4. The actors in the international legal system

International society is first and foremost a society of individual sovereign states. However, states are by no means the only relevant actors in international law. In fact, one of the consequences of the post-1945 expansion of international law into areas that had traditionally been of limited international interest has been the increasing legal importance of a variety of non-state actors, most notably international organizations and individuals. This chapter introduces the various actors in the international legal system that possess rights, powers and obligations in international law. It provides a thorough presentation of statehood and the criteria for the creation of new states, and briefly discusses the (limited) legal significance of recognition. It discusses the modes by which a state can acquire title to new territory; the issues of state succession and state extinction; and the legal personality of territorial entities other than states, international organizations, individuals and additional actors in the international legal system.
4. The actors in the international legal system

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