

Daniel Bednár. *Postmoderné výzvy medzinárodného práva ozbrojených konfliktov (Postmodern Challenges of the International Law of Armed Conflicts)*. Prague: Wolters Kluwer ČR, 2025. 108 p.

The monograph *Postmodern Challenges of the International Law of Armed Conflicts* represents a significant contribution to the contemporary debate on the transformation of international humanitarian law (IHL) under conditions of a dynamically evolving security environment. In this work, the author focuses on the analysis of legal challenges that armed conflicts assume in the so-called postmodern context, characterized by the fragmentation of actors, technological advancement, and the expansion of new operational domains.

The very choice of the topic confirms a high degree of topicality and expert engagement with the subject matter. Armed conflicts of the twenty-first century are increasingly departing from the classical model of inter-state warfare upon which IHL was historically constructed. The author correctly identifies that contemporary conflicts are marked by their hybrid nature, the intensive involvement of non-state actors, the use of private military and security companies, as well as the growing importance of cyberspace and outer space as new operational domains. These factors fundamentally challenge the traditional legal categories on which the regulation of the conduct of armed conflicts is based.

The structure of the monograph is logical and systematic. Following the introductory part, in which the author delineates the methodological framework and defines the basic concepts, the work proceeds with analytical chapters aimed at identifying and elaborating the key challenges of IHL in the postmodern environment. Particular attention is devoted to the redefinition of the concept of armed conflict, the issue of direct participation in hostilities, and the legal status of actors who do not fit neatly into the traditional dichotomy between civilians and combatants.

A major strength of the publication lies in the author's ability to connect the classical dogmatic foundations of international law with current security and technological developments. In the section addressing the privatization of armed conflicts, the author convincingly points out the limitations of the existing legal framework and analyses the insufficient regulation of private military and security companies. He rightly emphasizes that their activities create a legal vacuum with regard to accountability for violations of IHL and highlights the need to strengthen international control mechanisms, whether through soft law instruments or binding treaty regulation.

The chapter devoted to autonomous weapon systems and artificial intelligence is particularly valuable. Here, the author does not remain at the level of descriptive analysis but enters into a normative debate on the applicability of the fundamental principles of IHL, notably the principles of distinction, proportionality, and military necessity. He draws attention to the risk of "delegating" decisions on the use of lethal force to algorithms and raises the question of whether individual legal responsibility can be preserved in an environment lacking direct human control. These considerations possess not only academic relevance but also a strong practical dimension.

The analysis of outer space as a new operational domain may likewise be regarded as especially noteworthy. The author persuasively argues that existing treaty regimes of space law are not adequately prepared for the reality of potential armed conflicts in outer space.

From a methodological perspective, the monograph constitutes a high-quality legal-dogmatic study drawing on a broad range of primary and secondary sources. The author makes effective use of relevant case law of international judicial bodies, documents of the United Nations and the ICRC, as well as current foreign doctrine. The comparative insights and the linkage of theoretical conclusions with contemporary armed conflicts, including the conflict in Ukraine, are also to be positively assessed.

Overall, it may be concluded that Daniel Bednár's monograph represents a coherent, methodologically balanced, and substantively stimulating work that makes a significant contribution to the development of Slovak and Central European doctrine in the field of international humanitarian law. The publication is intended not only for the academic community but also for practitioners, particularly in the areas of security policy, armed forces, and international organizations. It is a work with the potential to become a reference point for further research on the postmodern aspects of armed conflicts.

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