

The Challenges of International Justice Amid Geopolitical Realities

Ștefănoaia Mihai

Ștefan cel Mare University, Suceava Romania

Abstract

The effectiveness and legitimacy of international justice mechanisms are increasingly tested in a world marked by shifting power dynamics, regional conflicts, and divergent political agendas. This paper explores the multifaceted challenges facing international justice in the context of evolving geopolitical realities. Institutions such as the International Criminal Court (ICC), International Court of Justice (ICJ), and ad hoc tribunals operate within a complex framework where legal norms often collide with state sovereignty, national interests, and global asymmetries of power. The lack of enforcement mechanisms, selective compliance, and political instrumentalization of justice processes undermine the impartiality and credibility of international legal bodies. Moreover, powerful states frequently resist or bypass international rulings, contributing to a growing legitimacy crisis. The research highlights recent case studies—including the Russia–Ukraine conflict, the situation in Palestine, and the limitations of accountability in Syria and Myanmar—to demonstrate how geopolitics influences access to justice and the implementation of international legal standards. At the same time, the rise of multipolarity and fragmentation within the international system generates both obstacles and opportunities for reform. The paper argues that for international justice to remain relevant and effective, it must adapt to the realities of a contested global order, emphasizing inclusive participation, institutional resilience, and a renewed commitment to universality and impartiality. Ultimately, the study calls for a pragmatic rethinking of the relationship between law and power, as well as for stronger normative coherence in the face of global crises and political pressures.

Keywords: accountability mechanisms geopolitical dynamics, international justice, legal legitimacy, state sovereignty