

**Enduring question:**

***How important are international laws and organizations in a world of sovereign states?***

1. Some states critique the International Criminal Court for a variety of reasons. Do you think these critiques are valid? Should the ICC continue to exist as is, with some modifications (which modifications?), or not at all?
2. Think about controversies over the UN Human Rights Council, which includes member states that are widely considered to be flagrant violators of fundamental human rights. Do countries with bad human rights records deserve a seat at the table and an opportunity to try to define human rights in a different way? Are human rights based on Western, Christian values to an unacceptable degree?
3. How does the modern ability of states like China to “build up land features” in disputed areas like the South China Sea complicate the Law of the Seas?
4. Historical trends show a gradual increase in the overall scope and power of international institutions, organizations, and law. Recently, some have become more skeptical of these three. What do you think of the growing skepticism of international organizations? Is this a small hiccup or a growing trend?
5. Why is it that international law looks different from domestic law? In other words, what inherent aspects of the international system lead to the four main differences between domestic law and international law discussed in this chapter?
6. The UN is numerically dominated by developing nations, and coalitions of these states have seen growing influence within the body. Yet great powers still hold important and permanent positions such as within the UN Security Council. Is the UN a force for empowering developing states, or is it still simply a reflection of the interests of great powers?
7. Organizations whose purpose it is to prosecute actors or states breaking international law like the PCA struggle with controversy from states both large and small. Is there anything that could be done to strengthen these bodies while maintaining or appeasing the sovereignty concerns of states?
8. Liberal theorists argue that international institutions allow states to escape the Prisoner’s Dilemma, yet there are still some states that consistently “cheat”. What could explain the reasoning behind some states’ refusal to cooperate even within the framework of international organizations?
9. Would international institutions be strengthened if the global community were composed exclusively of democracies? What if it were composed solely of authoritarian states?
10. Consider the viewpoints of realist, liberal, and constructivist thinkers. How would each group predict the future development of international law?