

AJIL

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The Survival of the Secret Treaty: Publicity, Secrecy, and Legality in the International Order

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This article offers the first detailed history of the norm of treaty publication as it has evolved over the last century. Drawing on both public debates and archives of foreign ministries, it traces how, and why, secret treaties have persisted, even in liberal democracies. It challenges assumptions of ever-greater transparency over time, and complicates the associations made—by interwar reformers and international lawyers today—between the norm of treaty publication and ideals of legality in the international order.

What Works in Human Rights Institutions?

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Since 1993, the United Nations has promoted national human rights institutions (NHRIs); these have spread to almost 120 countries. We assess what makes NHRIs effective, using quantitative and qualitative methods. We find that formal institutional safeguards contribute greatly to NHRI efficacy even in authoritarian and transition regimes. Complaint-handling mandates are particularly useful because they help NHRIs build broad bases of support. Our findings show how international organizations can wield great influence with soft tools such as recommendations and peer-review mechanisms.

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