Human Rights Research

March 4th, 2014
Human Rights Internship Program

Silke Sahl, International, Foreign and Comparative Law Librarian
Columbia Law School Library
Frequently Asked Questions

1. How can I find books on human rights?
2. How can I find articles on human rights?
3. How can I find treaties on human rights?
4. How can I find UN documents?
5. How can I find out about human rights in a country?
6. Where can I find the laws of another country?
Getting started at the Columbia Law School Library website

- Library website at
  http://www.law.columbia.edu/library
- Provides access points for
  - The catalog, Pegasus
  - Online Resources
  - Research Guides
- Human Rights Research Guide at
1. How can I find books on human rights?


- Search titles in these catalogs:
  - **Pegasus** (law school) at [http://pegasus.law.columbia.edu/](http://pegasus.law.columbia.edu/)
    - Title search, e.g. Encyclopedia of Public International Law
    - Keyword search
    - Subject search
    - Hicks/Schiller search, e.g. Af Zim
  - **WorldCat** (libraries beyond Columbia; books available through InterLibraryLoan at the reference desk) at [http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/eresources/databases/2047077.html](http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/eresources/databases/2047077.html)
2. How can I find articles on human rights?

- Decipher abbreviations
  - Cardiff Index to Legal Abbreviations at [http://www.legalabbrevs.cardiff.ac.uk/](http://www.legalabbrevs.cardiff.ac.uk/)

- Where can I find the journal text?
  - Pegasus and CLIO
    - Search for journal titles, but not article titles
    - Details on print and online access
  - Search full-text article databases
    - Westlaw, Lexis and HeinOnline
    - All available through our Online Resources page at [http://web.law.columbia.edu/library/online-resources](http://web.law.columbia.edu/library/online-resources)
Article indexes

- Go beyond full-text searching—index searching provides:
  - More journals
  - Longer coverage period
  - Targeted research
- *Index to Legal Periodicals & Books (Wilson)*
  - Available through Pegasus at [http://pegasus.law.columbia.edu/record=b603421~S9](http://pegasus.law.columbia.edu/record=b603421~S9)
- Legal Resource Index
  - Available in Westlaw and Lexis (indexes, not the full-text databases)
More indexes

- Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals at http://pegasus.law.columbia.edu/record=b768414~S9
  - For example, PAIS, for public affairs articles http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/eresources/databases/2135173.html
- Also, try searching www.ssrn.com for very new articles and articles in progress.
3. How can I find treaties on human rights?

- Many treaties can be found for free on the web with google or other search engines
- Look for official sources, in paper (see library research guides), or PDFs from official sources, sometimes available electronically
- Don’t forget to check on status
Finding the official text, U.S. treaties

- Bluebook (19th ed), 21.4.5 Treaty Sources (p. 189),
  - “For agreements between the United States and another party, cite one of the following sources, in the following order of preference: U.S.T. (or Stat.); T.I.A.S. (or T.S., or E.A.S.); U.N.T.S.; Senate Treaty Documents or Senate Executive Documents; the Department of State Dispatch; Department of State Press Releases. If the agreement has not appeared in one of these official sources, cite an unofficial source (rule 21.4.5(c))”
Treaties, continued

- **Electronic Access**
  - Free resources like EISEL, an electronic database of international treaties and conventions at [http://www.eisil.org](http://www.eisil.org)
  - Commercial databases: Hein Online, TIARA, Westlaw and Lexis all have good treaty databases and are available through our Online Resources page ([http://web.law.columbia.edu/library/online-resources](http://web.law.columbia.edu/library/online-resources)) or through Pegasus ([http://pegasus.law.columbia.edu/](http://pegasus.law.columbia.edu/))
  - NONE are comprehensive
  - Sometimes the results aren’t official texts/look for PDFs of official texts

- **Status**
  - *US Treaties in Force* from the U.S. State Department at [http://www.state.gov/s/l/treaty/tif/index.htm](http://www.state.gov/s/l/treaty/tif/index.htm)
UN Treaties

- **United Nations**
  - Text: *United Nations Treaty Series*
  - Status: *The Status of Multilateral Treaties Deposited with the Secretary General*
  - Example, C.E.R.D, 660 UNTS 195
Other treaties

- Not all treaties are available electronically, not all treaties have official texts available.
- A great unofficial source for treaties, *International Legal Materials* is a periodical that reprints selected cases, statutes and treaties.
  - It is available in paper and in Westlaw, Lexis and HeinOnline.
  - A preferred unofficial source of the bluebook.
- See our *Guide to Treaty Research* (http://library.law.columbia.edu/guides/Guide_to_Treaty_Research) for many other treaties and resources not covered by these U.S. and U.N. sources, such as bilateral treaties, regional treaties, out-of-date treaties, pending treaties, foreign resources, subject-specific resources and more...
4. How do I find United Nations documents?

- Access UN via Pegasus at http://pegasus.law.columbia.edu/record=b553481~S9
- See the website of the High Commissioner for Human Rights at http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Pages/WelcomePage.aspx
UN Research Guides

- The UN’s *UN Documentation, Research Guides, Human Rights* at http://research.un.org/en/docs/humanrights
- See our library’s UN research guide for more information at http://library.law.columbia.edu/guides/United_Nations
5. How can I find out about human rights in a country?

- Amnesty International
  - http://www.amnesty.org/
- Human Rights Watch
  - http://www.hrw.org/
- U.S. State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices
  - http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/
6. Where can I find the laws of another country?


Megasites, portals and research guides

- **By Country**

- **By Subject**
  - For example, NATLEX at [http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex_browse.home](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex_browse.home)

In conclusion…

- Columbia Law School Library Research Guides

- Other research guides
  - If there is a title that we don’t own that you recommend for our collection, please let us know. We’d be happy to consider it for acquisition.

- Go to the reference desk for help!
  - See the library website for hours and more information
  - [http://www.law.columbia.edu/library/services#3995](http://www.law.columbia.edu/library/services#3995)