1. Foundations and structure of international law

This chapter introduces the subject of public international law and provides an overview of its most important elements. It begins with a brief historical overview of international law. It then presents the international legal system consisting of different structures of legal rules and principles; discusses the basis of international legal obligation; offers a brief overview of the relationship between international law and national law; and deals with the issue of enforcement. The chapter concludes with some remarks about the alleged inadequacies of international law and the tension between notions of justice and order that is so prevalent within the international legal system.

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