contentious cases before the full court as well as the requests for an advisory opinion. The status of each of the pending cases and advisory opinions requested is described. Moreover, the second annual report of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 is published. Also the activities of the Iran–United States Claims Tribunal (the volume contains a selection of awards and decisions of particular relevance to public international law rendered from 1 July 1994 to 30 June 1995), the Permanent Court of Arbitration and the Hague Conference on Private International Law are described. This documentation of the activities of the international law institutions is a most interesting and extremely useful description of the ongoing work. It is of particular value for the international lawyer as it gives an overview of the activities in a number of international institutions which are of great importance for the evolution of international law.

GERHARD LOIBL


Research on human rights in Africa faces a primary difficulty in making available an updated version of all the textual sources of human rights law with respect to the individual African countries. The present book attempts to fill this gap by providing a comprehensive collection of the relevant sources that are presently in force with respect to the several African States, both on the international and on the national constitutional level.

The material is arranged in three parts. The first part provides a detailed account of the status of the 25 most important United Nations human rights instruments with respect to all African States (signatures, ratifications, and declarations recognizing the competence of the relevant treaty bodies). The treaty texts are not reproduced. The second part contains the text of the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights and indicates the status of the Charter. The third and most voluminous part contains the human rights provisions of the national constitutions of the 53 African States as of 1 January 1996.

As to the status of international human rights instruments in Africa, a disavantage of the book lies in the fact that it gives no account of the various reservations, interpretive declarations and understandings expressed by the individual States Parties to the respective treaties. Some of these reservations and declarations are indispensable for a detailed assessment of
the legal human rights situation in a given country. Yet as the reviewer can tell from his own experience, the texts of all these reservations and declarations are more difficult to find than the text of the Banjul Charter, and at least as difficult to find as the actual versions of the African constitutions, which are more or less kept updated in Blaustein and Flanz’s *Constitutions of the Countries of the World*, on which the editor of the present book relies to a large extent.

The specific value of the third part lies in a concise, yet comprehensive selection of those parts of the constitutional texts that are relevant for the human rights regime in the several countries. The criteria for this selection, as they are set out in the introduction, are pertinent and allow the assessment of the national legal status of human rights also in a broader, comparative constitutional context. For instance, one may discover common features of the human rights regimes in the constitutions that have been adopted in the course of the renewal of African constitutionalism since 1990, mostly by referendum, and many of them as a result of so-called national conferences. As a reaction to the political experiences of the past, no less than nine of these new constitutions grant the citizens a right (or even a duty) to resist unconstitutional usurpation of power. Likewise, political party pluralism is explicitly guaranteed in more than half of present-day African constitutions. On the other hand, most of them put strong emphasis on national unity and have banned all parties based on particularistic group identities, thus reflecting the challenges that hitherto unexperienced political pluralism may put to the stability and integrity of the African State. In several cases, the new systems could not cope with dangers of this kind, and the new constitutions did not succeed in preventing new coups or civil wars like in Sierra Leone, Burundi, Rwanda, or most recently, in Congo.

It is this broader context of overall developments in the several countries which, according to the introduction to the book, will be even further enriched in future editions by including commentary on legislation, judicial decisions and executive action in the field of human rights, as well as general information on the countries in question. These updated editions are planned to take place on an annual basis. Together with the necessary additions concerning the international human rights treaties, the book will soon become indispensable for anyone working in the field of human rights in Africa.

In order to achieve this ambitious task, the editors of the series will of course have to rely on information from researchers in the several countries, and their appeal to international cooperation in that sense will hopefully be followed. Not least this very enterprise might thus contribute to the development of intra-African channels of information and communication which are so urgently