**International Law : Definition and Types**

**I\_Definition of International Law :** Basically defined, international law is simply

**International Law:**  the set of rules that countries follow in dealing with each other.

**II\_ Types of International Law :** There are three distinct legal processes that can be indentified in International Law that include

**1\_Public International Law**

**Public international law**: deals mostly with the rights and responsibilities that countries have toward each other.

In international law, countries are usually referred to as "states." Public international law also applies to international organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Public international law sets the rules for issues that concern all humankind: the environment, the oceans, human rights, international business, etc. Various international bodies enforce these rules. For example, the International Criminal Court investigates and hears cases of people accused of war crimes or crimes against humanity. This court applies "international criminal law."

The rules of international law are found in treaties, conventions, declarations, agreements, customs and other sources. For example, **the Kyoto Protocol** is an international agreement on climate change. In this protocol, many countries have agreed to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions in order to protect the environment.

Another example is the Convention on **the Rights of the Child**. Countries that have signed this convention must respect the rights it gives to children and make sure these rights are made known and protected.

This brings us to a very important principal in international law: **the sovereignty** of states. This means that a country is free to accept or refuse to sign an international treaty

or agreement. Other countries can put political or economic pressure on a country to sign the treaty, but they can’t force it to sign the treaty.

2\_ **Private International Law :**

**Private international law:**  deals with relationships between citizens of different countries.

For example, an American man and a French woman were married in France and now live in Quebec. If they want to divorce, the rules of private international law will determine whether they have to go to a US, French or Quebec court to get their divorce.

Private international law also applies to business. Globalization and the Internet mean that companies are doing more business in other countries. For example, if you run into a problem when buying something online from an American company and you want to sue, the rules of private international law will apply.

**3\_ Supranational Law** : Supranational law differs from international law. In the case of supranational law a set of Member States (MSs) have agreed to transfer parts of their sovereignty to a supranational organization. In practice, supranational law refers to the law of the European Union. Supranational law is not merely law between MSs (as in international law) but also law between the bodies of the EU and the citizens of the MS, who are at the same time EU citizens.

Some of the legal instruments of the EU have ‘direct effect’ for EU citizens, and due to the supranational nature of the EU jurisdiction, this ‘direct effect’ does not depend on whether a MS takes a monist or a dualist approach to international law.

« Don’t compare youself with anyone in this world …if you do so, you are insulting yourself »

Bill gates