenada's archipelagic baselines, see United States Department of State, 'Limits in the Seas No. 135 - Grenada: Archipelagic and Other Maritime Claims and Boundaries' (Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, US Department of State 2014) 2.

without a prior proclamation or declaration of archipelagic status via national legislation. They are Jamaica, the Maldives and Mauritius.

Jamaica

Jamaica appears to have first established its archipelagic baselines, followed by an official proclamation four years later. In 1992, Jamaica enacted the Exclusive Economic Zone Act (Baselines) Regulations,³⁴⁸ which specified the geographical coordinates of the basepoints to be joined by archipelagic baselines. In 1996, Jamaica officially declared its archipelagic status through the Maritime Areas Act of 28th November 1996.³⁴⁹ At first glance, Jamaica does not resemble an archipelagic State. However, while drawing its archipelagic baselines, Jamaica connected its rocks and cays located to its south, successfully establishing a valid archipelagic baseline system. This baseline system is also within the permissible range of water-to-land ratio under the LOSC.³⁵⁰



³⁴⁸ The Exclusive Economic Zone Act (Baselines) Regulations 1992, available at <<https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/jam22356.pdf>>

³⁴⁹ The Maritime Areas Act 1996 (Act 25) available at <<https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/jam7862.pdf>>

³⁵⁰ United States Department of State, 'Limits in the Seas No. 125 - Jamaica's Maritime Claims and Boundaries' (Office of Oceans Affairs, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, US Department of State 2004) 4.

³⁵¹ Munavvar (n 12) 256; Lokita (n 52) 24; Prescott (n 54) 161; Roach and Smith (n 50) 123.

³⁵² The 1964 Constitution of the Maldives, available at <<https://mvlaw.gov.mv/dv/legislations/231/consolidations/728>>

³⁵³ The Maldivian Exclusive Economic Zone Law 1976 (Law 30/76) available at <https://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/MDV_1976_Law30.pdf>

³⁵⁴ The Maritime Zones of Maldives Act 1996 (Act 6/96) available at <https://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/MDV_1996_Act.pdf> Even prior to 1996, Maldives

(“Limits in the Seas No. 125 - Jamaica's Maritime Claims and Boundaries”, p 7)

Maldives

The initial attempt to clarify the geographical extent of the Maldivian maritime zones was considered quite unusual and deviated from the evolving straight baseline principles of the time.³⁵¹ The 1964 Constitution of the Maldives defined the territory of the Maldivian Monarchy as archipelagos, including the seas and airspace connected to these archipelagos, which were situated within a rectangle created using meridians and parallels.³⁵² Subsequently, the Maldives enacted the Maldivian Exclusive Economic Zone Law 1976 (Law 30/76)³⁵³ on 27th November 1976. The coordinates defined in this Act appeared to surround the Maldivian archipelago in the shape of a rectangle. They claimed the enclosed waters within the coordinates as waters exclusive for the Maldivian economic use.

The Maldivian Exclusive Economic Zone Law of 1976 was repealed and replaced by the Maritime Zones of Maldives Act 1996 (Act 6/96).³⁵⁴ This Act finally established the archipelagic baselines of the Maldives using appropriate basepoints as required for an archipelagic State under Article 47 of the LOSC. However, the Maldivian archipelagic baselines are reported to be inconsistent with Article 47(2) because three baseline segments exceed the 100 nm limit. The Maldivian archipelagic baseline system is composed of 37 segments. Thus, as per Article 47(2), only one segment of the Maldivian baseline segments would be allowed to exceed the limit.³⁵⁵ According to the ‘Counter-Memorial of the Republic of Maldives’ submitted to the Tribunal, the Maldivian

viewed itself as an archipelago; see Article 1 of the 1964 Constitution of the Maldives, available at <<https://mvlaw.gov.mv/dv/legislations/231/consolidations/728>> and Article 1 of the 1968 Constitution of the Republic of Maldives, available at <<https://mvlaw.gov.mv/dv/legislations/232/consolidations/729>>.

However, no specific declaration of archipelagic status was announced before the enactment of the official archipelagic baselines in 1996 under the Maritime Zones of Maldives Act 1996 (Act No. 6/96). Afterwards, Article 2 of the 1998 Constitution of the Republic of Maldives, available at <<https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6b59618.html>> and Article 3 of the 2008 Constitution of the Republic of Maldives, available at <<https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/mdv136135.pdf>> explicitly referred to the archipelagic baselines of Maldives in defining the Maldivian territory.

³⁵⁵ United States Department of State, 'Limits in the Seas No. 126 - Maldives Maritime Claims and Boundaries' (Office of Oceans Affairs, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, US Department of State 2005) 3; Baumert and Melchior (n 65) 65; Lathrop, Roach and Rothwell (n 53) 104.

government is considering the revision of the Maldivian archipelagic baselines by ‘inserting two new base points to the north-west and east of the Maldives’.³⁵⁶

Mauritius

Throughout UNCLOS III, Mauritius was one of the leading advocates for the archipelagic concept and submitted proposals together with Indonesia, the Philippines and Fiji.³⁵⁷ Yet, Mauritius claimed archipelagic status only on 28th February 2005 under the Maritime Zones Act 2005.³⁵⁸ Mauritius enacted its archipelagic baselines in August of the same year under its Maritime Zones (Baselines and Delineating Lines) Regulations 2005.³⁵⁹ Mauritius archipelagic baselines include two systems: one around Saint Brandon and the second around Chagos Archipelago.³⁶⁰ Both of these archipelagic baseline systems were considered consistent with Article 47 according to the US Limits of the Seas analysis.³⁶¹

Nevertheless, in light of the recent judgment of the *Mauritius v Maldives Maritime Boundary Delimitation Case*, the published archipelagic baselines of Mauritius surrounding the Chagos archipelago seem to be in need of a review. In the proceedings before the Tribunal, Mauritius asserted that the Blenheim Reef encompassed multiple parts or patches that were connected through an underwater structure and, thus, should be considered as a single low-tide elevation.³⁶² However, the Tribunal declared that:

“Article 13, paragraph 1, of the Convention, defines a low-tide elevation as “a naturally formed area of land which is surrounded by and above water at low tide but submerged at high tide.” The Special Chamber considers that Mauritius’ argument relating to “underwater structure” is not in conformity with the definition of a low-tide elevation. There is nothing in this definition that indicates that separate “parts”

or “patches” exposed at low tide, connected through an “underwater structure”, constitute a single low-tide elevation.”³⁶³

The Tribunal held that Blenheim Reef did consist of a number of low-tide elevations, many of which were situated beyond 12 nm of the nearest island, Île Takamaka.³⁶⁴ Therefore, the Tribunal established that ‘the 200 nm limit of Mauritius must be measured from a low-tide elevation of Blenheim Reef that is situated wholly or partly within 12 nm of Île Takamaka’.³⁶⁵ Consequently, it is safe to conclude that the archipelagic baseline system established around the Chagos Archipelago needs to be revised in compliance with Article 47(7).

States that Claimed Archipelagic Status but Enacted Legislation Concerning Archipelagic Baselines Years After the Entry into Force of the LOSC

Some States opted to claim archipelagic status via national legislation in advance and enacted the legislation establishing official archipelagic baselines years later.³⁶⁶ They are the

³⁵⁶ Republic of the Maldives, ‘Counter-Memorial of the Republic of Maldives - Volume 1 - Dispute Concerning the Delimitation of the Maritime Boundary between Mauritius and Maldives in the Indian Ocean’ (Republic of the Maldives 2021) 17 <https://www.itlos.org/fileadmin/itlos/documents/cases/28/Merits_Pleadings/C28_Counter_memorial_of_Maldives.pdf>.

³⁵⁷ See, for instance, *Archipelagic States - Legislative History of Part IV of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* (n 18) 11–13.

³⁵⁸ The Maritime Zones Act 2005 (Act 2) available at <<https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/ELECTRONIC/82676/90732/F101858%202086/MUS82676>>

³⁵⁹ Maritime Zones (Baselines and Delineating Lines) Regulations 2005, available at <<https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/mat62133.pdf>>

³⁶⁰ United States Department of State, ‘Limits in the Seas No. 140 - Mauritius: Archipelagic and Other Maritime Claims and Boundaries’ (Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs, Bureau of Oceans and

International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, US Department of State 2014) 4.

³⁶¹ United States, in its Limits in the Seas Series, did protest the archipelagic baseline around the Chagos archipelagos by virtue of the sovereignty dispute between Mauritius and the United Kingdom over the archipelagos. See *ibid* 5. Negotiations over the handover of Chagos to Mauritius is ongoing, however the practical resolution of this dispute still remains uncertain. See ‘Human Rights Watch Letter to Lord David Cameron’ (*Human Rights Watch*, 25 January 2024) <<https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/01/25/human-rights-watch-letter-lord-david-cameron>> accessed 22 May 2024.

³⁶² *Mauritius v Maldives Maritime Boundary Delimitation Case*, para 215.

³⁶³ *ibid* para 216.

³⁶⁴ *ibid* para 219.

³⁶⁵ *ibid* para 229.

³⁶⁶ Miron (n 49) 313.

Bahamas,³⁶⁷ Seychelles,³⁶⁸ Comoros,³⁶⁹ Tuvalu,³⁷⁰ Kiribati,³⁷¹ Saint Vincent and the Grenadines³⁷² and the Marshall Islands.³⁷³ These States were only symbolically regarded as archipelagic States before they established their archipelagic baselines via legislation. Similarly, they could only utilise the baseline methods stipulated under Articles 4 and 7 of the LOSC until proper archipelagic baselines were established and published by these States.³⁷⁴ This meant that they only had territorial waters and EEZs around each island and lacked the advantages of archipelagic waters.

Four of these State's archipelagic baselines are in accordance with the provisions under Article 47. They are the

³⁶⁷ Bahamas declared archipelagic status in 1993 via Archipelagic Waters and Maritime Jurisdiction Act 1993 (Act 37), available at <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/BHS_1993_37.pdf> and established archipelagic baselines in 2008 under The Archipelagic Waters and Maritime Jurisdiction (Archipelagic Baselines) Order, 2008, available at <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/DEPOSIT/bhs_mzn65_2008.pdf>

³⁶⁸ Seychelles declared archipelagic status in 1999 under the Maritime Zones Act, 1999 (Act 2), available at <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/SYC_1999_Act2.pdf> This Act was amended by the Maritime Zones Act 2009 (Act 5), available at <<https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/sey158827.pdf>> Seychelles established the coordinates of its normal and archipelagic baselines in 2008 set forth under Seychelles' Maritime Zones (Baselines) Order, 2008 available at <<https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/sey139170.pdf>>

³⁶⁹ Comoros declared archipelagic status in 1982 under Law No. 82-005 Relating to the Delimitation of the Maritime Zones of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros of 6 May 1982, available at <https://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/COM_1982_Law.pdf> Comoros established its archipelagic baselines in 2010 under Comoros Presidential Decree Establishing the limits of the Territorial Sea of the Union of The Comoros, Decree No. 10-092/PR of August 13, 2010, available at <<https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/com158709.pdf>>

³⁷⁰ Tuvalu declared archipelagic status in 1983 under Marine Zones (Declaration) Act 1983, available at <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/TUV_1983_Act.pdf> This Act was repealed in 2012 by the Maritime Zones Act 2012, available at <https://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/tuv_maritime_zones_act_2012_1.pdf> Pursuant to this Act, Tuvalu designated the coordinates of its archipelagic baselines in 2012 under Declaration of Archipelagic Baselines 2012 (LN No. 7), available at

<https://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/tuv_declaration_archipelagic_baselines2012_1.pdf>

³⁷¹ Kiribati claimed the archipelagic status via Marine Zones (Declaration) Act, 1983 (Act 7), available at <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/KIR_1983_Act.pdf> This Act was repealed by the Maritime Zones (Declaration) Act, 2011, available at <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/KIR_2011_Act.pdf> The archipelagic baselines of Kiribati were established in 2014 under The Baselines around the Archipelagos of Kiribati Regulations 2014, available at <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/KIR_2014_archipel_baselines_regulations.pdf>

³⁷² Saint Vincent and the Grenadines declared archipelagic status in 1983 under Maritime Areas Act 1983 (Act 15), available at <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/VCT_1983_Act.pdf> Pursuant to this Act, the coordinates for its archipelagic baselines and bay closing lines were established in 2014 under Government Notice No. 60 of 2014, entitled Archipelagic Closing Lines and Baselines of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, available at <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/DEPOSIT/VCT_2014_147_Gazette.pdf>

³⁷³ Marshall Islands claimed archipelagic status under Marine Zones (Declaration) Act 1984, available at <http://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/MHL_1984_Act.pdf> This Act was revoked by The Republic of the Marshall Islands Maritime Zones Declaration Act 2016, available at <https://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/DEPOSIT/mhl_mzn120_2016_1.pdf> The coordinates for the archipelagic baselines of the Marshall Islands were established in 2016 under the Baselines and Maritime Zones Outer Limits Declaration 2016, available at <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/DEPOSIT/mhl_mzn120_2016_2.pdf>

³⁷⁴ Tsamenyi, Schofield and Milligan (n 54) 452; Lokita (n 52) 26.

Bahamas,³⁷⁵ Tuvalu,³⁷⁶ Kiribati,³⁷⁷ Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.³⁷⁸ Meanwhile, as described below, the rest of the three States are reported to have some deficiencies in their archipelagic baselines.

Seychelles

Seychelles has established four archipelagic baseline systems. Overall, there are two issues with the archipelagic baselines designated by Seychelles. Firstly, according to the US Limits of the Seas study, only one group (Group 4) fits the water-to-land ratio required under Article 47(1). Groups 2 and 3 can qualify if the underwater banks they are located on are viewed as “part of a steep-sided oceanic plateau which is enclosed or nearly enclosed by a chain of limestone islands and drying reefs lying on the perimeter of the plateau”, as stated under Article 47(7). However, Group 1 does not appear to fit this criterion and consequently cannot benefit from this Article when calculating the water-to-land ratio.³⁷⁹ The second issue is that in all four baseline systems, Seychelles has positioned basepoints on open waters where there are neither islands, drying reefs or low-tide elevations.³⁸⁰ Such basepoint placements clearly deviate from the Article 47 requirements.

Comoros

³⁷⁵ United States Department of State, ‘Limits in the Seas No. 128 - The Bahamas: Archipelagic and Other Maritime Claims and Boundaries’ (Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, US Department of State 2014) 3.

³⁷⁶ United States Department of State, ‘Limits in the Seas No. 139 - Tuvalu: Archipelagic and Other Maritime Claims and Boundaries’ (Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, US Department of State 2014) 3. A noteworthy and inspiring inclusion in the recent Constitution of Tuvalu 2023 is the provision addressing the geographical impacts of climate change on the statehood and territory of Tuvalu. Article 2(1) of the 2023 Constitution of Tuvalu declares that: “The State of Tuvalu within its historical, cultural, and legal framework shall remain in perpetuity in the future, notwithstanding the impacts of climate change or other causes resulting in loss to the physical territory of Tuvalu.” Whereas Article 2(3) states that: “The baseline coordinates declared by Schedule 6 shall remain unchanged, notwithstanding any regression of the low water mark or changes in geographical features of coasts or islands, due to sea-level rise or other causes, until and unless otherwise prescribed by an Act of Parliament.” See Constitution of Tuvalu 2023, available at <https://www.tuvalu-legislation.tv/cms/images/LEGISLATION/PRINCIPAL/1986/1986-0001/ConstitutionofTuvalu_2.pdf>

³⁷⁷ United States Department of State, ‘Limits in the Seas No. 146 - Republic of Kiribati: Archipelagic and Other Maritime Claims and Boundaries’ (Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, US Department of State 2020) 4.

³⁷⁸ United States Department of State, ‘Limits in the Seas No. 144 - Saint Vincent and the Grenadines: Archipelagic and Other Maritime

Claims and Boundaries’ (Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, US Department of State 2019) 3.

Comoros used a submerged feature called the Banc Vailheu as part of its archipelagic baselines. The US, in their Limits in the Seas Series, emphasises that it is neither an island nor a drying reef or low-tide elevation, as there are no land or drying reefs near this completely submerged feature.³⁸¹ This placement of basepoints for archipelagic baselines is inconsistent with Article 47(1). Additionally, the location of this basepoint, more than 10 nm from the closest point on the island of Grand Comore, results in the departure of the baseline from the general configuration of the archipelago to an appreciable extent, which is in violation of Article 47(3).³⁸² Apart from the use of this submerged feature as a base point, Comoros also enclosed the island of Mayotte into its archipelago while drawing its archipelagic baselines. Mayotte is administered as an overseas department and region of France, but the sovereignty of Mayotte is contested between Comoros and France. France has protested the 13 base points used to enclose Mayotte, maintaining that these archipelagic baselines would imply that Mayotte is under the sovereignty of Comoros, which is ‘not compatible with the status of Mayotte and is without legal effect’.³⁸³ Afterwards, France

Claims and Boundaries’ (Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, US Department of State 2019) 3.

³⁷⁹ United States Department of State, ‘Limits in the Seas No. 132 - Seychelles: Archipelagic and Other Maritime Claims and Boundaries’ (Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, US Department of State 2014) 3; Lathrop, Roach and Rothwell (n 53) 103.

³⁸⁰ ‘Limits in the Seas No. 132 - Seychelles: Archipelagic and Other Maritime Claims and Boundaries’ (n 160) 4; Lathrop, Roach and Rothwell (n 53) 103.

³⁸¹ United States Department of State, ‘Limits in the Seas No. 134 - Comoros: Archipelagic and Other Maritime Claims and Boundaries’ (Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, US Department of State 2014) 2 <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/DEPOSIT/communicationsredeposit/mzn82_2011_fra_re_com_e.pdf>; Lathrop, Roach and Rothwell (n 53) 104.

³⁸² Baumert and Melchior (n 65) 77.

³⁸³ Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations, ‘Note Verbale No. 961 to the United Nations’ (*Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea*, 4 February 2012) <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/DEPOSIT/communicationsredeposit/mzn82_2011_fra_re_com_e.pdf> accessed 10 October 2023.

published their own straight baselines around Mayotte in 2013.³⁸⁴

Marshall Islands

The Marshall Islands claimed archipelagic status in 1984, but the coordinates for their archipelagic baselines were established in 2016.³⁸⁵ The archipelagic baselines established by the Marshall Islands comprise two archipelagic baseline systems, one of which exceeds the water-to-land ratio set forth in Article 47(1). Therefore, this baseline system is inconsistent with the LOSC.³⁸⁶

Special Case of Palau

Palau claimed archipelagic status in 1981 via Palau's Constitution of 1981 and also demarcated its straight archipelagic baselines under Article 1 (Section 1) of the Constitution.³⁸⁷ However, the literature review on the practice of archipelagic States reveals that previous studies have not included Palau in the lists of archipelagic States. The United Nations Division of Ocean Affairs and Law of the Sea (UNDOLAS) list of archipelagic States had not included Palau as having claimed archipelagic status as well.³⁸⁸

Palau's 1981 Constitution was written during the same time the LOSC and the related archipelagic baseline regulations were developing. Regrettably, the baselines finalised under the Palau Constitution were not consistent with the final archipelagic state regime established under Part IV of the LOSC.³⁸⁹ On May 1, 2020, Palau held a referendum in which voters chose to remove the section in the Constitution relating to straight archipelagic baselines.³⁹⁰ This amendment aimed to create a separate legislation concerning the archipelagic baselines rather than strictly fixing them in their Constitutional document, which makes it harder to revise the baselines if required.³⁹¹

Currently, Palau is in the process of updating its archipelagic baselines via domestic legislation in accordance with the LOSC.³⁹² Therefore, Palau's archipelagic baselines are under development. Nonetheless, Palau can be classified as a symbolic archipelagic State depending on its proclamation of 1981, making the total number of archipelagic states 23.

LEGAL EFFECT OF INVALID ARCHIPELAGIC BASELINES

According to the LOSC, it is essential for a State to establish its archipelagic baselines in compliance with Article 47 in order to be recognised as an archipelagic State. If the archipelagic baselines are not valid, the State may not be able to benefit from its archipelagic status and enjoy the rights and advantages associated with it. Hence, States that protest against invalid archipelagic baselines have the option of refusing to recognise the rights and entitlements derived from Part IV of the LOSC for that particular archipelagic State.³⁹³ For instance, sovereignty over their claimed archipelagic waters.

Additionally, the LOSC enable States to utilise the dispute settlement mechanisms outlined under Part XV of the LOSC in cases of conflict vis-à-vis a provision of the Convention. This would include the archipelagic baseline requirements stipulated under Part IV of the LOSC.³⁹⁴ However, to date, no State has filed a case against an archipelagic State purely on the grounds of the invalidity of its archipelagic baselines.

Up until now, the analysis of the archipelagic baselines made by international courts and tribunals has only been conducted within the context of other significant disputes between the parties involved.³⁹⁵ For instance, the *Qatar v.*

³⁸⁴ Decree No. 2013-1177, of Dec. 17, 2013, Concerning the Baselines for Measuring the Breadth of the Territorial Sea of the Department of Mayotte, available at http://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDF_FILES/DEPOSIT/fra_mzn101_2014.pdf.

³⁸⁵ See (n 152)

³⁸⁶ United Nations, 'Limits in the Seas No. 145 - Republic of the Marshall Islands: Archipelagic and Other Maritime Claims and Boundaries' (Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, US Department of State 2020) 4.

³⁸⁷ Palau's Constitution of 1981 with Amendments through 1992, available at < <https://faolex.fao.org/docs/pdf/pau132833.pdf>>

³⁸⁸ Ted L McDorman and Clive Schofield, 'Federated States of Micronesia - Palau (Report Number 5-31)' in DA Colson and R.W. Smith (eds), *International Maritime Boundaries*, vol VI (Brill, Nijhoff 2011) 4353

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³⁸⁹ Island Times Staff, 'Evolving Law of the Sea Mandates Flexibility; Reasoning for the Change' (*Island Times*, 14 April 2020) <<https://islandtimes.org/evolving-law-of-the-sea-mandates-flexibilityreasoning-for-the-change/>> accessed 20 November 2023.

³⁹⁰ Leilani Reklai, 'National Referendum on Nat'l Boundary Passed by All States' (*Island Times*, 5 May 2020) <<https://islandtimes.org/national-referendum-on-natl-boundary-passed-by-all-states/>> accessed 20 November 2023.

³⁹¹ 'Evolving Law of the Sea Mandates Flexibility; Reasoning for the Change' (n 173).

³⁹² Powers and Vakautawale (n 2) 4.

³⁹³ Lathrop, Roach and Rothwell (n 53) 104.

³⁹⁴ *ibid.*

³⁹⁵ *ibid* 113.

Bahrain Case, the South China Sea Arbitration,³⁹⁶ the *Barbados v. Trinidad and Tobago Delimitation Case*,³⁹⁷ and the *Mauritius v Maldives Maritime Boundary Delimitation Case*.

In the *Mauritius v Maldives Maritime Boundary Delimitation Case*, the Tribunal did not analyse the legality of Mauritius's and Maldives' archipelagic baselines, even though both States submitted objections in their written submissions to the Tribunal regarding the validity of the other State's archipelagic baselines.³⁹⁸ The Tribunal did not find the need to determine whether these States were legally entitled to utilise archipelagic baselines or not. Thus, the Tribunal did not address the legality of their respective archipelagic baselines. The Tribunal merely relied upon their respective archipelagic claims and proceeded with the maritime delimitation, treating them as archipelagic States under the LOSC.

The only instance where the Tribunal assessed the validity of an archipelagic basepoint was when the Tribunal examined the basepoint placed by Mauritius on Blenheim Reef. This assessment was necessary in order to determine the 200 nm limit of Mauritius and the overlap between the Mauritius EEZ and the outer continental shelf (hereinafter OCS) claimed by Maldives. The Tribunal explained that:

“The Special Chamber observes at the outset that, since it decides not to place any base points on Blenheim Reef, the question of how to draw Mauritius’ straight archipelagic baselines is not directly relevant to the construction of the provisional equidistance line. However, this question still matters in two respects. First, it is relevant for drawing the 200 nm limit of Mauritius, as such limit is to be measured from archipelagic baselines in accordance with article 48 of the

Convention. Second, it is also relevant for the purpose of identifying the precise area of overlap between Mauritius’ claim to the exclusive economic zone and the Maldives’ claim to the continental shelf beyond 200 nm.”³⁹⁹

On the other hand, in the *Qatar v Bahrain Case*, the ICJ ruled against Bahrain vis-à-vis its claimed ‘*de facto* archipelagic status’.⁴⁰⁰ The final maritime delimitation, in this case, was concluded without reference to the effects of archipelagic status on the maritime delimitation at all. In fact, the Court affirmed that:

“The fact that a State considers itself a multiple-island State or a *de facto* archipelagic State does not allow it to deviate from the normal rules for the determination of baselines unless the relevant conditions are met.”⁴⁰¹

Therefore, it seems to indicate that, as long as a State has officially declared itself an archipelagic State, its archipelagic status will not come into question unless it directly impacts the case being decided. Courts or Tribunals only analyse the entitlement of a State to the archipelagic status and the validity of its archipelagic baselines if it is directly relevant to the issue which the Court or Tribunal is dealing with.

In practice, States tend to prefer diplomatic dispute resolution rather than resorting to judicial means, as stipulated under Part XV of the LOSC. This tendency can also be observed regarding baseline disagreements.⁴⁰² It is important to highlight that some diplomatic protests may not be publicly accessible and might be resolved using ‘bilateral exchanges at a diplomatic or Ministerial level’.⁴⁰³

FINDINGS FROM THE ANALYSIS OF STATE PRACTICE

³⁹⁶ *The South China Sea Arbitration (The Republic of Philippines v. The People's Republic of China)*, PCA Case No. 2013-19, Award (UNCLOS Annex VII Arb. Trib. July 12, 2016).

³⁹⁷ *Delimitation of the Exclusive Economic Zone and the Continental Shelf between Barbados and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago* (2006). 45 ILM 800.

³⁹⁸ Republic of Mauritius, ‘Memorial of Mauritius - Volume 1 - Dispute Concerning the Delimitation of the Maritime Boundary between Mauritius and Maldives in the Indian Ocean’ (Republic of Mauritius 2021) 19 <https://www.itlos.org/fileadmin/itlos/documents/cases/28/Merits_Pleadings/C28_Memorial_of_Mauritius.pdf>; ‘Counter-Memorial of the Republic of Maldives - Volume 1 - Dispute Concerning the Delimitation of the Maritime Boundary between Mauritius and Maldives in the Indian Ocean’ (n 135) 19.

³⁹⁹ *Mauritius v Maldives Maritime Boundary Delimitation Case*, para 213.

⁴⁰⁰ *Qatar v. Bahrain*, para. 183 and 214.

⁴⁰¹ *ibid* para. 183 and 213.

⁴⁰² See, for instance, France’s protest of the archipelagic baselines drawn by Comoros around Mayotte. See ‘Note Verbale No. 961 to the United Nations’ (n 166). Timor Leste protested two segments of the Indonesian Archipelagic Baselines. See Permanent Mission of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste to the United Nations, ‘Note No. NV/MIS/85/2012 to the United Nations’ (6 February 2012) <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/DEPOSIT/communicationsredeposit/mzn67_2009_tls.pdf> accessed 20 November 2023. The UK in 2009 protested the inclusion of the Chagos Archipelago within the archipelagic baselines of Mauritius. See United Kingdom Mission, ‘Note No: 26/09’ (19 March 2009) <https://www.un.org/depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/DEPOSIT/communicationsredeposit/mzn63_2008_gbr.pdf> accessed 20 November 2023. The US, even though it is not a party to LOSC, is very proactive in submitting diplomatic protests to invalid baselines. The US also routinely undertakes operational assertions using government vessels to claim freedom of navigation in disputed seas. See Lathrop, Roach and Rothwell (n 53) 113.

⁴⁰³ Lathrop, Roach and Rothwell (n 53) 113.

The following findings can be derived from this review of the practice of archipelagic States with regard to their claims of archipelagic status and the drawing of their archipelagic baselines.

As of date, 23 States (including Palau) have claimed archipelagic status. This number may continue to increase as other States, such as Bahrain⁴⁰⁴ or Tonga,⁴⁰⁵ decide to claim archipelagic status officially in the future.⁴⁰⁶ Some States claimed archipelagic status and established their archipelagic baselines within a few years; meanwhile, some States took longer to establish their archipelagic baselines even though they had claimed archipelagic status years prior. Nevertheless, within the last two decades, all the States that have claimed archipelagic status so far (with the exception of Palau) have managed to legislate their archipelagic baselines. 13 States⁴⁰⁷ established their archipelagic baselines before the LOSC entered into force. This fact adds to the notion that the archipelagic regime had gained recognition as an international custom.

Five States⁴⁰⁸ have created more than one archipelagic baseline system within their archipelago. This practice is not contrary to the provision under Part IV.⁴⁰⁹ Some archipelagic States, namely: Fiji,⁴¹⁰ Vanuatu,⁴¹¹ the Marshall Islands,⁴¹² the

Philippines,⁴¹³ Mauritius,⁴¹⁴ and Comoros,⁴¹⁵ have unresolved sovereignty disputes over territories with their neighbours.

As demonstrated above, 15 archipelagic baselines formed by the archipelagic States conform to the provisions under Article 47. As per this analysis, the archipelagic baselines that still require some revisions belong to the Dominican Republic, the Solomon Islands, Mauritius, the Maldives, Comoros, the Marshall Islands and Seychelles. The *Mauritius v Maldives Maritime Boundary Delimitation Case* has also facilitated the analysis of the validity of archipelagic baselines, particularly in relation to the Dominican Republic and Mauritius archipelagic baselines.

Some of the archipelagic States that had established archipelagic baselines in variation with the LOSC provisions have revised their archipelagic baselines to conform to the LOSC. They are Cape Verde, Indonesia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea and the Dominican Republic (although the Dominican Republic's baselines are still invalid by virtue of Article 47). Likewise, it has been reported that Maldives is also attempting to make some revisions.

Meanwhile, States that do not recognise an archipelagic state's archipelagic Status have the option to utilise diplomatic or adjudicative dispute settlement methods described in the LOSC. Nevertheless, it should be noted that, apart from a few

⁴⁰⁴ Bahrain had argued that it had *de facto* archipelagic status during the *Qatar v Bahrain Case*. See *Qatar v Bahrain*, para. 183 and 214. However, Qatar has not officially claimed archipelagic status to date (as of May 2024).

⁴⁰⁵ Tonga is reported to have aspired to become an archipelagic State during UNCLOS III, see Munavvar (n 12) 179. Tonga could be able to draw legitimate archipelagic baselines and claim archipelagic waters. See Roach and Smith (n 50) 208.

⁴⁰⁶ Lokita (n 52) 71; Proelss and others (n 3) 338.

⁴⁰⁷ They are: Indonesia, the Philippines, Dominican Republic, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Sao Tome and Principe, Vanuatu, Antigua & Barbuda, Trinidad and Tobago, Cape Verde, Grenada and Jamaica.

⁴⁰⁸ They are: the Solomon Islands, Mauritius, Seychelles, Kiribati and the Marshall Islands.

⁴⁰⁹ Lathrop, Roach and Rothwell (n 53) 123.

⁴¹⁰ Tonga claims sovereignty over two submerged atoll reefs situated inside Fiji's EEZ called Minerva Reefs. See Michael Field, 'Fiji, Tonga War over Minerva Reef' (*Stuff*, 15 May 2011) <<https://www.stuff.co.nz/world/south-pacific/5008060/Fiji-Tonga-war-over-Minerva-Reef>> accessed 3 November 2023.

⁴¹¹ Vanuatu and France contest the sovereignty of Matthew and Hunter Islands, which are located to the south of Vanuatu's main islands but outside Vanuatu's claimed archipelagic baselines. See 'Limits in the Seas No. 137 - Vanuatu: Archipelagic and Other Maritime Claims and Boundaries' (n 123) 2.

⁴¹² The United States and the Marshall Islands both claim sovereignty over Wake Island, located in the North Pacific Ocean. See 'Wake Island' (*The World Factbook*) <<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/wake-island/>> accessed 3 November 2023.

⁴¹³ The Philippines has several unresolved territory disputes with its neighbours. For instance, the dispute over the Spratly Islands with China and the other claimants and the dispute over the Sabah Region with Malaysia. See 'What Is the South China Sea Dispute?' (*BBC News*, 13 June 2011) <<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13748349>> accessed 3 November 2023; 'Malaysia-Philippines Land Boundary' (*Sovereign Limits*) <<https://sovereignlimits.com/boundaries/malaysia-philippines-land>> accessed 3 November 2023.

⁴¹⁴ Mauritius claims sovereignty over Tromelin Island, which is the fifth district of the French Southern and Antarctic Lands, a French Overseas Territory. See Pierre-Emmanuel Dupont, 'The South China Sea Moves to the Indian Ocean: Conflicting Claims Over the Tromelin Islet and Its Maritime Entitlements' (*EJIL: Talk!*, 8 February 2017) <<https://www.ejiltalk.org/the-south-china-sea-moves-to-the-indian-ocean-conflicting-claims-over-the-tromelin-islet-and-its-maritime-entitlements/>> accessed 3 November 2023.

⁴¹⁵ The sovereignty of the island of Mayotte is contested between the Comoros and France, which is a French overseas department. See Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, 'The Union of the Comoros and Mayotte' (*France Diplomacy - Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs*) <<https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/regional-strategies/indo-pacific/the-indo-pacific-a-priority-for-france/france-in-the-south-west-indian-ocean/article/the-union-of-the-comoros-and-mayotte>> accessed 3 November 2023.

countries such as the US, States have not taken any active measures to protest against invalid archipelagic baselines. Diplomatic protests have only been made by neighbouring States or States that are directly affected by invalid archipelagic baselines.

Mohamed Munavvar highlighted in his thesis, prepared in 1993, that the feasibility of the formula for archipelagic baselines under Article 47 depended mainly on the archipelagic States themselves.⁴¹⁶ Based on the current state practice of archipelagic States in terms of establishing archipelagic baselines, it is apparent that archipelagic States have adhered more to the strict requirements stipulated under Article 47 compared to the States that have conformed to the rules under Article 7 in relation to straight baselines.⁴¹⁷ The majority of archipelagic States meet the water-to-land ratio requirement and the maximum 125 nm baseline rule.⁴¹⁸ Additionally, the conventional rules related to archipelagic States and archipelagic baselines are alleged to be part of customary international law.⁴¹⁹ Therefore, based on the current State practice, it appears safe to say that the Article 47 technical formula has been effective in legalising the archipelagic regime in practice.

CONCLUSION

The establishment of the archipelagic regime under the framework of a multilateral treaty marked a momentous milestone in the codification of international law. It is the legal materialisation of decades of painstaking consideration given to the issues faced by archipelagos in securing their maritime rights due to their unique geographical peculiarities. It was undoubtedly the result of extraordinary diplomatic efforts by a handful of States that secured benefits for all the potential archipelagic States. This fact enhances the vitality of adherence to the provisions of Part IV of the LOSC in proclaiming archipelagic status, drawing archipelagic baselines, and the ensuing delimitation of maritime boundaries.

According to the above analysis of the State practice of archipelagic States with regard to their archipelagic baselines, all the States that have claimed archipelagic status so far, with the exception of Palau, have now enacted legislation in order to establish their archipelagic baselines. 15 of the 23 archipelagic States conform to the Article 47 provisions, including 4 States that have successfully revised their archipelagic baselines. Meanwhile, 7 States require more revision in order to comply with the Article 47 provisions entirely. In fact, a close examination of the 2023 *Mauritius v Maldives Maritime Boundary Delimitation* case revealed that the Dominican Republic and the Mauritius archipelagic

baselines with respect to the Chagos Archipelago are still in need of revision due to their dependence on low-tide elevations outside the 12nm range from the nearest island.

With respect to invalid archipelagic baselines, other States have the right to employ the peaceful settlement mechanism under the LOSC if they wish to protest such practices. This includes diplomatic and adjudicative means of dispute settlement. However, State practice indicates that States usually prefer handling such disputes by simply sending diplomatic notes. Moreover, based on past international jurisprudence concerning archipelagic baselines, a court or tribunal analyses the validity of an archipelagic baseline only up to the extent it directly relates to the issue being heard.

The unilateral delineation of baselines is the first step in delimiting a State's maritime boundaries and establishing its maritime entitlements. Therefore, the drawing of baselines, including archipelagic baselines, needs to be completed with precision, accuracy and compliance with the prescribed baseline regulations under the LOSC.

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⁴¹⁶ Munavvar (n 12) 268.

⁴¹⁷ Prescott and Schofield (n 35) 181.

⁴¹⁸ Lathrop, Roach and Rothwell (n 53) 103, 104.

⁴¹⁹ Baumert and Melchior (n 65) 61; Miron (n 49) 311.

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‘What Is the South China Sea Dispute?’ (BBC News, 13 June 2011) <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-13748349> accessed 3 November 2023

Bandeyri Kileygefaanu,⁴²⁴ the long-serving prime minister of His Highness the King. They both indeed opposed the idea of a written constitution, naturally, because the main purpose of a written constitution is to limit the powers of the rulers, i.e. to introduce a limited government.

Some contemporary historians have argued that the main objective of the reforms was to divert the Throne to the Athree-ge family (The Family of the Prime Minister and the ruling aristocrats.⁴²⁵). There were, indeed, more competent, educated, and qualified individuals in the Athree-ge family compared to the only son of the incumbent King. Most leading figures at the time in Male' were deeply concerned about Prince Hassan Izzudin's becoming King after Sultan Shamsudin, given his incompetency in royal duties and lack of political maturity. Some educated and influential youths were concerned with the future of the Maldivian government, and the only way forward to reform the governing system was to introduce a written constitution that would abolish the old customary laws in the country. Hence, introducing a written constitution is the only legitimate way to prevent Crown Prince Hassan Izzudin from becoming a successor to Sultan Shamsudins' Throne. In addition to these perceptions, the desired reforms include inter-alia, limiting and distributing the state powers, ensuring the establishment of the rule of law, and the introduction of a limited government. The constitution was also intended to introduce a parliament where citizens are represented and heard in the legislative process. The new constitution inserted additional criteria of the peoples' consent, previously absent in the unwritten constitution of the Maldives, as an eligible criterion for the ascending King. One significant reform brought by the new constitution was changing the absolute hereditary monarchy to an elected hereditary monarchy. This radical change to the Maldivian governing system led the Maldives to become a presidential form of democratic government in the future.

A group of young and educated Maldivians, along with a few nobles, initiated crafting the first Maldivian constitution. Their efforts revolutionized the country's ancient political order, which had been rooted in the culture and political ideals of the Maldivians for centuries. On 19 March 1931, the first constitutional council was constituted by a royal decree of His Majesty As-Sultan Muhammad Shamsudin Iskandar III.⁴²⁶

The three leading key figures in the introduction of a written constitution to the Maldives worth mentioning here

include Prince Mohamed Farid Didi, Prince Hassan Farid Didi, and Mr. Mohamed Amin Didi. These youths, along with the other political elites and religious scholars in Male', played a significant role in materializing the new constitution.

All leading government figures and those actively involved in the reform activities persuaded the King of the urgency of reforms and the significance of having a written constitution. In fact, there were robust deliberations and preparations amongst the politicians even before the royal order to draft the new constitution.⁴²⁷

3. The Drafting Committee

When King As-Sultan Mohamed Shamsudin III decreed the drafting of the first written constitution, a drafting committee with twelve members was formed to carry out the task. The first constitutional drafting committee contained 14 members including religious scholars, academicians, and wise and noble people in Male. This committee gathered for the first time on 19th March 1931 at the royal palace.⁴²⁸

The committee president was Al-Ameeru al-Haj Abdul Majeed Rannabandeyri kilegefaanu (the Prime minister); the deputy president was Prince Ali; the secretary was Al Qadi Hussain Salahudin (The Chief justice); the Deputy Secretary was Mr. Hussain Hilmee Didi. The Sultan's royal order provided the primary guideline for the drafting of the constitution and set out the sources for the first written constitution of the Maldives. These sources include Islam or Sharia principles, ancient but relevant customary norms, and international agreements,⁴²⁹ that the Maldives was bound to abide by.

The first session of the constitutional council was held on 2nd Dhulqadah 1349 (22nd March 1931). This was a preliminary session to decide the agenda and schedules and solve other critical preliminary issues, such as the rules of the Majlis and other relevant operational policies. It was agreed to hold general sessions every Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday. It was also agreed to have two sessions each day: the first session from 7:00 to 10:30 and the second from 14:00 to 16:30.

The constitutional Majlis also decided to form two sub-committees.

1- The first subcommittee is to evaluate and study the ancient customs of Maldives and

⁴²⁴ Prime Minister Abdul Majeed was initially appointed as the President of the first Constitution drafting committee. However, he chose not to participate in the drafting process and ultimately resigned in protest against the very concept of introducing a written Constitution.

⁴²⁵ This includes Prince Mohamed Farid Didi, Prince Hassan Farid Didi and Amin Didi.

⁴²⁶ Husnu Al-Suood, *The Maldivian Legal System* (Maldives Law Institute 2014).

⁴²⁷ Didi (n 2).

⁴²⁸ Constitution of the Maldives 1932.

⁴²⁹ This includes the British- Maldives Protectorate agreement signed in 1889.

2- The second subcommittee will study and translate some foreign literature and constitutional documents collected by the Maldives mission in Ceylon. They include relevant materials on the British, Egyptian, and Turkish constitutions.

After thorough research and deliberation on these two areas, the constitution-drafting process commenced on 7th Muharram 1350 (25th May 1931). The Majlis formed a third committee for the task of drafting the constitution. This committee consists of the following members:

Prince Ahmed Dhoshimeyna Kilegefaanu
 Sheikh Hussain Salahudin, the Chief justice
 Prince Mohamed Farid Didi
 Ahmed Kamil Didi
 Ibrahim Ali Didi
 Sheikh Ibrahim Rushdi
 Hussain Hilmy Didi

Committee meetings are usually held on days when there are no Majlis sittings. It is also important to note here that the Maldivian government sought technical assistance from the British authorities in Ceylon. The Ceylon government appointed Sir Bernard Henry Bordelon as an envoy of the British Governor General in Ceylon for this task. According to Mohamed Amin Didi, the majority committee refused to incorporate the suggestions provided by the British envoy, claiming that his opinions were not fitting for inclusion in the Maldivian constitution as they were unsuitable for the stature of the Maldivian state.⁴³⁰

The committee members' robust efforts completed the drafting process on 22nd Muharram 1350 (09th June 1931). The draft was then submitted to the Constitutional Majlis on the 23rd of Muharram (10th June 1931). After several working sessions of deliberation on the drafted constitution, the final sitting of the Constitutional Assembly was held on 7th Safar 1351 H. (12th June 1932). The constitution was presented to As-Sultan Muhammad Shamsudin Iskandar C.M.G. Ibnu As-Sultan Ibrahim Nooradin Iskandar, the King of Maldives, on the 29th of Muharram 1350 (16th June 1931) for ascension.

⁴³⁰ The Peoples Majlis, *Dhivehiraajjeyge Gaanoonu Asaasee Hayai (Constitutional Life of Maldives)* (The Peoples Majlis 1981).

⁴³¹ Constitution of the Maldives 1932.

⁴³² Didi (n 2).

⁴³³ *ibid.*

⁴³⁴ Constitution of the Maldives 1932.

⁴³⁵ This specifically referred to the colonial agreement with the British signed in 1886.

The first written Constitution of the Maldives came into force on 22nd December 1932, on 23rd Sha'aban 1350.⁴³¹

4. Sources of law

The 1932 Constitution was entirely based on Islamic Sharia and the customs of the Maldives. According to the first constitution, Sharia and the customary practice of the Maldives are the main sources of law.⁴³² In addition, the British constitution, the Ottoman-Turkish constitution and the constitution of Egypt were used as references. Hence, shadows of British constitutional principles and Ottoman-Turkish and Egyptian constitutional characteristics were implanted into the first Maldivian constitution.⁴³³

King As-Sultan Mohamed Shamsudin's royal edict revealed the sources to be referred to in the making of the first written constitution of the Maldives. The royal decree, as stated in the first constitution, provides the following:

"without violating the tenets of Islam, the customary norms of the people of Maldives, and the agreements with the British and in favour of my subjects, I command you to formulate a constitution that would ease the governance of this country."⁴³⁴

The sources of law may be derived from the royal decree of his highness the Sultan, include the following:

Islamic Sharia
 Customs and conventions of the Maldives
 The bilateral agreements with foreign nations⁴³⁵

In addition to the above-stated sources, the drafting committee also referred to the British, Egyptian,⁴³⁶ and Turkish constitutions⁴³⁷ to incorporate their constitutional norms and values.

The analysis of the first written constitution of the Maldives indeed displays a comprehensive mixture of all the mentioned sources. The novel constitution vividly displays the Islamic attributes, customary norms and conventions, and some attributes of the above-stated constitutions.

⁴³⁶ The first Egyptian Constitution, promulgated in 1924, served as a model for the Maldivian Constitution of 1932, which adopted several of its key features.

⁴³⁷ The first Ottoman Constitution came into force in 1887. After abolishing the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924, the Turkish Republic enacted a new constitution designed to align with the principles of the newly established secular republic. The analysis of the Maldivian historical documents does not specify whether the second subcommittee reviewed the early Ottoman Constitution, or the Turkish Constitution tailored for the 1924 Turkish Republic. However, the first Maldivian Constitution demonstrated the attributes of all constitutions, as mentioned earlier, to a notable extent.

5. Characteristics of the first constitution

The Constitutional features are deeply rooted in philosophical principles that modelled the political thoughts of a country for centuries.⁴³⁸ The Constitution of a country demonstrates the ideological philosophy and the consciousness of the people of the nation.⁴³⁹ The first Maldivian Constitution characterized the foundation of philosophical principles that shaped the political arena of the then Maldives.

Understanding the characteristics of the first written Constitution of the Maldives requires a journey into its historical origins and an exploration of the intellectual and political climate that shaped its drafting. It could be best viewed if we reverse our journey back to the Maldives in the 1920s. Some of the characteristics of the new Constitution indeed reflects the rapid unweaving of socio-political circumstances in the capital Male', especially tensions amongst the aristocrats. The attributes and characteristics of a constitution define the contemporary polity of the country. The examination of the novel constitution of the Maldives displays its unique constitutional features.

The first written Constitution of the Maldives is multifaceted, including its structural design, the entrenchment of Islamic principles, the Bill of Rights, the principles of constitutionalism, and the mechanisms for amendments. The separation of powers is another significant attribute in the new constitution, central to preventing the concentration of power in any one branch of government,⁴⁴⁰ particularly in the royal courts. These fundamental attributes of the first written constitution continued until the last constitution, which had more advanced constitutional features.

5.1 Islamic attributes

Since Islam was introduced into the Maldives in 1153 C.E., Islamic Sharia has played a significant role in the Maldivian Judiciary.⁴⁴¹ The ancient customary legal system in the Maldives was harmonized with Islamic Sharia. Since then, the

Maldivian judiciary has operated according to Islamic law. When the first written constitution was introduced in the Maldives, Islamic Sharia became a major source of law in the contemporary Maldivian judiciary. In the royal order for the drafting of the first written constitution, His Highness As-Sultan Mohamed Shamsudin III stressed adhering to Islamic principles while drafting the first constitution of the Maldives. Examining the basic document demonstrates Islamic features not only in its constitutional provisions but also in its layout, style of writing, and arrangement of provisions.

The constitution begins with a glorious verse of the holy Quran. On the top of the title page of the Constitution, even before the title "*The Constitution of Maldives*," it begins by presenting a Quranic verse of Surah al-Shura,⁴⁴² قال الله تعالى: وَأَمْرُهُمْ شُورَى بَيْنَهُمْ meaning that Allah says: "and whose affair is [determined by] consultation among themselves."⁴⁴³ It is customary in the Maldives to begin every official document with a Quranic verse, the glorification of Allah, and salutation to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him).

The first page of the document contained the royal order of the King for the drafting of the first constitution of the Maldives. Before the beginning of the order, Allah's name, "Al-Ghaniyyu", is inscribed on top of the page; it states هُوَ الْغَنِيُّ and the meaning is that "He (GOD) is the Self-Sufficient, The Wealthy". The Sultan's statement begins with glorifying God, the Almighty, and saluting the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him as per Islamic customs.

The constitution contained a preamble and 92 constitutional provisions. The Constitution included with verse 4 of Surah Al Rum of the Holy Quran, which states:

قال الله تعالى: لِلَّهِ الْأَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ بَعْدُ⁴⁴⁴

The meaning is 'Allah says: "To Allah belongs the command before and after."⁴⁴⁵

Article 2 of the Constitution declared that "the Official religion of the state is the religion of Islam, the official language is Dhivehi, and the capital of the Maldives is Male."⁴⁴⁶ Since then, all the Maldivian Constitutions have

⁴³⁸ Akhil Reed Amar, *America's Unwritten Constitution: The Precedents and Principles We Live By* (Hachette UK 2012).

⁴³⁹ L Ali Khan, 'The Qur'an and the Constitution' (2010) 85 Tul. L. Rev. 161 <https://heinonline.org/hol-cgi-bin/get_pdf.cgi?handle=hein.journals/tulr85§ion=7&cas_token=3pgv8xdxU4AAAAA:tP8V5n19EREIHn6rn9oui8lUgHa4P8-PKGT6bkm1UbSZrWSMvOzTNScloJS9oENbBxio9I8> accessed 13 September 2024.

⁴⁴⁰ David Brian Robertson, *The Constitution and America's Destiny* (Cambridge University Press 2005).

⁴⁴¹ Harry Charles Purvis Bell, *The Maldivian Islands: Monograph on the History, Archaeology, and Epigraphy*. (The Ceylon Government Press 1940).

⁴⁴² *The Holy Quran*, v 42:38.

⁴⁴³ 'Ash-Shura [42:38] - Tanzil Quran Navigator' <<https://tanzil.net/#42:38>> accessed 13 September 2024.

⁴⁴⁴ *The Holy Quran* (n 23) v 30:4.

⁴⁴⁵ 'Ar-Rum [30:4] - Tanzil Quran Navigator' <<https://tanzil.net/#30:4>> accessed 13 September 2024.

⁴⁴⁶ Constitution of the Maldives 1932.

recognised Islam as the official religion of the country, and the same statement has continued in all subsequent constitutions.

The declaration of state religion was an old constitutional norm amongst Islamic countries. Iran and Afghanistan pioneered introducing Islamic supremacy and repugnancy clauses for the first time,⁴⁴⁷ despite the Tunisian constitution recognizing Islamic law in 1861 and later the Turkish Ottoman constitution providing Islam in its constitution in 1876.⁴⁴⁸ Iran's constitution adopted Islamic provisions and incorporated them into Qanuni Assaasi Iran 1906 through Article 2 of the Iranian supplementary constitution in 1907. Afghanistan adopted Islam as the state religion in its first constitution in 1923.⁴⁴⁹

In addition to the declaration of Islam as the state religion, Islamic Sharia was the governing law in the Judicial institutions in the Maldives. The second constitution of the Maldives in 1934, specifically provided Shafi'e juristic school for the judges to decide matters.⁴⁵⁰

Islamic Sharia was set as the primary constitutional criterion for qualifying almost all state positions, including the King as head of state. Article 25 of the first written constitution stipulates the attributes of the Kings. It states that the King must be a male Sunni Muslim who had not been punished with *hadd* punishment according to Islamic criminal laws.⁴⁵¹ The King is removed from the throne if he is found guilty of Hadd offences proscribed under Islamic Sharia.⁴⁵²

It is a well-established principle that the ruler, also known as the Imam of the Islamic state, must be a Muslim. Non-Muslims are not allowed to hold the highest office in the Islamic state. Further, the constitution provides that he must

also follow the Sunni teachings of Islam. This is an important principle to protect the homogeneity of the Maldivian Sunni Muslim society. The same conditions are provided for the qualifications of the members of the parliament.⁴⁵³ Further, regarding the right to education, the constitution stipulates that citizens must learn to recite the holy Quran, read and write Dhivehi and Arabic.⁴⁵⁴

These constitutional provisions, along with many other articles in the first constitution of the Maldives, present a comprehensive Islamic political system for the Maldives that would advance Islamicity in subsequent Maldivian constitutions.

6. Doctrine of constitutionalism

The doctrine of constitutionalism is a popular constitutional attribute displayed in the constitutions of all democratic nations. A simple definition of constitutionalism could be the constitutional recognition of the rule of law and separation of powers to avoid the arbitrary exercise of power by the state authorities. The principles of constitutionalism were first developed by two famous political philosophers of 17th-century Europe.⁴⁵⁵ English political philosopher Thomas Hobbs' social contract theory and French philosopher Montesquieu's theory of separation of powers,⁴⁵⁶ invented the fundamentals of constitutionalism. The application of the doctrine was later expanded by English jurist John Locke,⁴⁵⁷ as we see in the modern democratic constitutions today. The doctrine of constitutionalism was clearly displayed in the first Constitution of the Maldives. It provides the principles of the rule of law,⁴⁵⁸ the separation of power and the ideals for a

⁴⁴⁷ Dawood I Ahmed and Tom Ginsburg, 'Constitutional Islamization and Human Rights: The Surprising Origin and Spread of Islamic Supremacy in Constitutions' (2013) 54 Va. J. Int'l L. 615 <https://heinonline.org/hol-cgi-bin/get_pdf.cgi?handle=hein.journals/vajint54§ion=25&casa_token=BBgBEELPYKIAAAAA:rakDx5fZkLPYJC565adelOBAahSjzlwR3wi9QAH-isLOCPwcBemGnj77mQGRSpRki7Xg> accessed 13 September 2024.

⁴⁴⁸ JAM Caldwell, *Dustūr: A Survey of the Constitutions of the Arab and Muslim States* (Brill 1966).

⁴⁴⁹ Hannibal Travis, 'Freedom or Theocracy?: Constitutionalism in Afghanistan and Iraq' (2005) 3 Nw. Univ. J. Int'l Hum. Rts. 1 <https://heinonline.org/hol-cgi-bin/get_pdf.cgi?handle=hein.journals/jihr3§ion=6> accessed 13 September 2024.

⁴⁵⁰ Constitution of the Maldives 1934 art 75.

⁴⁵¹ Constitution of the Maldives 1932 art 25 (1),(2) & (3).

⁴⁵² *ibid* 54 (2).

⁴⁵³ *ibid* 56.

⁴⁵⁴ *ibid* 14.

⁴⁵⁵ Maurice John Crawley Vile, *Constitutionalism and the Separation of Powers* (Liberty Fund 2012).

⁴⁵⁶ Robert G Hazo, 'Montesquieu and the Separation of Powers' (1968) 54 ABAJ 665 <https://heinonline.org/hol-cgi-bin/get_pdf.cgi?handle=hein.journals/abaj54§ion=172&casa_token=U3xwnFlzcOMAAAAA:dAk0EB3oOi2x-mnHlb51EVJfK02Rq8iosk41svDCMGYglyEDj05t9LbulXu alJBvMGlcoAQ> accessed 13 September 2024.

⁴⁵⁷ John Michael V Sasan, 'The Social Contract Theories of Thomas Hobbes and John Locke: Comparative Analysis' (2021) 9 Shanlax International Journal of Arts Science and Humanities. 34 <10.34293/sijash.v9i1.4042.>.

⁴⁵⁸ Constitution of the Maldives 1932 art 4.

limited government, a contemporary need of the then Maldives,⁴⁵⁹ which was historically based on the absolute power of the King. The Constitution further introduces the executive branch, the legislative power⁴⁶⁰ and the judiciary as separate state organs.⁴⁶¹

Although the first Maldives constitution did not meet the standards of Montesquieu's theory of separation of powers or the French Constitution, it laid the foundation for the limited government and separation of powers that exist today. Surprisingly, for its time, this Constitution granted more freedom than the people of the Maldives had expected. Even Mohamed Ameen Didi, a prominent liberal democrat and member of the Constitutional Majlis, found the level of liberty excessive, given the socio-political consciousness of the masses, providing a balanced view of its impact.⁴⁶²

Another fundamental element of constitutionalism is the will and the power of the people through a representative government and their unchallenged constitutional rights. The first written Constitution of the Maldives characterizes the features of the representative government by defining the state organs. Article 23 begins by providing the power of the people; it provides that "all powers of the state emanate from the people."⁴⁶³ The provision further illustrates the order and hierarchy of the state powers as follows:

- 1- His Highness the King
- 2- The Cabinet
- 3- The parliament, which consists of two houses, i.e., the legislative assembly and the Peoples' Assembly

The Constitution defined the King as the ruler and sovereign of the state.⁴⁶⁴ This basic document not only outlines the conditions and procedure for his election⁴⁶⁵ but also provides the framework for his potential removal from office.⁴⁶⁶ This constitutional structure is a fundamental attribute of a limited government, standing in stark contrast to an absolute monarchy. The power of the King, the prime minister and the cabinet is strictly circumscribed within the tenets of the Constitution, which explicitly limits the powers of the King. The provision states:

"The power of the King is vested within the limits provided in the Constitution. No action should be taken in violation of the Constitution."⁴⁶⁷

Furthermore, the Constitution explicitly prohibits the King from interfering with the judicial institutions and their decisions.⁴⁶⁸ The King's commitment to the Constitution and the nation is further emphasized by the requirement that he must take an oath in the name of Allah before the legislative assembly. This oath, taken in the presence of the legislative assembly, binds him to respect the country's Constitution and laws, protect its sovereignty, and safeguard the nation.⁴⁶⁹

7. Check and balance mechanism in the constitution

The 1932 Constitution provides a check-and-balance mechanism, where one organ of the state is always vigilant of the other, ensuring one power does not override the other.⁴⁷⁰ In most democracies, the parliament is entrusted with the responsibility of watching the operation of all other state institutions. Articles 67-69 provide that the cabinet ministers are answerable to the legislative assembly. Article 75 states that the Majlis is responsible for questioning the cabinet ministers, conducting inquiries, and investigating any such acts that may lead to the violation of laws. Article 76 provides the proceedings for the motion of no confidence of cabinet ministers, while Article 55 states the procedures for the motion of no confidence of the king and the procedures of removal from his office.

8. Constitutional Supremacy

The Constitutional supremacy clause is another significant principle related to the check and balance mechanism in the first Constitution of the Maldives. Constitutional supremacy is indeed the declaration enshrined in the Constitution that establishes the Constitution as the highest law of the land while setting limitations on the state authorities through its provisions. Article 79 contains constitutional supremacy and repugnancy provisions worth mentioning here. The provision states that "no law shall be enacted in violation of the

⁴⁵⁹ Didi (n 2).

⁴⁶⁰ Constitution of the Maldives 1932 art 23.

⁴⁶¹ *ibid* 43.

⁴⁶² Didi (n 2).

⁴⁶³ Constitution of the Maldives 1932.

⁴⁶⁴ *ibid* Article 27.

⁴⁶⁵ *ibid* Article 26.

⁴⁶⁶ *ibid* Articles 54 & 55.

⁴⁶⁷ *ibid* Article 42.

⁴⁶⁸ *ibid* Article 43.

⁴⁶⁹ *ibid* 26.

⁴⁷⁰ It is important to recognize that the concept of a checks-and-balances mechanism, as enshrined in the first constitution, cannot be directly equated with those in contemporary modern democracies. Nevertheless, the principles articulated were tailored to the context of their time and were applied in accordance with the societal norms and governance frameworks of the Maldives during that era. (See. Mohamed Amin Didi, Qaanoonu Asaasege Hayai)

constitution.⁴⁷¹ As previously mentioned, the constitutional limitation provided in the first Constitution is never too much to repeat. They include articles 42 and 43 of the first written Constitution of the Maldives, a remarkable constitutional limitation that dismantled the age-old absolute supreme authority of the King. Such limitations demonstrate the enduring supremacy of a written constitution.

9. Judicial independence

The principle of separation of power can only be completed under constitutionalism if the judicial institution is liberated from interference from other state powers, especially the executive authority. The first written constitution, holds a significant place in history as it laid the foundation for introducing an independent judiciary.⁴⁷² In order to achieve this, the 1932 constitution provides that judges are independent and that others are prohibited from interfering with judicial authority as long as their conduct is according to the law.⁴⁷³

The development of the Maldivian judiciary has been a journey of several significant steps. The institution of the judiciary was further refined under the second constitution in 1934, a significant evolution of the Maldivian judiciary. Subsequent constitutions of the Maldives continued this refinement. The 1934 Constitution precisely demands the judiciary to follow Islamic Sharia and apply juristic rules of the Shafi'e school of thought.⁴⁷⁴

As the head of state, the Sultan was traditionally associated with the administration of justice, but the constitution aimed to separate this role from the executive authority, ensuring an independent judiciary. The 1932 constitution explicitly prohibited the King from interfering with the judiciary.⁴⁷⁵ The introduction of this provision is a massive step towards an independent judiciary, which led us to formulate the current impartial judicial regime in the Maldives in the 2008 Constitution.⁴⁷⁶

10. Rights of the people

Another remarkable attribute of the 1932 Constitution is its Bill of Rights. The Constitution recognizes the rights of the people, safeguarding their lives, property, and dignity. Freedom of expression,⁴⁷⁷ freedom of the press, the constitutional obligation to education, freedom to protest⁴⁷⁸ and the freedom to participate in any activity, including political activities, are some enduring attributions of the First Constitution.

The rights section is provided in articles 4 to 22 of the Constitution. The Constitution also prohibits arbitrary arrests, torture, banishment and deportation to a foreign country.⁴⁷⁹ Article 11 protects citizens' personal communications, including telephone calls, telegrams, and letters, from being intercepted by state authorities.⁴⁸⁰ One of the significant rights guaranteed in the Constitution is the protection of the sanctities of private properties, the Constitution prohibits the seizure and confiscation of people's entire property as a punishment for any form of wrong at any time.⁴⁸¹ Another significant right guaranteed in the Constitution is the right to pension. The Constitution provides that "every public servant shall receive a pension of two-thirds of his salary if he has served for twenty-five consecutive years."⁴⁸² The first Constitution granted reasonable rights to citizens in an era when most people were ignorant of their rights and the government's duties toward them.

11. Abolition of the first constitution

The new Constitution introduced a new system for the Maldivian society, where ancient customary norms were accepted as the law of the land in force for centuries. The introduction of newly granted constitutional rights, the constitutionalized governing system, the newly formed parliament, and the rapid introduction of the newly enacted laws indeed caused a significant level of confusion and uncertainty among the public.⁴⁸³

The character and attributes of the first Maldivian Constitution continue to be scrutinized in the context of contemporary challenges at the time. Among the numerous reasons for the abolition of the short-lived Constitution as

⁴⁷¹ Constitution of the Maldives 1932.

⁴⁷² *ibid* Article 80-84.

⁴⁷³ *ibid* Article 80.

⁴⁷⁴ Constitution of the Maldives 1934 art 75.

⁴⁷⁵ Constitution of the Maldives 1932 art 43.

⁴⁷⁶ Constitution of the Republic of Maldives 2008 ch 5.

⁴⁷⁷ Constitution of the Maldives 1932 art 12.

⁴⁷⁸ *ibid* 13–16.

⁴⁷⁹ *ibid* 5–7.

⁴⁸⁰ *ibid* 11.

⁴⁸¹ *ibid* 9 & 10.

⁴⁸² *ibid* 22.

⁴⁸³ Didi (n 2).

described by Mohamed Amin Didi, the hardship caused by newly enacted laws as one of the reasons for initiating a protest against the government, which subsequently led to the abolition of the Constitution. The enactment of some forty brand-new statutes in just over eight months created a massive burden and intolerable hardship on people.⁴⁸⁴

Since ancient times, the lifestyle of Maldivians has been attached to un-written customary laws or 'Aadat and the people were not prepared for such a drastic transition. The sudden abolition of long-standing customary practices and the overhaul of the entire legal system overnight really shook the capital city of the Kingdom and caused chaos and anger among the public. In addition, the incitement of the political opponents added the firewood to the burning fire by creating fear among the public in numerous ways. A series of protests in the streets of Male' for nearly two weeks finally reached its boiling point. The people in 'Gulhakuley Fasgandu' (the main public square in Male') literally tore down the Constitution on the evening of the 20th Rajab 1352, 9th November 1933.⁴⁸⁵ This incident ended the era of the first written Constitution, giving it to life for just ten months and seventeen days. The same day, the Constitution was officially abolished, the cabinet dissolved, and the parliament was suspended.⁴⁸⁶

The analysis of the incidents that took place during the era of the first Constitution shows that the fundamental reason to cease the Constitution was not the Constitution itself. However, the main contributing factor to the demise of the first written Constitution of the Maldives was the rapid and unprecedented number of laws passed by virtue of this Constitution.

12. The impact of the first written constitution

The abolition of the first written constitution does not bar constitutional rule in the Maldives. On the contrary, the first written constitution had a tremendous impact on Maldives' politics, and the spirit of the written constitution never died in the Maldives. The roots of the first written constitution were well-struck in the Maldivian soil to the extent that the people felt the emptiness of the constitution within a few months. Therefore, to fill the constitutional vacuum within the state, efforts were made to revive the deceased constitution. Subsequently, a total of eleven constitutions were passed in just over seven decades.

⁴⁸⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁸⁵ Ahmed Shakir, *Adl Insaafai Qaanoonu Asaasee (Justice and Constitution)* (Maldives National Centre for Linguistic and Historical Research 2006).

⁴⁸⁶ The Peoples Majlis (n 11).

Despite its short lifespan, the 1932 Constitution played a critical role in shaping the Maldivian society and the political sphere in Male'. Its most significant contribution was laying the groundwork for democracy, a concept that would become functional almost a century after its initial establishment. This pioneering document also revolutionized the Maldives' unwritten constitutional norms and centuries-old traditional system of governance. The absolute hereditary monarchical system switched to an elected monarchy, which later evolved into a presidential system. The presidential form of governing system in the Maldives reverted to an elected monarchy not long after, which was permanently abolished in 1968. This paved the way for the introduction of the second presidential republic through constitutional amendments.

The abolition of the short-lived Constitution does not cause the death of the constitutional ideals in the Maldives. In fact, it opened doors for a better, more adaptable constitution for the future Maldivian society, which had been followed in the subsequent constitutions. Constitutionalist, like Jack Balkin, correctly suggest that the character of the Constitution is dynamic and adaptable. He argues that the document's enduring strength lies in its capacity to evolve and respond to changing societal values.⁴⁸⁷ To this end, the second Maldivian Constitution in 1934 came into force with more dynamic and adaptable features. Many scholars contend that the latter is an amendment to the first Constitution, addressing the inclusion of the demands of the people and resolving the contemporary issues of the state.⁴⁸⁸

13. Conclusion

The introduction of the first written Constitution of the Maldives and an examination of its characteristics reveal a rich tapestry interwoven with historical, philosophical, and contemporary elements. Its constitutional ideas of governance, the upholding of religious values, and features such as the separation of powers, checks-and-balances mechanisms, and the bill of rights collectively highlight its enduring significance.

Exploring the first written Constitution of the Maldives revealed significant historical values in its character and unique Islamic and local features. As the cornerstone of democratic reform in the Maldives, the first Constitution introduced a remarkable advancement: the establishment of a representative legislature. The elected parliament was a novel idea contrary to the old-age traditional governance system.

⁴⁸⁷ Jack M Balkin, *Living Originalism* (Harvard University Press 2011) <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt24hh8x>> accessed 13 September 2024.

⁴⁸⁸ Shakir (n 65).

Despite the short lifespan of the first Constitution, its abolition did not mark the end of constitutional ideals in the Maldives. The subsequent constitutions demonstrate the revival of its constitutional spirit, which defined the state of the Maldives and set a trajectory for the future.

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should be given a high priority since sensitive legal documents and other personal information of students and faculty staff would be shared using this digital medium⁴⁹⁸.

Equity and accessibility are something that should be addressed when shifting to hybrid and online models of legal education. For this reason, ensuring equal digital representation, learning opportunities and accessibility for all students is an important factor⁴⁹⁹. This would mean regardless of the socio-economic status and background of the student; everyone should be able to benefit from this platform⁵⁰⁰. It has to be noted that this may involve providing technology acquisition assistance, creating resources for students and faculty staff who are differently abled⁵⁰¹ as well as offering support for those who require additional literacy with regards to the digital shift⁵⁰².

The other notable factor to consider would be the revision of institutional policies to reflect the realities of digital and hybrid learning⁵⁰³. The main policies required for revision would be the attendance policies, assignment and examination formats, class participation and discussion as well as policies related to modes of content delivery⁵⁰⁴. The maintenance of integrity of assessments in a virtual environment by adopting new tools for monitoring student activities and overall calibrating the view of the nature of assessment themselves is vital to maintain the quality⁵⁰⁵ of legal education provided by the institution.

Apart from the internal policy that needs to be revised. The input from the external stakeholders such as the accreditation body as well as collaboration with legal practitioners⁵⁰⁶ would provide insights into the changing nature of the legal profession in a digital world which would ensure the new hybrid programs would be up to par with the required educational standards as well as enrich the curriculum with the latest information in the legal field where technology could be used at an advantage⁵⁰⁷.

The transition from traditional to hybrid and online teaching methods in law schools is a significant evolution in legal education. It may have been necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic; however, this shift is an inevitable factor we should have faced sooner rather than later due to the exponential growth in technological advancements in every possible facet of life. However, changing the modality and paradigm of teaching requires a careful and holistic approach which would have to ensure pedagogical innovation would not be hindered or held back. Keeping in mind that the initial delivery of legal education through digital means would be faced with unprecedented challenges, but with careful consideration these challenges could be overcome, and we would be able to capitalise on the opportunities to provide a more dynamic, inclusive and effective learning environment for legal education.

Objectives of the Study

The transition to hybrid and remote learning in legal education presents both opportunities and challenges. A primary concern is the need for a comprehensive understanding and assessment of the impact of these learning models at institutions like the Islamic University of Maldives (IUM).

Adoption of Hybrid and Remote Learning Models

Evaluating the extent and manner in which IUM's faculties have adopted hybrid and remote learning models is crucial. Research indicates that blended learning, which combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online components, has been increasingly utilized in higher education to enhance teaching and learning quality⁵⁰⁸. However, challenges persist in sustaining and scaling these practices across courses and programs within institutions⁵⁰⁹. A proposed framework suggests that institutional strategic planning is essential for

⁴⁹⁸ Wang and others (n 3).

⁴⁹⁹ MM Alexander, JE Lynch, T Rabinovich and PG Knutel, 'Snapshot of a Hybrid Learning Environment' (2014) 15(1) Quarterly Review of Distance Education.

⁵⁰⁰ BH Chen and HH Chiou, 'Learning Style, Sense of Community and Learning Effectiveness in Hybrid Learning Environment' (2014) 22(4) Interactive Learning Environments 485–496.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid.

⁵⁰² Raes (n 2).

⁵⁰³ D Bennett, E Knight and J Rowley, 'The Role of Hybrid Learning Spaces in Enhancing Higher Education Students' Employability' (2020) 51(4) British Journal of Educational Technology 1188–1202..

⁵⁰⁴ D Griffin and others, 'Best Practices for Sustainable Inter-Institutional Hybrid Learning at CHARM European University' (2022) 12(11) Education Sciences 797.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁶ L Johnston-Walsh and A Lintal, 'Tele-Lawyer and The Virtual Learning Experience: Finding the Silver Lining for Remote Hybrid Externships & Law Clinics after the Pandemic' (2020) 54 Akron L Rev 735

⁵⁰⁷ X Bai and MB Smith, 'Promoting Hybrid Learning through a Sharable eLearning Approach' (2010) 14(3) Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks 13–24.

⁵⁰⁸ CP Lim, T Wang and CR Graham, 'Driving, Sustaining and Scaling Up Blended Learning Practices in Higher Education Institutions: A Proposed Framework' (2019) 1 Innovation and Education Article 1 <https://doi.org/10.1186/s42862-019-0002-0>.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid.

driving, sustaining, and scaling up blended learning practices in higher education⁵¹⁰.

Challenges Faced by Students and Faculty

Exploring the challenges faced by students and faculty in the new learning environment is vital. Studies have shown that while blended learning approaches can enhance student engagement and experience, they also create significant influences on students' awareness of the teaching mode and learning background⁵¹¹. Additionally, research on students' experiences with remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic utilized thematic analysis to explore their perceptions and challenges⁵¹². This underscores the necessity for continuous professional development for educators to effectively utilize digital tools and adapt their teaching methods to the digital environment⁵¹³.

Institutional Policies and Infrastructure

Examining the changes in institutional policies and infrastructure to support hybrid and remote learning is essential. A study on blended learning adoption and implementation in higher education suggests that there is a need for more institutional adoption research to guide how higher education institutions shape policies as they transition from the traditional face-to-face delivery model to fully blended universities⁵¹⁴. The study adopts a grounded theory methodology to investigate institutional blended learning adoption initiatives, highlighting the importance of institutional support in the successful implementation of blended learning models⁵¹⁵.

Significance of the Research

This research is crucial in guiding IUM in navigating the shift towards hybrid and remote learning in the provision of legal education. It aims to provide actionable insights for educators and administrators to optimize these models for legal education. Furthermore, the study's findings will contribute to the broader discourse on the future of higher education in the digital age. The transition to hybrid learning and remote work is not merely a temporary response to global events but a significant shift in the educational landscape. This

research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of this shift and to offer strategic guidance for IUM to effectively embrace this new era of legal education.

Methodology and Data Analysis

The research on hybrid and remote learning in legal education employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. Quantitative data were gathered through surveys and structured interviews with students, educators, and administrators. These instruments aimed to capture experiences, challenges, and preferences regarding hybrid and remote learning models. Metrics such as years of experience for educators, satisfaction levels for students, and strategic challenges for administrators were included. Qualitative data, including open-ended comments, were collected to provide further context to the quantitative results and to capture the more subjective experiences of the stakeholders.

The analysis of this data was conducted through both statistical and thematic approaches. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive statistics to identify common trends, such as preferred learning environments of students and challenges faced by educators in adapting to hybrid teaching. For instance, satisfaction levels and engagement issues were compared across different demographics, allowing for insights into specific challenges faced by younger students or educators with fewer years of experience. Meanwhile, qualitative responses were coded and analysed thematically to identify recurring issues, such as the need for improved technological infrastructure and more frequent professional development for educators.

This mixed-methods approach aligns with studies in legal education that have utilized similar methodologies. For example, an evaluation of a hybrid law degree program employed both quantitative and qualitative methods to assess student outcomes and the program's impact on access to legal education⁵¹⁶. Additionally, research on students' experiences with remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic utilized thematic analysis to explore their perceptions and challenges⁵¹⁷.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹¹ J Poon, 'Blended Learning: An Institutional Approach for Enhancing Students' Learning Experiences' (2014) 51(4) *Educational Media International* 271–284 <https://doi.org/10.1080/09523987.2014.971847>.

⁵¹² T Nguyen, T Nguyen and T Nguyen, 'Insights into Students' Experiences and Perceptions of Remote Learning Methods from the COVID-19 Pandemic to Best Practice for the Future' (2021) 6 *Frontiers in Education* 647986 <https://doi.org/10.3389/educ.2021.647986>.

⁵¹³ E Perry and S Boodt, 'Supporting the Professional Development of "Hybrid" Teacher Educators in the Further Education Sector' (2019) 11(3) *Teaching in Lifelong Learning* 60–71 <https://doi.org/10.11120/tile.2019.00019>.

⁵¹⁴ A Antwi-Boampong and AJ Bokolo, 'Towards an Institutional Blended Learning Adoption Model for Higher Education Institutions' (2022) 27 *Technology, Knowledge and Learning* 765–784 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10758-021-09507-4>.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid.

⁵¹⁶ Wang and others (n 3).

⁵¹⁷ Nguyen and others (n 24).

Findings and Discussions

Table 1: Educator Data

Years of Experience	Courses Taught	Challenges in Hybrid/Remote Teaching	Opportunities Identified	Preferred Teaching Model
10	Contract Law, Criminal Law	Student engagement	Flexible scheduling	Hybrid
5	Property Law, Torts	Technical issues	Increased accessibility	Remote
5	Constitutional Law	Adapting materials for online format	Use of diverse teaching tools	Hybrid

The experiences of educators at IUM with hybrid and remote learning models reveal the challenges and opportunities inherent in these teaching modalities. The table illustrates how educators with varying years of experience face different challenges, with some struggling to maintain student engagement, others dealing with technical issues, and a few encountering difficulties in adapting materials to online formats. These issues reflect broader concerns in legal education, where maintaining engagement and effectively utilizing technology are critical hurdles. Educators with varying years of experience have encountered specific challenges in adapting to hybrid and remote teaching environments. For instance, an educator with 10 years of experience teaching Contract and Criminal Law noted difficulties in maintaining student engagement. Similarly, a colleague with 5 years of experience teaching Property Law and Torts faced technical issues, while another educator teaching Constitutional Law struggled with adapting materials for online formats. These challenges are consistent with broader findings in legal education, where maintaining student engagement and effectively utilizing technology are common hurdles⁵¹⁸.

Despite these challenges, educators have identified several opportunities within the hybrid and remote models, such as flexible scheduling and the use of diverse teaching tools. The flexibility offered by hybrid learning can enhance accessibility for both students and faculty, fostering an adaptable learning environment. Furthermore, educators' preferences for hybrid or remote teaching underscore the diversity of teaching models in legal education, with some preferring in-person interaction while others appreciate the recorded lectures provided by hybrid setups. These opportunities align with research suggesting that hybrid teaching can offer increased

accessibility and the potential for innovative pedagogical approaches⁵¹⁹.

There is a significant need for increased training on technology. Educators require more professional development to enhance their proficiency with digital tools, ensuring that they can engage students effectively and deliver quality content in a remote or hybrid setting. Preferences regarding teaching models vary among educators. Some favor hybrid models, while others prefer remote or in-person instruction. For example, one educator expressed a preference for hybrid teaching, citing positive feedback on recorded lectures, while another preferred in-person interaction. These preferences reflect broader debates in legal education about the effectiveness and desirability of different teaching modalities⁵²⁰.

Educators have also emphasized the need for more training on technology to effectively navigate hybrid and remote teaching environments. This underscores the importance of professional development in equipping educators with the necessary skills to adapt to evolving teaching landscapes⁵²¹. The integration of hybrid and remote learning models in legal education offers both opportunities and challenges, as highlighted by the experiences of educators at the Islamic University of Maldives (IUM).

Table 2: Law Students

ID	Programme	Year of Study	Hybrid/Remote Learning Challenges	Preferred Learning Environment	Satisfaction Level (1-10)	Suggestions for Improvement
S001	LLB	2	Internet connectivity	Hybrid	7	More interactive sessions
S002	MCL	1	Lack of hands-on experience	Remote	6	Regular feedback and support
S003	LLB	3	Difficulty concentrating	In-person	8	Flexible deadlines

The experiences of law students at the Islamic University of Maldives (IUM) with hybrid and remote learning models reveal both challenges and opportunities that are consistent with broader trends in legal education. Law students at IUM have faced a variety of challenges in adapting to hybrid and remote learning environments, which is consistent with broader trends in legal education. The students' struggles include technical issues like internet connectivity, difficulty with concentration in online classes, and a lack of hands-on

⁵¹⁸ J Secker, M Melcher and R Wells, 'Researching the Challenges and Opportunities of Hybrid Teaching' (2021) Learning at City <https://blogs.city.ac.uk/learningatcity/2021/11/09/researching-the-challenges-and-opportunities-of-hybrid-teaching/>.

⁵¹⁹ A Raes and others, 'Designing Synchronous Hybrid Learning Spaces: Challenges and Opportunities' in Hybrid-Flexible Course

Design (Springer 2020) 123–138 https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-88520-5_9.

⁵²⁰ A Thanaraj and others, Teaching Legal Education in the Digital Age (Routledge 2022) <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429351082>.

⁵²¹ Perry and Boott (n 25).

experience, especially in a field like law where practical learning is essential. These challenges highlight the need for improved infrastructure, particularly reliable internet access and more interactive learning opportunities. Students have reported specific challenges in adapting to hybrid and remote learning environments. For example, one student in the LLB program experienced difficulties with internet connectivity, which is a common issue in online education⁵²². Another student pursuing a Master of Comparative Law (MCL) noted a lack of hands-on experience, highlighting the importance of practical learning in legal education⁵²³. Additionally, a third-year LLB student found it challenging to concentrate during online classes, a concern that has been observed in studies on online learning environments⁵²⁴.

Preferences regarding learning environments⁵²⁵ vary among students. The LLB student with internet connectivity issues preferred the hybrid model, which combines in-person and online instruction, possibly to mitigate connectivity problems. The MCL student favored remote learning, despite the lack of hands-on experience, indicating a preference for the flexibility it offers. Conversely, the LLB student who struggled with concentration preferred in-person learning, suggesting that face-to-face interaction enhances their focus and engagement. Satisfaction levels among students ranged from 6 to 8 out of 10. The LLB student suggested more interactive sessions to enhance engagement, a recommendation supported by research emphasizing the importance of active learning strategies in online education⁵²⁵. The MCL student requested regular feedback and support, highlighting the need for continuous communication between students and instructors in remote learning settings⁵²⁶. The LLB student who preferred in-person learning proposed flexible deadlines, acknowledging the challenges of online learning environments⁵²⁷.

Despite these challenges, students have expressed varying preferences for learning environments, with some preferring hybrid learning to mitigate connectivity issues, others favouring remote learning for its flexibility, and a few advocating for in-person learning to enhance focus and engagement. The fact that students' satisfaction levels range from 6 to 8 out of 10 suggests that while the hybrid and remote models have some benefits, there is still room for improvement in addressing their concerns. Students' suggestions for improvement, such as more interactive sessions, regular feedback, and flexible deadlines, echo research on the importance of active learning in remote

education. Incorporating these suggestions into future strategies could help improve student satisfaction and engagement.

The findings from IUM law students align with broader research on hybrid and remote learning in legal education. Studies have identified that while online learning offers flexibility, it also presents challenges such as technical issues, reduced engagement, and difficulties in maintaining concentration⁵²⁸. To address these challenges, it is essential to incorporate interactive elements, provide regular feedback, and offer flexible learning options to accommodate diverse student needs⁵²⁹. Furthermore, ensuring equitable access to technology and resources is crucial for the success of hybrid and remote learning models⁵³⁰.

Table 3: Administrators

ID	Role	Years in Role	Strategic Challenges	Technological Needs Identified	Future Plans for Hybrid/Remote Learning	Additional Comments
A001	Curriculum Developer	7	Integrating technology	Advanced LMS, reliable internet	Expand hybrid model	Need professional development
A002	Educational Technologist	4	Staff training	User-friendly platforms	Enhance remote learning infrastructure	More funds required resources
A003	Programme Coordinator	10	Coordinating hybrid schedules	Collaborative tools	Increase hybrid course offerings	Positive outlook on hybrid education

The integration of hybrid and remote learning models in legal education presents both opportunities and challenges, as highlighted by the experiences of administrators at the Islamic University of Maldives (IUM). Administrators at IUM play a key role in implementing hybrid and remote learning models, and their perspectives highlight the strategic challenges involved in integrating these approaches. The difficulties identified include the integration of technology into the curriculum, the need for more comprehensive staff training, and the coordination of hybrid schedules to ensure smooth course delivery. The administrators have also emphasized specific technological needs, such as advanced Learning Management Systems (LMS) and reliable internet infrastructure. These requirements reflect broader trends in higher education, where the effective integration of technology is essential for the success of blended learning.

⁵²² Raes and others (n 31).

⁵²³ Thanaraj and others (n 32).

⁵²⁴ Secker and others (n 30).

⁵²⁵ Raes and others (n 31).

⁵²⁶ Thanaraj and others (n 32).

⁵²⁷ Secker and others (n 30).

⁵²⁸ I Lomonosova and I Valentinovna, 'Role of Administrators in Blended Learning in Higher Education Institutions' (2018) 9(2) *Pakistan Journal of Distance and Online Learning* 29–50 <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1413986>.

⁵²⁹ Thanaraj and others (n 32).

⁵³⁰ Secker and others (n 30).

Furthermore, the future plans outlined by administrators to expand hybrid learning and enhance remote learning infrastructure align with the broader movement towards more flexible and adaptable learning environments. Administrators have identified several strategic challenges in implementing hybrid and remote learning. A Curriculum Developer with seven years of experience noted difficulties in integrating technology effectively into the curriculum. Similarly, an Educational Technologist with four years in the role emphasized the need for comprehensive staff training to adapt to new teaching modalities. These challenges are consistent with findings in higher education, where administrators play a crucial role in implementing and supporting blended learning, ensuring its success⁵³¹.

To address these challenges, administrators have identified specific technological needs. The Curriculum Developer requires an advanced Learning Management System (LMS) and reliable internet infrastructure to support hybrid learning. The Educational Technologist seeks user-friendly platforms to facilitate teaching and learning processes. These needs align with research indicating that effective implementation of blended learning necessitates appropriate technological tools and infrastructure⁵³². Looking ahead, administrators plan to expand the hybrid learning model and enhance remote learning infrastructure. The Curriculum Developer aims to broaden the hybrid model's reach, while the Educational Technologist focuses on improving remote learning capabilities. These plans are in line with trends in higher education, where institutions are increasingly adopting hybrid and remote learning models to offer flexible learning options and prepare students for evolving work environments⁵³³.

The need for professional development and additional funding is a recurring theme. For hybrid and remote learning models to succeed, continuous investment in staff training and infrastructure is necessary. Administrators have also highlighted the need for professional development and additional funding. The Curriculum Developer emphasizes the importance of ongoing training for educators to effectively utilize new technologies. The Educational Technologist points out the necessity for more resources to support the expansion of hybrid and remote learning. These considerations are crucial, as research underscores the importance of professional development and adequate funding in successfully implementing blended learning strategies⁵³⁴.

Table 4: Expert Opinion

ID	Area of Expertise	Years of Experience	Best Practices in Hybrid/Remote Education	Emerging Trends Identified	Recommendations for IUM	Addition Insights
X001	Legal Education	20	Interactive online tools	AI in education	Invest in training and tech	Need regular feedback mechanisms
X002	Educational Technology	15	Adaptive learning technologies	Virtual reality in learning	Pilot innovative solutions	Emphasize accessibility and inclusivity
X003	Curriculum Development	18	Blended learning models	Data-driven decision making	Foster a culture of innovation	Importance of ongoing evaluation

External experts in legal education and educational technology provide invaluable insights into the evolving landscape of hybrid and remote learning. These experts stress the importance of integrating interactive online tools, adaptive learning technologies, and virtual reality into the learning experience. The use of AI in education is also highlighted as a promising tool for enhancing engagement and personalization in legal education.

Experts also recommend that IUM focus on fostering a culture of innovation and embracing new technologies. Implementing pilot programs for innovative solutions and focusing on accessibility and inclusivity are key strategies for ensuring that hybrid learning models meet the diverse needs of all students. The experts further emphasize the importance of regular feedback mechanisms, adaptive learning models, and data-driven decision-making to improve the effectiveness of hybrid and remote learning. These insights suggest that IUM should continue exploring cutting-edge technologies and continuously evaluate the effectiveness of its hybrid learning models.

⁵³¹ Lomonosova and Valentinovna (n 40).

⁵³² Raes and others (n 31).

⁵³³ Thanaraj and others (n 32).

⁵³⁴ Lomonosova and Valentinovna (n 40)..

Table 6: Available Facilities

Facility ID	Facility Name	Purpose	Technological Support Available	Challenges Identified	Potential Improvements
F001	Hybrid Learning Classroom	Supports hybrid classes with live streaming	High-speed internet, interactive displays	Occasional connectivity issues	Invest in more reliable internet infrastructure
F002	Remote Learning Hub	Offers students access to remote learning tools	Video conferencing software, laptops	Limited number of devices available	Increase device availability for students
F003	Legal Research Library	Provides access to legal resources	Digital databases, eBooks, online journals	Limited training on digital resource use	Offer digital resource training for students
F004	Technology Training Lab	Trains educators in using hybrid learning tools	Computers, LMS, interactive software	Lack of ongoing training	Introduce regular training sessions
F005	Study and Collaboration Space	Facilitates group discussions and projects	Smartboards, collaborative tools	Limited space for group work	Expand space and introduce booking system
F006	Virtual Classroom Studio	For recording and broadcasting lectures	Recording equipment, green screens	Difficulties in recording high-quality content	Upgrade audio and visual equipment
F007	Administrative Support Centre	Provides technical support for hybrid/remote issues	IT support desk, troubleshooting services	Delays in response time	Increase staff to improve response time

The table showcases the facilities at IUM that play a crucial role in supporting the institution's shift towards hybrid and remote learning, with a focus on legal education. Each facility is designed to address specific needs for both educators and students in this new learning environment. The Hybrid Learning Classroom allows for live-streamed classes with interactive displays and high-speed internet, enabling a seamless blend of in-person and online learning. However, connectivity issues sometimes disrupt this process, indicating a need for enhanced internet infrastructure to ensure reliable access for all users. Improving the network's reliability could significantly boost the learning experience, especially for real-time interactions during hybrid classes.

The remote learning facilities should be able to provide students with essential tools such as laptops and video conferencing software to participate in remote learning. While this facility is vital for students who cannot attend in-person sessions, the limited availability of devices hampers its effectiveness. Expanding the inventory of laptops and other remote learning tools would allow more students to benefit from it, reducing barriers to accessing online education. Additionally, ensuring that the software provided is user-friendly and fully integrated with the institution's learning management systems would enhance the overall remote learning experience.

The Library's legal research facility is another key facility, offering digital access to some legal databases, eBooks, and online journals. However, despite these limited yet available resources, many students struggle with navigating the digital

systems, highlighting a need for improved training. Offering workshops and tutorials on how to effectively use the library's digital resources could enhance student engagement and make the facility more valuable. Similarly, the Computer Lab could be utilised to train students and educators in the use of digital teaching and learning tools as an essential resource. However, the lack of ongoing and regular training sessions means that educators may not always be up to date with the latest tools and technologies. Increasing the frequency of these training sessions would ensure that educators are better equipped to deliver high-quality hybrid and remote lessons.

The physical classrooms and the virtual classroom softwares further support IUM's hybrid learning model. The physical classrooms are not equipped with smartboards and collaborative tools to facilitate group discussions and project work. Also, the space is limited, often leading to overcrowding and making it difficult for students to book time for group work. Expanding such a space or introducing a more efficient booking system could alleviate these issues. The virtual classroom software allows lecturers to record and broadcast lessons with high-quality recording equipment, but some challenges persist in maintaining audio-visual quality, particularly for those aiming to deliver professional-level content. Upgrading the software and related equipment would ensure higher quality recordings and improve the overall learning experience for students accessing recorded lectures.

Finally, the IT department provides essential technical support to staff and students navigating hybrid and remote learning. While they offer troubleshooting services and an IT support desk, there are delays in response time due to limited staff capacity. Increasing the number of support staff would reduce waiting times and ensure quicker resolutions to technical issues, thereby enhancing the overall efficiency of IUM's hybrid learning model.

While IUM's facilities are geared to be aligned with the needs of hybrid and remote learning, there is significant room for improvement. Enhancing internet infrastructure, increasing device availability, providing more frequent training for both students and staff, expanding collaborative spaces, and upgrading recording technology are key areas of focus. Implementing these recommendations would help ensure that IUM remains at the forefront of legal education in the digital age, providing a more seamless, effective, and accessible learning environment for all.

The facilities at IUM play a critical role in supporting hybrid and remote learning, with resources like the Hybrid Learning Classroom, Remote Learning Hub, and Legal Research Library providing essential tools for both students and educators. The availability of high-speed internet, interactive displays, and digital resources supports hybrid and remote learning, but there are notable challenges related to connectivity, device availability, and lack of ongoing training.

The Hybrid Learning Classroom faces occasional connectivity issues, highlighting the need for more reliable internet infrastructure. The Remote Learning Hub has a limited number of devices, which restricts access for students who cannot attend in person. Expanding the availability of devices and ensuring better integration with learning management systems would improve the remote learning experience.

The Legal Research Library's digital resources are underutilized by students who lack proper training in using them. Offering workshops and tutorials would significantly enhance the value of these resources. Similarly, the Technology Training Lab could benefit from more regular training sessions to ensure that educators remain up to date with the latest tools and technologies.

Improvements to physical spaces, such as expanding the Study and Collaboration Space or implementing a booking system, could help alleviate overcrowding and promote more collaborative learning. Additionally, upgrading the recording equipment in the Virtual Classroom Studio would ensure better-quality lecture recordings.

Discussion

The transition to hybrid and remote learning in legal education has introduced both opportunities and challenges, as evidenced by recent data. On the one hand, these models offer greater flexibility for students, enabling them to access learning materials and engage with the course at their own pace, which is particularly beneficial for those with time constraints or geographical limitations. However, the shift has also revealed significant challenges, including technical difficulties such as connectivity issues, which hinder students' ability to fully participate in learning activities. Additionally, many educators have struggled to adapt their teaching methods to the digital environment, highlighting a gap in digital literacy and pedagogical skills. As a result, there is a growing recognition of the need for continuous professional development for educators and investment in technological infrastructure to ensure equitable access to learning resources for all students. These findings underscore the complexity of successfully integrating hybrid and remote learning models into legal education, particularly when it comes to maintaining engagement, ensuring accessibility, and preparing educators to navigate the evolving educational landscape.

Active student engagement is crucial for the success of hybrid learning models. However, many students face connectivity issues and a lack of hands-on experiences, which

are particularly challenging in practical fields like law. Research indicates that online learning environments can often result in lower engagement compared to traditional in-person settings. To maintain student engagement in hybrid learning environments, incorporating interactive elements such as live discussions and real-time feedback is essential. While some students reported improved academic performance due to the flexibility of online learning, others highlighted challenges like decreased engagement and isolation.

The shift to hybrid and remote learning necessitates continuous professional development for educators. Legal education, traditionally reliant on direct classroom interaction, requires educators to adjust their teaching methods and enhance their technological proficiency. The rapid transition during the COVID-19 pandemic exposed gaps in many educators' abilities to effectively utilize digital tools. This underscores the need for institutions to invest in ongoing training and support to ensure educators can deliver high-quality education in digital formats. The success of a professional development program aimed at supporting educators in the Further Education sector, emphasizing the importance of such initiatives⁵³⁵.

The findings also underscore the role of infrastructure in supporting hybrid and remote learning models. Many students and educators reported issues with internet connectivity and access to technological resources, hindering the learning experience. Equitable access to digital tools is crucial for the success of hybrid education models. As institutions continue to adopt hybrid models, addressing these infrastructural challenges by investing in reliable internet access and ensuring all students have the necessary resources to participate fully in remote learning is critical. The Open University Law School's approach to blended learning, which combines asynchronous and synchronous methods, aims to enhance the student experience by creating a sense of community and support⁵³⁶. As IUM and other institutions continue to adopt hybrid models, it will be critical to address these infrastructural challenges by investing in reliable internet access and ensuring that all students have the necessary resources to participate fully in remote learning.

Recommendations

To optimise hybrid and remote learning at IUM, several strategic recommendations can be made. First, educators should be provided with enhanced training and support to better navigate the challenges of online and hybrid teaching.

⁵³⁵ Perry and Boodt (n 25).

⁵³⁶ The Open University Law School, 'Enhancing Distance Learning Student Experience by Creating a Feeling of Community' (2024) Scholarship and Innovation Blog

<https://www5.open.ac.uk/scholarship-and-innovation/scilab/blog/enhancing-distance-learning-student-experience>.

This includes upskilling in the use of technology and engagement strategies to ensure that course materials are effectively adapted for digital environments. Furthermore, addressing students' connectivity issues is crucial, and this can be achieved by investing in reliable technological infrastructure, making sure that students, particularly those in remote areas, have access to the necessary resources for seamless learning.

Additionally, fostering increased interaction and feedback within the learning process is essential. This can involve creating more interactive sessions, offering regular feedback, and providing opportunities for hands-on learning, which will help maintain student engagement and fill the gaps left by traditional in-person experiences. Lastly, IUM should continue exploring the potential of advanced technologies like artificial intelligence and virtual reality to enhance the learning experience. These innovations, if accessible and inclusive, can revolutionise legal education and ensure that the institution remains at the forefront of digital learning.

Conclusion

The transition to hybrid and remote learning models at the Islamic University of Maldives (IUM) represents a pivotal moment in the evolution of legal education. While these models present significant challenges—particularly in terms of student engagement, technological adaptation, and infrastructure—they also offer unique opportunities to enhance accessibility, flexibility, and the use of innovative teaching tools. The experiences of educators, students, administrators, and external experts highlighted in this study suggest that with the right investments in technology, professional development, and support systems, IUM can optimise its hybrid and remote learning strategies. To achieve this, it is essential to address existing barriers such as connectivity issues, the need for more interactive learning environments, and the importance of continuous training for educators. Additionally, leveraging emerging technologies such as AI and virtual reality could further enrich the learning experience and position IUM at the forefront of modern legal education. The recommendations outlined in this report provide a roadmap for IUM to refine and expand its hybrid and remote learning models, ensuring that they not only meet the immediate needs of students and faculty but also anticipate the future demands of legal education in an increasingly digital world. By embracing innovation, fostering continuous improvement, and focusing on inclusivity, IUM can successfully navigate the shift to a more flexible and dynamic educational landscape.

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workers into the country.⁵⁴⁵ Until the mid-90s, there was no proper regulatory mechanism to protect the rights of employees in the Maldives.

Despite the rights of workers were briefly outlined in the earlier constitutions of the Maldives, these rights were limited to certain context, *inter alia* include the right to work, the right to freedom from forced labor, and the right to a pension.⁵⁴⁶ Workers' rights were outlined in more detail with the enactment of the government employees' regulation in 1994. This regulation covered issues such as hiring, promotions, termination of government employees, wages, allowances, and other benefits given to government employees. The first employment regulations regarding the private sector were also established in 1994. These regulations set down minimum standards which must be included in an employee agreement.⁵⁴⁷ While there was no significant improvement in labor legislation, the ratification of the Maldives Civil Service Act in 2007 established the Civil Service Commission to oversee the enforcement of rights and duties of civil servants.⁵⁴⁸ The 2008 Constitution also brought about a notable change in the horizon of labor laws. It set down more extensive rights of workers, including freedom from forced labor, the right to strike, the right to safe conditions of work and fair wages.⁵⁴⁹ The biggest milestone in protecting labor rights was achieved with the enactment of the Employment Act in 2008, which set down the rights and duties of workers comprehensively.⁵⁵⁰

The promulgation of the 2008 Constitution and the enactment Employment Act of 2008 established labor rights for private sector employees as well. Despite the existence of labor laws and regulatory bodies to oversee the enforcement of labor rights, workers still complain about the deprivation of basic rights⁵⁵¹ such as access to food, shelter, and inadequate pay.⁵⁵² Such complaints raise the question of the extent of enforcement of those legislations. This research, therefore, will identify some key rights that private sector employees in the Maldives are entitled to and the extent to which they are

protected. This will ultimately help to determine the steps necessary to ensure the protection of rights of private sector employees. It focuses on all employees who fall within the ambit of the private sector, including workers in the tourism industry and migrant workers.

Research Methodology

Qualitative research design is utilized, as it is considered the most feasible methodology for this study. A thematic documentary analysis approach is employed to scrutinize information from secondary sources, such as articles and reports, on the current state of the private sector workforce. In addition to analyzing statutes and by-laws related to labor rights, interviews with private sector employees are conducted to gain insights into their experiences.

Rights of Private sector employees

Private sector employees are legally entitled to many labor rights. These rights are mainly laid down in the Constitution, and they are reinforced in the Employment Act and regulations. Regardless of the existence of these labor rights, there are questions as to whether private sector employees are fully afforded basic rights such as adequate pay, freedom from discrimination, fair working hours, safe working conditions and adequate accommodation.

(a) The right to fair wages

The right to fair wages for all workers is a constitutionally protected right,⁵⁵³ and the Employment Act⁵⁵⁴ elaborates this right with a recent amendment to establish a minimum wage.⁵⁵⁵ For government employees, the right to adequate pay is enforced within the regulatory framework of the Civil Service Commission in that civil servants can raise issues regarding their pay with the Commission, and the punctuality in payment is ensured as salaries are managed by the Ministry of Finance.

⁵⁴⁵ Aishath Shakeela and Chris Cooper, 'Human Resource Issues in a Small Island Setting: The Case of the Maldivian Tourism Industry' (2009) 34 *Tourism Recreation Research* 67.

⁵⁴⁶ Constitution of the Maldives 1932. Also see all subsequent Constitutions of the Maldives

⁵⁴⁷ Human Rights Commission of the Maldives, 'Rapid Assessment of the Employment Situation in the Maldives' (Human Rights Commission of the Maldives 2009).

⁵⁴⁸ Act No. 5/2007, The Maldivian Civil Service Act.

⁵⁴⁹ Constitution of the Republic of Maldives 2008.

⁵⁵⁰ Act No 2/2008 'The Employment Act.

⁵⁵¹ 'Afcons Muvazzafunnah Kaan Nudhy, Musaara Nudhey Kamuge Thuhumathu! - Vaguthu' <<https://vaguthu.mv/news/832045/>> accessed 23 April 2023.

⁵⁵² raajje.mv, 'Tourism dhaairaga masakkai kuraa muvazzafunge haqquthah hoadhai dhinumah majlis memberun govaalaifi' <<https://raajje.mv/45861>> accessed 23 April 2023.

⁵⁵³ Constitution of the Republic of Maldives 2008 ch II.

⁵⁵⁴ Employment Act.

⁵⁵⁵ Minimum Wage Order 2021.

The wages of private sector employees are not regulated through such a framework, and the pay depends on the policies of private companies, and punctuality and consistency of salaries depends on the supervisors and human resource departments of workplaces. This lack of supervision of private workplaces by authorities leaves employees vulnerable to being exploited by inadequate pay and remuneration. Private sector employees are sometimes not paid on time, or they are paid inadequately for the work they do. For instance, Maldivian employees often file issues over wages in the Employment Tribunal,⁵⁵⁶ sometimes regarding non-payment of commissions and decrease in salaries and benefits contrary to the Employment Act.⁵⁵⁷ Private sector employees were also the most affected by the delay of the government in establishing a minimum wage.⁵⁵⁸ Many workers were not paid adequately during the two period, and this exacerbated during Covid-19 where some workers were placed on unpaid leave and foreign workers were deported without being paid their wages.⁵⁵⁹ Foreign workers are particularly exploited as they have less access to regulatory authorities. For instance, 49 foreign workers employed by Jaah Investments filed their case with the Employment Tribunal over unpaid wages.⁵⁶⁰ Despite filing complaints with the police, the Labor Relations Authority, and the Human Rights Commission, no significant action was taken. Moreover, the minimum wage order excluded expatriate workers despite migrants consisting about 1/3rd of the Maldivian workforce.⁵⁶¹ Being excluded from the minimum wage meant that the wages received by migrant workers would have been insufficient for the work they do and vulnerable to exploitation.⁵⁶²

(b) The right to freedom from discrimination

⁵⁵⁶ *Aishath Maasha vs Strader Private Limited, 146/VTR/2019; Ali Thameem vs Rainbow Enterprises Private Limited, 5/VTR/2019.*

⁵⁵⁷ *Hawwa Huzma vs Ondhigo Private Limited, 193/VTR/2019.*

⁵⁵⁸ Minimum Wage Order 2021.

⁵⁵⁹ 'COVID-19: Over 11,000 Resort Employees Placed on Unpaid Leave' <<https://avas.mv/en/80534>> accessed 23 April 2023; Human Rights Watch, 'Maldives: Events of 2020', *World Report 2021* (2020) <<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/maldives>> accessed 23 April 2023.

⁵⁶⁰ Lamy Abdulla, '49 Migrant Workers File Case with Employment Tribunal over Unpaid Wages' *The Edition* <<https://edition.mv/news/26716%202>> accessed 23 April 2023.

The freedom to be protected from discrimination based on gender, race, nationality, and disabilities is one of the most remarkable labor rights.⁵⁶³ Regardless of this constitutionally protected labour right, private sector employees are often excluded due to their nationality or disabilities and harassed due to their gender. While employees often face such issues, there are no mechanisms in place to report these problems and they are commonly met with inaction from supervisors.

The Maldivian workforce composes of many lower-skilled migrant workers from India and Bangladesh, many of whom are undocumented. Their undocumented status often exposes them to exploitation. A large portion of lower skilled, foreign, undocumented workers reveals the system issues of discrimination in the Maldivian workforce⁵⁶⁴ and recently, some foreign workers complained of the discrimination they faced based on their nationality.⁵⁶⁵ Workers also complain about feeling excluded due to the ableist nature of workplaces. An employee with an illness shared their experience of being excluded from their team and feeling isolated due to their inability to participate in team lunches due to a health condition where they had dietary restrictions and had to urinate frequently. They reported that there was no procedure to share their grievances with their superior workers nor did they attempt to address their difficulties.⁵⁶⁶

Gender based discrimination is the most prevalent type of discrimination in workplaces, where women are met with condescending attitudes, exclusion, and sometimes harassment from other workers and supervisors. A female employee shared her experience of being excluded from meetings early in her employment, while her male counterparts were called into the meeting. While this situation has changed since then and she is included in such meetings, she shared how she felt excluded earlier in her employment.⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶¹ Human Rights Watch (n 23).

⁵⁶² 'Expatriate Workers with No Rights | Maldives Financial Review' (22 September 2022) <<https://mfr.mv/industry/expatriate-workers-with-no-rights>>.

⁵⁶³ Employment Act, Law No. 2/2008 s 4; Constitution of the Republic of Maldives 2008 art 37.

⁵⁶⁴ 'Expatriate Workers with No Rights | Maldives Financial Review' (n 26).

⁵⁶⁵ Abdulla (n 24).

⁵⁶⁶ Interview with Participant 03, Employee working in the private sector (Male', Maldives, 17 April 2023

⁵⁶⁷ Interview with Participant 01, Employee working in the private sector (Male', Maldives, 13 April 2023)

Another female employee also shared her experience of being patronized by male supervisors where their behavior suggested that she was less capable of understanding office procedures compared to her male counterparts.⁵⁶⁸ Several private sector employees also share their experiences with sexual harassment. A 2013 report by the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives showed that over a fifth of the women surveyed had been sexually harassed in their workplace. Sexual harassment in workplaces are not isolated events; it is part of the discrimination women face in the workplace. For instance, in July 2013, the CEO of the Sun Media Group, was charged with criminal offences for bringing girls into his office and having sexual relations with them after offering them jobs; and in November 2014, the former editor of V-news was arrested for assaulting a female colleague. While the harassment against women is widespread, many employees cannot report these incidents due to the lack of a proper framework and regulatory body within workplaces. Employees are more reluctant to report such incidents where the perpetrators are their superiors, for the fear of being terminated, ostracized, or subjected to further harassment.⁵⁶⁹

(c) The right to fair working hours

The Employment Act places a cap on the maximum number of working hours (48 hours) and the maximum number of consecutive workdays (six days).⁵⁷⁰ This is also a constitutionally protected labor right.⁵⁷¹ The working hours are fixed for government employees from 8 to 2 (6 hours), and overtime is also fixed and regulated by the Civil Service Commission and respective government offices. While government employees work beyond the designated hours, they are usually given leave on public holidays, and they are given an overtime. However, private sector employers have the liberty of establishing their own working hours and overtime. Subsequently, employees are often made to work longer hours without overtime pay or inadequate overtime pay. The lack of a regulatory framework and varying policies within private companies result in unfair working hours and compensation for private sector employees.

A private sector employee shared their experience with how workers in her office must come to work even on their designated off days, albeit having worked six consecutive days.⁵⁷² Another employee shared how managers often ask employees in their workplace to do work after official working hours during events without overtime. She also shared that employees are often made to work during public holidays, even on labor day, without additional wages although it is an established labor right.⁵⁷³ Another employee shared that the managers refused to establish official working hours during Ramadan to avoid calculating overtime, as a result of which one employee was forced to work long after the Iftar time and did not get the opportunity to go home and break their fast.⁵⁷⁴

(d) *The right to safe working conditions*

Employers must establish a safe workplace for their employees. Where employees are made to operate machinery, employers must obtain the necessary protective gear, tools and train their employees to operate the machinery safely. This is a critical labor right protected through the Constitution and the Employment Act. While workers must be provided with just and safe working conditions, the reality is anything but. The Public Interest Law Centre in a recent infographic video reported that work site safety issues are at an alarming level in the Maldives, where workers are at risk of being injured in several ways (falling, objects falling on them, sustaining injuries during heavy lifting etc.).⁵⁷⁵ It is not only private sector employees who are exposed to dangerous working conditions. Government employees also endure unsafe working conditions where workers have met with accidents, and one worker consequently passed away;⁵⁷⁶ however, these conditions are somewhat regulated and monitored by the government after such accidents. Private sector workers are more vulnerable due to the absence of a solid framework and a parent body to regulate working conditions.

Construction workers are often exposed to worksite accidents. In one incident, a worker at Thaa Atoll Dhiyamigili Island boatyard had his toes severed after an iron sheet fell on

⁵⁶⁸ Interview with Participant 02, Employee working in the private sector (Male, Maldives, 13 April 2023)

⁵⁶⁹ 'Workplace Sexual Harassment in the Maldives: The Struggle for Justice' (6 November 2017) <<https://maldivesindependent.com/society/workplace-sexual-harassment-in-the-maldives-the-struggle-for-justice-133995>> accessed 23 April 2023.

⁵⁷⁰ Employment Act, Law No. 2/2008 s 32.

⁵⁷¹ Constitution of the Republic of Maldives 2008 art 37.

⁵⁷² Interview with Participant 02.

⁵⁷³ Interview with Participant 01.

⁵⁷⁴ Interview with Participant 04, Employee working in the private sector (Male, Maldives, 5 April 2023)

⁵⁷⁵ Public Interest Law Centre, 'Work Site Safety Issues Are at an Alarming Level in the Maldives' (2023) <<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=815332063039012>> accessed 23 April 2023.

⁵⁷⁶ Avas, 'Man Injured in Port Accident Passes Away' (16 January 2021) <<https://avas.mv/en/94203>> accessed 25 April 2023.

his feet.⁵⁷⁷ Migrant workers are perhaps more vulnerable to such accidents. Many migrant workers are often made to lift heavy objects on their head without protective equipment, and following workplace incidents they have less access to healthcare. In one incident, a Bangladeshi worker was killed after he was hit by a falling stone in a construction site. New worker safety regulations were enacted in 2022 following this incident, where it was mandatory for employers to provide workers with safety equipment in construction sites.⁵⁷⁸ However, these regulations are seldom monitored and enforced by relevant authorities such as the Labor Relations Authority and the Construction Ministry. Work safety is also unfortunately not only confined to worksites involving heavy labor. An employee who worked in an office space shared that her workplace was unhygienic due a rat infestation. She also shared that she constantly got ill due to the accumulation of dust in her working space.⁵⁷⁹ Amid unsafe working conditions, The Public Interest Law Center has advocated for an Occupational Safety and Health Act to protect the rights of laborers working in dangerous conditions.⁵⁸⁰ While a bill was drafted and sent to the Parliament in 2022; it was passed by the Parliament and ratified after a yearlong delay.⁵⁸¹

(e) *The right to adequate accommodation*

Accommodation rights are a point of contention for workers. Accommodation is mostly provided for migrant workers. All foreign employees employed by the government are paid accommodation allowances while Maldivian workers usually do not get accommodation quarters or allowances. Many local workers have expressed displeasure regarding the discrepancy in the treatment between local workers and migrant workers especially by the government. When

Maldivian workers migrate to the capital Male' from other islands and are forced to pay a steep rent to work in Male', most of their income are paid to rent.

Nevertheless, migrant workers undeniably consist of about 1/3rd of the Maldivian workforce, and they usually carry out heavy labor in construction and other companies that require hard labor. These companies are usually in the private sector without a proper oversight framework. These workers are indubitably a significant part of the workforce and thus are entitled to accommodation given that many workers come from foreign countries, are often exploited by agents.⁵⁸² Migrant workers, especially those who work as laborers, are more vulnerable to unfair labor practices due a lack of access to regulatory authorities.

A recent amendment to the Employment Act and regulations made under the Employment Act established certain standards for providing accommodation quarters for migrant workers such as proper shelter, ventilation, lighting, clean sleeping arrangements, and access to bathrooms.⁵⁸³

However, the accommodation quarters provided to migrant workers often fall short of the legally established standards. Labor quarters in Male' are often congested, and during the worst waves of Covid-19, the severe congestion in accommodation quarters caused extreme difficulties in social distancing. Consequently, already vulnerable workers were at risk of exposure to the virus.⁵⁸⁴ In another incident, Afcons⁵⁸⁵ employees who worked on the *Thilamale' Bridge Project* protested their poor living conditions due to the subsequent damage caused when a fire broke out in their labor quarters.⁵⁸⁶ An employee in the Human Resource Department of another construction company also shared the substandard living conditions of their main labor quarters citing that "no human should live there." She reported that the living quarters were

⁵⁷⁷ 'Iron Sheet Falls on Worker's Feet, Severing Toes' (*Worksafemaldives*, 29 September 2022) <<https://worksafemaldives.com/iron-sheet-falls-on-workers-feet-severing-toes/>> accessed 23 April 2023.

⁵⁷⁸ 'Worker Killed in Construction Accident' (*Worksafemaldives*, 29 September 2022) <<https://worksafemaldives.com/worker-killed-in-construction-accident/>> accessed 23 April 2023.

⁵⁷⁹ Interview with Participant 02.

⁵⁸⁰ Public Interest Law Centre (n 39).

⁵⁸¹ Massakathuge maahauluge salaamathaa siyyhee rakkatheri kamuge bill; The President's Office, 'The President Ratifies the Occupational Safety and Health Act' (2 January 2024) <<https://presidency.gov.mv/Press/Article/29534>> accessed 25 April 2024.

⁵⁸² 'Expatriate Workers with No Rights | Maldives Financial Review' (n 26).

⁵⁸³ Regulation on Employees Accommodation Standards, Regulation, R-15/2021.

⁵⁸⁴ 'Maldives: Migrants Arrested for Protesting Abuses | Human Rights Watch' (24 July 2020) <<https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/07/24/maldives-migrants-arrested-protesting-abuses>> accessed 23 April 2023.

⁵⁸⁵ AFCONS Infrastructure is an Indian Construction company based in the Maldives, which is working on the Thilamale' Bridge project in the Maldives.

⁵⁸⁶ Ahmed Aidhu, 'މުވަޒަފުނު ގުލްހީ ފަލްހުގައި ހާމަ ނުޖެހުނު ހިންގަންނަ ބިރު' (Bridge Ge Massakaiyy Kuraa Afcons Ge Muvazzafun Gulhee Falhugai Hama Nujehun Hinganee)' <<https://adhadhu.com/article/32326>> accessed 23 April 2023.

congested, and the workers were forced to sleep on floor mats due to the sheer number of workers, although employers are required to provide beds for workers under the accommodation regulation. She also shared the unhygienic state of the living quarters where the place was infested with rats, and it had unclean bathrooms. It also did not have separate rooms for cooking.⁵⁸⁷

It is worth noting that the accommodation provided for staff working in the tourism industry, particularly in tourist resorts, is of a good standard. Most resorts offer air-conditioned rooms, private bathrooms, and other necessary amenities. In fact, many resorts began providing high-quality staff accommodations even before the current legal framework for staff housing was enacted. Currently, over 170 tourist resorts in the Maldives provide fairly a good quality accommodation and meals for all employees. These provisions are essential, as each resort is situated on a separate, uninhabited island, isolated from the local population.

However, it is important to clarify that workers in the resort construction industry are not provided with such facilities, as they are typically employed and managed by construction companies rather than resort management.

Recommendations

To enhance labor rights protection and improve working conditions, several key measures must be taken. First, regulatory bodies and other relevant parties should raise awareness about the constitutional and legal rights of workers to ensure employees understand their entitlements. Additionally, organizations such as the Labor Relations Authority, the Ministry of Economic Development, and the Ministry of Construction must more closely monitor the working conditions in the private sector, especially labor sectors under a clear legal mandate. Enacting specific mandates for regulatory bodies to oversee labor conditions will ensure consistent and effective oversight.

Increasing the budget for regulatory bodies is also crucial to enabling them to address labor rights infringements promptly and efficiently. Furthermore, these bodies must practice impartiality and avoid discrimination, especially when migrant workers seek their assistance. Such measures will foster trust and ensure equitable enforcement of labor rights.

Private sector employers must also take responsibility by establishing proper systems and procedures for employees to report grievances related to wages, discrimination, working hours, working conditions, and labor quarters. In addition, private companies should establish independent departments dedicated to human resource management to ensure proper handling of labor-related matters.

Employers must implement standardized working hours, allocate appropriate pay for overtime, and compensate employees for work performed on public holidays. It is also essential for employers to ensure that working conditions align with the standards set by the Employment Act and related regulations. Finally, employers should provide training for foreign workers (laborers) on maintaining labor quarters to promote cleanliness and hygiene, fostering a safe and comfortable living environment for all employees.

Conclusion

Many private sector employees are not entirely familiar with their labor rights. Consequently, employers exploit their workers due to the lack of this knowledge and often follow the Employment Act to the extent of their convenience. They make employment guidelines contrary to the Employment Act, especially in terms of pay, working hours and overtime. Although the Employment Tribunal has done a better job in securing the rights of private sector employees in recent years, regulatory authorities such as the Labor Relations Authority, the Economic Ministry, and the Ministry of Construction often fall short in their duty of monitoring labor conditions. They do not take the necessary action when knowledge of employee abuse surface or when such complaints are made. Subsequently, many employers are not penalized for such abuses. Migrant workers are especially dismissed when they seek the assistance of regulatory authorities. They are considered a threat while they attempt to acquire the rights they are constitutionally and legally entitled to. Thus, private sector employees are still unable to fully enjoy their labor rights; and migrant workers are particularly exploited with regards to pay and accommodation, especially those working in the labor sector.

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Dhivehi Section

تُرَوِّسَ بِرَقَبَتِهِ بِمَوْجِدَةٍ مَوْجِدَةٍ، أَوْ تَمْرُجَتْ بِجَسَدِهِ
بِمَوْجِدَةٍ مَوْجِدَةٍ بِرَقَبَتِهِ حَسْبَ عَدْلٍ.

أَمَّا بِنِسْبَةِ وَجَدَةِ فَوَقَّحَ فَوَقَّحًا، أَمَّا بِنِسْبَةِ
مَوْجِدَةٍ مَوْجِدَةٍ فَوَسَّ، وَجَدَةٌ أَوْ مَوْجِدَةٌ أَوْ
وَجْدَةٌ مَوْجِدَةٌ.⁶⁰⁸

(أَرْبَعَةٌ لَيْسَ بَيْنَهُمْ لِعَانٌ، لَيْسَ بَيْنَ الْحُرِّ وَالْأَمَةِ لِعَانٌ، وَلَيْسَ
بَيْنَ الْحُرَّةِ وَالْعَلْبِدِ لِعَانٌ، وَلَيْسَ بَيْنَ الْمُسْلِمِ وَالْيَهُودِيَّةِ لِعَانٌ،
وَلَيْسَ بَيْنَ الْمُسْلِمِ وَالنَّصْرَانِيَّةِ لِعَانٌ) بِمَوْجِدَةٍ مَوْجِدَةٍ.

أَمَّا بِنِسْبَةِ وَجَدَةٍ فَوَقَّحَ فَوَقَّحًا، أَمَّا بِنِسْبَةِ
مَوْجِدَةٍ مَوْجِدَةٍ فَوَسَّ، وَجَدَةٌ أَوْ مَوْجِدَةٌ أَوْ
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فَوَسًّا، وَجَدَةٌ أَوْ مَوْجِدَةٌ أَوْ وَجْدَةٌ
مَوْجِدَةٌ مَوْجِدَةٌ، وَجَدَةٌ أَوْ مَوْجِدَةٌ
مَوْجِدَةٌ مَوْجِدَةٌ، وَجَدَةٌ أَوْ مَوْجِدَةٌ
مَوْجِدَةٌ مَوْجِدَةٌ، وَجَدَةٌ أَوْ مَوْجِدَةٌ
مَوْجِدَةٌ مَوْجِدَةٌ." ⁶⁰⁹

أَمَّا بِنِسْبَةِ مَوْجِدَةٍ مَوْجِدَةٍ فَوَسَّ، وَجَدَةٌ
أَوْ مَوْجِدَةٌ أَوْ وَجْدَةٌ مَوْجِدَةٌ، وَجَدَةٌ
أَوْ مَوْجِدَةٌ أَوْ وَجْدَةٌ مَوْجِدَةٌ، وَجَدَةٌ
أَوْ مَوْجِدَةٌ أَوْ وَجْدَةٌ مَوْجِدَةٌ.

وَ تَمْرُجَتْ بِرَقَبَتِهِ بِرَقَبَتِهِ حَسْبَ عَدْلٍ.

أَمَّا بِنِسْبَةِ مَوْجِدَةٍ مَوْجِدَةٍ فَوَسَّ، وَجَدَةٌ
أَوْ مَوْجِدَةٌ أَوْ وَجْدَةٌ مَوْجِدَةٌ، وَجَدَةٌ
أَوْ مَوْجِدَةٌ أَوْ وَجْدَةٌ مَوْجِدَةٌ.⁶⁰⁹

(أَرْبَعٌ مِنَ النِّسَاءِ لَا مُلَاعِنَةَ بَيْنَهُنَّ النَّصْرَانِيَّةِ تَحْتَ الْمُسْلِمِ،
وَالْيَهُودِيَّةِ تَحْتَ الْمُسْلِمِ، وَالْحُرَّةُ تَحْتَ الْمَمْلُوكِ، وَالْمَمْلُوكَةُ تَحْتَ
الْحُرِّ) بِمَوْجِدَةٍ مَوْجِدَةٍ.

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فَوَسًّا، وَجَدَةٌ أَوْ مَوْجِدَةٌ أَوْ وَجْدَةٌ
مَوْجِدَةٌ مَوْجِدَةٌ، وَجَدَةٌ أَوْ مَوْجِدَةٌ
مَوْجِدَةٌ مَوْجِدَةٌ، وَجَدَةٌ أَوْ مَوْجِدَةٌ
مَوْجِدَةٌ مَوْجِدَةٌ، وَجَدَةٌ أَوْ مَوْجِدَةٌ
مَوْجِدَةٌ مَوْجِدَةٌ." ⁶¹⁰

أَمَّا بِنِسْبَةِ مَوْجِدَةٍ مَوْجِدَةٍ فَوَسَّ، وَجَدَةٌ
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وَ تَمْرُجَتْ بِرَقَبَتِهِ بِرَقَبَتِهِ حَسْبَ عَدْلٍ
بِمَوْجِدَةٍ مَوْجِدَةٍ بِرَقَبَتِهِ حَسْبَ عَدْلٍ،
بِمَوْجِدَةٍ مَوْجِدَةٍ بِرَقَبَتِهِ حَسْبَ عَدْلٍ،
بِمَوْجِدَةٍ مَوْجِدَةٍ بِرَقَبَتِهِ حَسْبَ عَدْلٍ
بِمَوْجِدَةٍ مَوْجِدَةٍ بِرَقَبَتِهِ حَسْبَ عَدْلٍ.

⁶¹⁰ وَجَدَةٌ أَوْ مَوْجِدَةٌ أَوْ وَجْدَةٌ مَوْجِدَةٌ، وَجَدَةٌ
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أَوْ مَوْجِدَةٌ أَوْ وَجْدَةٌ مَوْجِدَةٌ. (قَوْلُهُ رَسُوْلُهُ سُبْحَانَكَ)

⁶⁰⁸ أَمَّا بِنِسْبَةِ مَوْجِدَةٍ مَوْجِدَةٍ (س 6).

⁶⁰⁹ وَجَدَةٌ أَوْ مَوْجِدَةٌ أَوْ وَجْدَةٌ مَوْجِدَةٌ.

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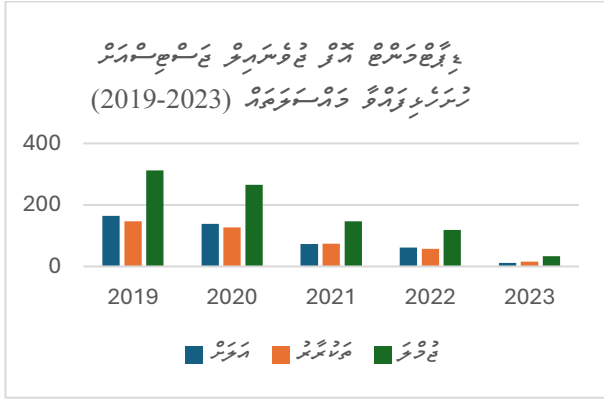
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1. **Introduction**
 The purpose of this study is to analyze the legal aspects of the...
 In the first part, we will discuss the...
 The second part will focus on...
 Finally, we will conclude with...

2. **Legal Framework**
 The legal framework consists of...
 According to...
 The...

3. Analysis of the Case

In this section, we analyze the...
 The...
 The...
 The...

1. **Introduction**
 The purpose of this study is to analyze the legal aspects of the...
 In the context of the...
 The research methodology employed...
 The findings of the study indicate...
 The study concludes that...

2. Literature Review

This section reviews existing research on...
 The authors of this study...
 The study identifies...

3. Methodology

The research methodology...
 The data collection...
 The analysis...

نَدْوَةُ الْمَدِينَةِ

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نَدْوَةُ الْمَدِينَةِ

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ
أَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ
وَرَسُولُهُ
أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ
وَرَسُولُهُ
أَعْلَمُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ
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وَرَسُولُهُ

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَسْئَلُكَ بِرَبِّىْ
 سُبْحٰنَكَ اَسْئَلُكَ بِرَبِّىْ
 اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَسْئَلُكَ بِرَبِّىْ
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 اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَسْئَلُكَ بِرَبِّىْ

پروگرامی و تقویم:

۱. اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَسْئَلُكَ بِرَبِّىْ
 سُبْحٰنَكَ اَسْئَلُكَ بِرَبِّىْ
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۲. اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَسْئَلُكَ بِرَبِّىْ
 سُبْحٰنَكَ اَسْئَلُكَ بِرَبِّىْ
 اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَسْئَلُكَ بِرَبِّىْ
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۳. اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَسْئَلُكَ بِرَبِّىْ
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 اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَسْئَلُكَ بِرَبِّىْ
 اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَسْئَلُكَ بِرَبِّىْ

۴. اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَسْئَلُكَ بِرَبِّىْ
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 اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّىْ اَسْئَلُكَ بِرَبِّىْ

