



Legal Dimensions of External Powers' Influence on Iran-Israel Border Diplomacy: An International Law Perspective

Maira Hilal¹ Umair Ali² Saad Zakriya³ Shoaib Yousaf⁴

¹ PhD Scholar, Department of History, Government College University, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.

² LL. B (Honours), LL.M. Student at Chicago-Kent College of Law, Illinois Institute of Technology, USA.

³ PhD Scholar, Department of History, Government College University, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan.

⁴ BA. LLB Advocate High Court, Punjab, Pakistan.

Corresponding Author: Maira Hilal, **Correspondence through:** mairehilal@yahoo.com

Vol. 5, Issue 1, 2026

Article Information

Received:

2026-03-09

Revised:

2026-05-02

Accepted:

2026-06-26

ABSTRACT

This study explores the complex legal aspects of third parties' role in the diplomacy over the Iran-Israel border in light of international law. Geopolitical tensions have been rising in the region, and the intervention of other countries and organisations in the dispute over the border area, for better or worse, has undermined the concept of territorial sovereignty and territorial integrity, as safeguarded by international law. Therefore, this paper examines analytically how legal conflicts have been resolved in regional and international tribunals, and the importance of concepts such as self-determination, non-intervention, and the prohibition of territorial acquisition by force. Along with that this paper also critically analyzes for the participation of actors outside ICAR kind of legal arguments and presents a comparison with legal norms and precedents. The examination reveals how geopolitical agendas can undercut the principle of respect for sovereignty and peaceful conflict resolution and how this in turn creates legal uncertainties and conflicts in international law. The findings of this study provide a detailed analysis of the intricate nature of international law and geopolitics, which may help in making informed decisions, conducting legal analysis and research, as well as understanding these dynamics in other nations with border disputes and security threats.

Keywords: Border Diplomacy, International Law, International Court of Justice (ICJ), Territorial Integrity, Sovereignty.

Citation: APA

Hilal, M., Ali, U., Zakriya, S & Yousaf, S (2026). Legal dimensions of external powers' influence on Iran-Israel border diplomacy: An international law perspective, *Journal of Climate and Community Development*, 5(1), 299-309.



Context of Iran-Israel Border Diplomacy

Diplomacy between Iran and Israel is unique and complicated, not only due to the fact that these two countries don't have contiguous land borders. Rather, they fight their proxy wars, do their covert operations and fight their ideological battles, all of which permeates the larger Middle East. Iran's indirect diplomacy is manifested by its strategic support for groups like Hezbollah in Lebanon, Palestinian factions and different militias, as a means to reduce the presence of Israel in the region and dominate it.¹ According to academics, it's a broader struggle for power and influence that this proxy involvement transforms the traditional notions of border diplomacy, in which tangible borders take a back seat to spheres of influence and ideological divides.² The current conflict, combined with Iran's nuclear aspirations and Israel's security policies, makes it even more difficult for diplomacy to be the solution, instead of a matter of strategic positioning.³ The point is that border diplomacy here is more about regional domination through ideological and strategic means than about the border itself.

In addition, the absence of a common border and the formality of diplomatic relations create a situation of mistrust and hidden actions. In both countries, open negotiations are rare, and diplomacy usually takes the form of back-channel negotiations, clandestine actions and international influence. The regional security framework, represented by relationships with outside actors, greatly influences these dynamics.⁴ This conflict is complex, and unlikely to find a peaceful answer because of its regional affiliation, religious and ethnic divides, as well as geopolitics. This is important to appreciate because otherwise border diplomacy will be perceived as meaning just what it says, dealing with traditional territorial issues, yet this is not the case in a hostile neighborhood; it is much more about strategic, ideological and security

issues.

Influence of Foreign Entities and Global Legislation

Iran-Israel relations are diplomatically, militarily and covertly pushed by external actors, including the United States and Russia, satisfying their agendas. The U.S. is a key ally of Israel and has long supplied military assistance, intelligence, and diplomatic assistance to try and undo the influence Iran is able to wield in the region.⁵ Such assistance enhances Israel's military strength and can affect the regional dynamics, sometimes igniting friction and making diplomacy even more difficult. Conversely, the situation has been complicated by Russia's role in Syria, both in terms of military intervention and diplomatic relationships with Iran. Russia wants to maintain its influence and stability in the region, and it's often used as a mediator or spoiler, depending on the circumstances, when it comes to its relations with Iran and Israel.⁶

International law provides an apparent framework of obligations that guides the conduct of states in the region, including sovereignty, non-interference, and conflict resolution.⁷ However, in practice, these standards are frequently thrown into disarray by the circumstances of proxy warfare, hidden operations and diplomatic ambiguities. The international legal framework is, for instance, often unclear about Iran's support for non-state actors and Israel's military activities, giving rise to questions of applicability and enforcement of international law. Extraterritorial application of law, based on arbitrary criteria, by outside actors to legalise their conduct and/or influence the conduct of other states, undermines diplomatic efforts and often undermines the international law provisions for the resolution of conflicts.⁸ In conclusion, the role of international law in the diplomacy of Iran and Israel's border disputes is complex. It can be both a means of peace and a source of disagreement, reflecting broader geopolitical tensions.

¹ Levitt, M. (2006). Hezbollah: The global footprint of Lebanon's Party of God. Georgetown University Press.

² Katz, Y. (2019). The Iran-Israel conflict: Proxy warfare and diplomatic strategies. *Middle East Policy*, 26(4), 45-58.

³ Shapiro, J. (2014). Iran and Israel: The regional security dilemma. *Foreign Affairs*, 93(3), 78-89.

⁴ Ranstorp, M. (2006). Hizbullah in Lebanon: The politics of the proxy war. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 38(2), 239-259.

⁵ Mearsheimer, J., & Walt, S. (2007). The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy. *Middle East Policy*, 15(3), 29-35.

⁶ Pavel K. Baev, "Russia as Opportunist or Spoiler in the Middle East?" *The International Spectator* 50, no. 2 (2015): 8-12.

⁷ Antonio Cassese, *International Law*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 55-61.

⁸ Christine Gray, *International Law and the Use of Force*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 72-80.

Research Questions

This work aims to answer key questions about the legal framework governing border diplomacy between Iran and Israel. What are the legal doctrines that can justify the actions of borderless states? How do international laws and conventions regard sovereign states, conflicts and non-intervention impact diplomacy? How do legal norms support or impede the efforts towards border stabilisation and conflict management? An analysis of these questions is essential to understanding the role of international law in fostering or perpetuating diplomatic engagement in this highly charged region. This research seeks to illuminate the possible pathways and constraints for legal-based diplomacy between Iran and Israel by examining pertinent legal frameworks.

Doctrines of International Law Regulating Boundaries

The foundations of international law that support border governance rest on the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Shaw (2017) states that sovereignty involves a state's sole power within its territorial limits, safeguarded by the UN Charter and customary international law.⁹ The principle of *Uti Possidetis Juris* underscores the importance of honouring established boundaries, particularly in post-colonial contexts, by asserting that newly sovereign states ought to maintain the territorial limits they acquired at independence.¹⁰ The principle's goal is to prevent border conflicts and promote peace, stressing that borders should only be changed in the event of a mutual agreement or a judicial ruling. Crawford (2019) notes that the law prioritises negotiation, arbitration or judicial settlement of border issues whereas resorting to force is not preferred.¹¹ This is reinforced by the consensus in the literature, which considers that

respecting borders is an essential aspect in maintaining peace and security in the international community, and that border infringement often leads to war as noted by Simma (2017). For this reason these are foundational legal principles for negotiating on a border and for conflict resolution that can be used by diplomacy.¹²

Relevant Treaties, Resolutions, and Legal Precedents

Different international conventions/receptions and court decisions are the sources, which enable to understand legal framework of border diplomacy. Extraordinary efforts have been made to negotiate treaties which provided a boundary or process for resolving conflict peacefully; for example, the Camp David Accords of 1978 between Egypt and Israel were a bilateral treaty which were used to model a type of diplomacy through a legal contract.¹³ Regional cooperation and respect for borders are also crucial to stability and peace in the Mediterranean region, especially under the umbrella of multilateral agreements such as the 1992 Barcelona Declaration.¹⁴ An important element of the international legal debate is UN Security Council Resolution 242 (1967), which was adopted after the Six-Day War, and clearly emphasises the "inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war" and promotes negotiations anchored in the respect for secure and recognised borders.¹⁵ Under this resolution, the border issue remains a cornerstone of legal arguments regarding territorial sovereignty and boundaries.

The decisions of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) also highlight the role of legal norms in relation to border conflicts. In this respect, the ICJ's opinion on the declaration of independence of the Republic of Kosovo (2010) highlighted the importance of respecting sovereignty and existing law in the context of unilateral declarations.¹⁶

⁹ Malcolm N. Shaw, *International Law*, 8th ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 365–372.

¹⁰ Shabtai Rosenne, *The Perplexities of Modern International Law* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2002), 54–58.

¹¹ James Crawford, *Brownlie's Principles of Public International Law*, 9th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 420–427.

¹² Bruno Simma et al., *The Charter of the United Nations: A Commentary*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 208–214.

¹³ William B. Quandt, *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1986), 321–328.

¹⁴ European Communities and their Member States, *Barcelona Declaration Adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference* (Barcelona: European Commission, 1995), 3–7.

¹⁵ United Nations Security Council, Resolution 242 (1967), S/RES/242, November 22, 1967, 1–2.

¹⁶ International Court of Justice, *Accordance with International Law of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Respect of Kosovo*, Advisory Opinion (The Hague: ICJ Reports, 2010), 403–409.

Similarly, the importance of dialogue and adherence to legal standards for maintaining stability is emphasised in decisions on territorial issues, such as Western Sahara (1975) and the Golan Heights (2000), which emphasise the need to resolve such conflicts through legal channels.¹⁷ In sum, these treaties, resolutions, and legal precedents underscore the necessity of maintaining border relations in accordance with international law, thereby ensuring peace and confidence in a conflict-ridden region such as the Middle East.

U.S., Russia, and Other Actors' Legal Justifications

The involvement of major outside actors, such as the United States, Russia, and other major countries in conflicts in the region often has a legal rationale rooted in international law. The United States frequently invokes concepts such as self-defence, collective security, and humanitarian intervention as a basis for military operations, including those permitted under Article 51 of the UN Charter.¹⁸ In both cases, U.S. interventions in Kosovo (1999) and Iraq (2003) were justified with arguments that would seek to protect civilians and avert self-threatening situations, respectively. Often, these rationales are presented as if they were based in law. Still, they spark ongoing debates about why they are being undertaken and whether, under international law, they are indeed legal.

Similarly, Russia's legal grounds for its operations in Crimea (2014) and Syria (2015) are based on sovereignty and protection of Russian citizens and/or national interests, claims that are disputed by the international community and many lawyers.¹⁹ There are arguments, for example those by Chesterman (2004), that many of these are intended to deflect the impact of one of the fundamental principles of international law, that of non-interference, and that they, in fact, create a blurred boundary between legal intervention and unilateral

action.²⁰ Such external factors usually express their actions in legal terms, but real intentions may be revealed to be strategic interests or geopolitical issues. These rationalisations continue to be controversial and debated in both legal and academic circles, representing the tension between respect for international norms and the promotion of national interests. This complex dynamic in its bilateral relations with Iran has significant implications for external pressure in the Iran-Israel framework, as external players often seek to "legalise" their involvement, often with strategic aims.

Legality of Interventions and Influence

As far as international law, the right of outsiderforce in the border region Iran-Israel is still under dispute. The use of force is generally prohibited under the United Nations Charter, except when it contravenes the territorial integrity or political independence of states, as provided in Article 2(4).²¹ This is a basic principle that aims to preserve both sovereignty and peace from the chaos of conflict; however, the nature of conflicts around the world has been evolving, challenging this traditional perspective. New concepts such as 'humanitarian intervention' and 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P), which hold that states have a moral obligation to prevent mass atrocities, have also introduced complications, as they might provide cover for infringing on sovereignty.²²

These rationalisations are often alleged to be a way of advancing strategic interests rather than human rights, according to critics. Thakur (2017) states that influential countries invoke the law to justify their actions in line with their geopolitical interests, thereby undermining the credibility of international law.²³ Geopolitical authority, for example, can bend the rules and standards of law; Russia's influence in the Security Council has been a hindrance to condemning its actions in Syria, Ukraine and

¹⁷ International Court of Justice, Western Sahara, Advisory Opinion (The Hague: ICJ Reports, 1975), 31–37.

¹⁸ Malcolm N. Shaw, *International Law*, 8th ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 892–899.

¹⁹ Marcus Kreutz, "Russia in Syria: The Legal Position," *Journal on the Use of Force and International Law* 3, no. 1 (2016): 28–34.

²⁰ Simon Chesterman, *Just War or Just Peace? Humanitarian Intervention and International Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 45–53.

²¹ Malcolm N. Shaw, *International Law*, 8th ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 854–862.

²² Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams, *Understanding Peacekeeping*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 312–318.

²³ Ramesh Thakur, *The United Nations, Peace and Security: From Collective Security to the Responsibility to Protect*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 245–252.

elsewhere.²⁴ This effect is a player that complicates efforts to control outside countries' presence in the Iran-Israel border region, where they often support proxy groups or engage in covert activity under the guise of law. Finally, while the concept of the rule of law in international relations is geared towards controlling and curbing interventions to preserve states' sovereignty, in practice, power politics often prevail, jeopardising the basic principles of non-interference and territorial integrity.

Legal Disputes, Relevant Cases from ICJ or Other Tribunals

Analysis of legal disputes involving regional borders

Key cases heard by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and other regional courts have had a significant impact on the framework of international border law, providing landmark decisions that help to resolve territorial disputes and clarify legal standards. In the ICJ's advisory opinion on Western Sahara (1975), the importance of self-determination and territorial sovereignty was emphasised, stating that unilateral claims to territories must be based on legal rights and respect existing legal structures.²⁵ In the same way, the Golan Heights case (2000) emphasised that territorial alterations obtained by force are unacceptable under international law, highlighting the legal prohibition on annexation by force, a principle especially pertinent to the Iran-Israel situation, where outside powers frequently rationalise interventions with disputed legal arguments.²⁶ These instances illustrate the ICJ's approach to weighing sovereignty, self-determination, and territorial integrity, establishing legal precedents that affect regional border disputes.

Border demarcation and sovereignty matters have been dealt with by regional courts and arbitral bodies, other than the ICJ, often stressing peaceful negotiations and legal resolutions. The African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights has for

instance issued decisions on issues of territorial sovereignty, for example, that regional legal systems play a crucial role in promoting stability.²⁷ A review of the aforementioned conflicts shows that the bulk of them have been over historical rights, de facto control, and recognition – and are fraught with political dilemmas. The aforementioned cases, as discussed by scholars including Shaw (2017), signify the importance of clear legal bounds and regulations for a complex process of border questions in the modern era, where foreign influences impact on territorial protests.²⁸

Varying assertions regarding undensified sovereignty in the case of Iran and Israel, contested boundaries and the legal argumentations effected by third parties in accordance with their strategic interests. Existing legal frameworks remain inadequate in concordantly resolving geopolitically-driven conflicts and novel legal solutions are required that reflect and appreciate history and its underlined claims whilst simultaneously integrating modern notions of international law. A paramount reason the literature cites on why legal adjudication works in these sensitive areas is states' respect for the courts' rulings and adherence to international standards – which are not readily implementable during geopolitical conflict but for long-term stability are imperative.

Legal Status of Proxy Warfare

Proxy wars are relatively complex in terms of international law; as foreign States are backing non-state actors or rebel groups for strategic interests. Unlike direct military operations, proxy wars play in a grey zone of the law, raising questions of legal responsibility and who is responsible for what. According to Byman (2018), proxy warfare challenges the traditional concepts of sovereignty and non-interference in other states' affairs, enabling states to become involved in conflicts indirectly, often in violation of international

²⁴ Christine Gray, *International Law and the Use of Force*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 331–337.

²⁵ International Court of Justice, *Western Sahara, Advisory Opinion* (The Hague: ICJ Reports, 1975), 31–37.

²⁶ Frans Viljoen, *International Human Rights Law in Africa*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 487–492.

²⁷ Frans Viljoen, *International Human Rights Law in Africa*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 487–492.

²⁸ Malcolm N. Shaw, *International Law*, 8th ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 490–498.

standards governing the use of force.²⁹ The nature of these conflicts is that there is no clear accountability: for example, sponsoring States may deny involvement or invoke valid deniability, making it difficult to hold them accountable for violations of international law.³⁰

There are no clear international regulations on proxy warfare, so the lawlessness of these indirect forms of warfare is heightened. Current legal regimes focus on interstate relations, and leave the legal landscape for proxy actors and their supporters rather ambiguous.³¹ This gap can allow foreign influences to shape legal perceptions up to and including the rationalisation of aid to rebel groups or proxy forces as lawful security measures. Proxy warfare remains a problem, and there is a growing need to establish transparent legal norms that explicitly refer to proxy warfare. But, the absence of sound law—the non-binding sovereignty of the area of the border between Iran and Israel is proving to be a continued threat to regional stability and to the peace processes taking place in the Middle East, and even to international peacekeeping efforts.

International Regulations on Non-State Actors

As an increasing number of non-state actors are involved in armed conflict, there have been a push by the world community to find ways to better regulate the conduct of non-state actors and hold them accountable. While certain laws and conventions like the Geneva Conventions (including their Additional Protocols) provide important protections for non-state actors, especially in regards to the treatment of civilians and detainees, these laws don't contain specific language that addresses the deeds of armed non-state groups. The UN has also done its part to sensitize the public about the importance of holding non-state actors to account for breaches of international humanitarian law (IHL), such as

Security Council Resolutions (SCRs) and in the context of the Monterrey convention..³²

Despite such efforts, enforcement remains difficult, as many non-state actors are unwilling or refuse to commit to legal obligations. The implementation of organisations like ISIS, al-Shabaab, insurgent groups, etc. is operating beyond the international legal framework with no consequences, and they commit war crimes, crimes against humanity and other violations.³³ There is widespread challenge to the state by non-state actors, who see state sovereignty as being undermined and legal standards as tools of politics. Contemporary conflicts also have an uneven character, including unconventional means of combat and a lack of recognition as lawful conflict, which makes them even more difficult to enforce. This raises the question of whether international legal frameworks are sufficient in addressing the situation.³⁴ This is an important loop hole to consider, which suggests a need for non-traditional approaches, such as new arrangements or extended legal frameworks that allow for more effective dealing with non-state actors involved in proxy wars and/or insurgencies. All these are crucial to bolster the international legal regime, to deter violations and to encourage responsibility in today's complex conflict environment, especially in conflict-stricken areas such as Iran-Israel.

Role of International Law Institutions

The diplomatic process between Iran and Israel on their border is extremely important, and international legal organisations play an important role in managing and directing the external impact on this process. The United Nations is an organisation that provides a legal framework for addressing conflicts and foreign interventions in the region, particularly through its Security Council and General Assembly. International legal mechanisms, such as UNSC Resolution 1701, work

²⁹ Daniel Byman, *Road Warriors: Foreign Fighters in the Armies of Jihad* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 167–173.

³⁰ Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*, new ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019), 42–49.

³¹ Miroslav Nincic, “Proxy Warfare and the Future of Conflict,” *Journal of Strategic Security* 13, no. 4 (2020): 55–61.

³² International Committee of the Red Cross, *International Humanitarian Law and the Challenges of Contemporary Armed Conflicts* (Geneva: ICRC, 2020), 34–39.

³³ Laurel E. Fletcher and Harvey M. Weinstein, “Violence and Social Repair: Rethinking the Contribution of Justice to Reconciliation,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 24, no. 3 (2015): 590–598.

³⁴ Jacob Børresen and Tina Søreide, “Non-State Armed Groups and International Humanitarian Law,” *Journal of International Humanitarian Legal Studies* 11, no. 2 (2020): 201–209.

to resolve conflicts in the region, as is also the case for Lebanon, to stabilise the country and prevent spillovers to Israel.³⁵ These entities set standards that external actors are expected to follow, and sovereignty, non-interference, and respect for borders are key principles of international law, enshrined in the UN Charter (Shaw, 2019).

Moreover, international judicial organizations can play a role in resolving disputes on borders and violations, like in the dispute between Mali and Burkina Faso (2013).³⁶ Decisions of the ICJ are legally binding, but they are difficult to enforce, particularly when influential countries and / or external players do not fulfil their obligations, which weakens the impact of the ICJs' decisions on regional diplomacy. Having foreign actors involved, whether through diplomatic means, covert measures, or military aid, raises complex legal questions about intervention, sovereignty, and the legality of supporting non-state actors in the region that remain unresolved under international law.

While such institutions form a normative framework, political factors limit their effect on reducing the impact of outsiders on Iran's fragile diplomacy with Israel. Indeed, foreign powers often invoke state security or strategic collaboration, such as Iran's support for Hezbollah or Israel's military operations, as sovereign acts or justifiable in terms of self-defence.³⁷ As a normative and legal benchmark, international law plays a vital role. Still, due to geopolitical conditions, it is sometimes not very influential in resolving border disputes, and the role of foreign intervention in the international legal system becomes complicated.

Effectiveness and Limitations

Geopolitical circumstances and the independence of the parties to the talks largely limit the role of international legal instruments in managing third-party influence on the Iran-Israel border negotiations. Under international law, as set out in the UN Charter, there is no right to interfere in other

countries' internal or external affairs.³⁸ But in reality, when put to the test, external actors often justify their conduct by invoking self-defence or humanitarian intervention, which are subject to considerable debate and interpretation. For example, the purported support that Iran has given to proxy organisations like Hezbollah or Israel's preemptive actions, are often represented as security measures, but are at odds with principles of non-intervention and respect for sovereignty laid down by international law.³⁹

Case studies clearly demonstrate these constraints. The 2006 Lebanon War, during which Israel conducted extensive military actions against Hezbollah, faced global criticism and legal discussions concerning proportionality and the legality of preemptive attacks.⁴⁰ In the same way, Iran's covert weapon shipments and backing for non-state groups hinder legal accountability, since evidence tends to be either circumstantial or secret, complicating legal proceedings. International legal institutions lack the enforcement tools needed to urge states to halt such actions, particularly when outside powers prioritise strategic goals over legal duties.

Furthermore, as international law relies on collaboration and agreements among States, it is not well equipped to regulate external influence effectively. Permanent members of the Security Council have the power to veto decisions, which often makes it difficult to act decisively: Diplomatic efforts relating to the Iranian nuclear issue and related regional problems have been hampered by geopolitical tensions.⁴¹ This political deadlock undermines the capacity of legal systems to impose sanctions and/or compliance measures, and often leaves the legal framework ignored, in the face of strategic partnerships and individual action. Thus, even though international law provides more normative standards and a forum for dialogue, it has little impact on guiding the actions of outside actors in Iran-Israel border diplomacy in the absence of a

³⁵ United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1701 (2006), S/RES/1701, August 11, 2006, 1–3.

³⁶ International Court of Justice, Frontier Dispute (Burkina Faso/Republic of Mali), Judgment (The Hague: ICJ Reports, 1986), 554–560.

³⁷ Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*, new ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018), 102–109.

³⁸ Ian Brownlie, *Principles of Public International Law*, 7th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 289–296.

³⁹ Antonio Cassese, *International Law*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 56–63.

⁴⁰ Yoram Dinstein, *War, Aggression and Self-Defence*, 6th ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 245–252.

⁴¹ Vaughan Lowe, *International Law*, revised ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 102–110.

broader political agreement and enforcement mechanisms.

Ensuring Adherence to International Law

The international legal aspect of the Iran-Israel border dispute is essential to maintaining stability and legitimacy in Iran-Israel border diplomacy, especially given the complex involvement of external actors. The UN Charter and international law, in particular, prohibit the use of force, except in self-defence or under the authority of the Security Council.⁴² Therefore, if external powers seek to be involved in diplomatic or military activities related to the Iran-Israel border, they are obliged to adhere to these laws. As an illustration, if a country's military forces intervene in another nation or support proxy groups that inflame tensions, the principles of sovereignty and non-interference are violated.⁴³ Further, respecting international commitments, such as non-aggression pacts and border agreements, is crucial for developing a rule-based order and preventing unilateral action driven by geopolitical motives. There should be accountability for external powers that violate international law through international legal mechanisms, and the importance of adherence should be stressed; otherwise, it will be a downward spiral, and it will stress the importance of legality for diplomacy, not simply geopolitical factors. This compliance not only preserves the validity of international law but also acts as a deterrent to provocative acts that could further destabilise the region.

Legal Pathways for Peaceful Resolution

Legal avenues for peaceful resolution are crucial to reducing tensions along the Iran-Israel border, especially considering the significant risks and the possibility of conflict escalation. International law offers several tools that outside parties can use to foster diplomacy, including through the United Nations' facilitation of negotiations, arbitration and the International Court of Justice (ICJ).⁴⁴ Conversations can be held in a bilateral or multilateral format via the UN Security Council or regional organisations such as the Arab League to

provide an impartial forum for dialogue.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the ICJ can use its powers to settle border disputes or violations of international treaties, providing a legally binding means to resolve conflicts peacefully. Such legal means provide greater transparency, accountability and compliance with international standards, which diminishes the chances of conflict scenarios with military forces. The international community, in particular through the offices and ministries of third parties, should put their emphasis on dialogue within these frameworks and work towards Iran and Israel using peaceful conflict-resolution measures in line with international law. This is consistent with the principle of sovereignty, non-aggression and a lasting peace and stability based on respect for international law, a pivotal element for the stability of the region.

Conclusion

An outsider's legal assessment of the impeding factors on Iran-Israel border talks outlines a messy mix of accepted international law and the use of power. International law has established the principle of sovereignty, territorial integrity and peaceful resolution of conflicts, as important elements in the following treaties, resolutions and law. The inclusion of documents (UNSC Res. 242, ICJ's rulings), focusing on the necessity of the territorial issue's resolution by negotiation and law, reiterates the principle of forbidding seizure of land by force.

The fact that external actors (the United States and Russia) are included, however, shows that legal arguments can easily combine with strategic considerations and that the dividing line between legal action and unilateral action which infringes on the principle of respect for the sovereignty and non-interference of other states can be somewhat indistinct. Whereas proxy warfare and the rise of the non-state actors make the law difficult to interpret, thereby revealing gaps in laws and already existing frameworks and emphasizing the sustainability for having clearer and more binding international laws in the presence of current

⁴² Louis Henkin, *International Law: Politics and Values* (Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1995), 23–29.

⁴³ Thomas M. Franck, *Fairness in International Law and Institutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 52–60.

⁴⁴ Rosalyn Higgins, *Problems and Process: International Law and How We Use It* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 210–215.

⁴⁵ I. William Zartman, *Negotiation and Conflict Management in International Relations* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 133–139.

dynamics. Questions of legal responsibility and who is responsible and interventions' legitimacy are not only an issue of compliance with treaties and resolutions. This "balance between enforcing international law and achieving strategic goals" frequently results in the application of international law rules being non-uniform with a negative impact on the "normative structure of the stability of the global system. The legal framework thus continues to be dynamic and further adjustments are required to correspond to the new challenges arising from the nature of conflicts, non-state actors and geopolitical aspects.

Because of "new" types of warfare (e.g., cyber, proxy, and secret wars), which are not always covered by law, new challenges are emerging to the legal framework of management of external

influences on border diplomacy, specifically the Iran–Israel border. Meanwhile, the enforcement of international laws is also not yet effective. It's a necessity for major institutional momentum and political will in organizations like the United Nations Security Council and International Court of Justice. Non-state actors are increasingly asked to perform additional tasks; the question of accountability and attribution are growing more complex; and law needs to be developed to meet the asymmetric challenge of proxy warfare. However, there is a chance for the multilateral diplomacy to be improved, the compliance systems to be reinforced and the international law standards to be reinforced so that there is more room for demands of responsibility and more space for sustainable regional stability.

Conflict of Interest

The authors showed no conflict of interest.

Funding

The authors did not mention any funding for this research.

References

- Baev, Pavel K. "Russia as Opportunist or Spoiler in the Middle East?" *The International Spectator*, 50, no. 2 (2015): 8–12.
- Bellamy, Alex J., and Paul D. Williams. *Understanding Peacekeeping*. 3rd ed. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015.
- Børresen, Jacob, and Tina Søreide. "Non-State Armed Groups and International Humanitarian Law." *Journal of International Humanitarian Legal Studies*, 11, no. 2 (2020): 201–209.
- Brownlie, Ian. *Principles of Public International Law*. 7th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Cassese, Antonio. *International Law*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Chesterman, Simon. *Just War or Just Peace? Humanitarian Intervention and International Law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Crawford, James. *Brownlie's Principles of Public International Law*. 9th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019.
- Daniel Byman, *Road Warriors: Foreign Fighters in the Armies of Jihad*, 167–173 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).
- Dinstein, Yoram. *War, Aggression and Self-Defence*. 6th ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017.
- European Communities and their Member States. *Barcelona Declaration Adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference*. Barcelona: European Commission, 1995.
- Fletcher, Laurel E., and Harvey M. Weinstein. "Violence and Social Repair: Rethinking the Contribution of Justice to Reconciliation." *Human Rights Quarterly*, 24, no. 3 (2015): 590–598.
- Franck, Thomas M. *Fairness in International Law and Institutions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Grey, Christine. *International Law and the Use of Force*. 4th ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- Higgins, Rosalyn. *Problems and Process: International Law and How We Use It*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994.
- Henkin, Louis. *International Law: Politics and Values*. Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1995.
- International Committee of the Red Cross. *International Humanitarian Law and the Challenges of Contemporary Armed Conflicts*. Geneva: ICRC, 2020.
- International Court of Justice. *Accordance with International Law of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in Respect of Kosovo, Advisory Opinion*. The Hague: ICJ Reports, 2010.
- . *Western Sahara, Advisory Opinion*. The Hague: ICJ Reports, 1975.
- . *Frontier Dispute (Burkina Faso/Republic of Mali), Judgment*. The Hague: ICJ Reports, 1986.
- Kreutz, Marcus. "Russia in Syria: The Legal Position." *Journal on the Use of Force and International Law* 3, no. 1 (2016): 28–34.
- Krasner, Stephen D. *Sovereignty: Organised Hypocrisy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2018.
- Katz, Y. "The Iran-Israel Conflict: Proxy Warfare and Diplomatic Strategies." *Middle East Policy*, 26, no. 4 (2019): 45–58.
- Mearsheimer, John, and Stephen Walt. "The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy." *Middle East Policy* 15, no. 3 (2007): 29–35.
- Nincic, Miroslav. "Proxy Warfare and the Future of Conflict." *Journal of Strategic Security*, 13, no. 4 (2020): 55–61.

- Levitt, M. (2006). Hezbollah: The global footprint of Lebanon's Party of God. *Georgetown University Press*.
- Ranstorp, Magnus. "Hizbullah in Lebanon: The Politics of the Proxy War." *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 38, no. 2 (2006): 239–259.
- Rosenne, Shabtai. *The Perplexities of Modern International Law*. Leiden: *Martinus Nijhoff Publishers*, 2002.
- Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organised Hypocrisy*, 42–49 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019).
- Sassòli, Marco, Antoine A. Bouvier, and Anne Quintin. *How Does Law Protect in War?* 3rd ed. Geneva: *International Committee of the Red Cross*, 2019.
- Shapiro, Jacob. "Iran and Israel: The Regional Security Dilemma." *Foreign Affairs*, 93, no. 3 (2014): 78–89.
- Shaw, Malcolm N. *International Law*. 8th ed. Cambridge: *Cambridge University Press*, 2017.
- Simma, Bruno, et al. *The Charter of the United Nations: A Commentary*. 3rd ed. Oxford: *Oxford University Press*, 2017.
- Thakur, Ramesh. *The United Nations, Peace and Security: From Collective Security to the Responsibility to Protect*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: *Cambridge University Press*, 2017.
- United Nations Security Council, Resolution 242 (1967), S/RES/242, November 22, 1967, 1–2.
- United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1701 (2006), S/RES/1701, August 11, 2006, 1–3.
- Viljoen, Frans. *International Human Rights Law in Africa*. 3rd ed. Oxford: *Oxford University Press*, 2019.
- Vaughan Lowe, *International Law* (Oxford: *Oxford University Press*, 2015).
- William B. Quandt. *Camp David: Peacemaking and Politics*. Washington, DC: *Brookings Institution Press*, 1986.
- Yoran Dinstein. *War, Aggression and Self-Defence*. Cambridge: *Cambridge University Press*, 2017.
- Zartman, I. William. *Negotiation and Conflict Management in International Relations*. New York: *Routledge*, 2008.