

Research Article

Legal Analysis of Saddam Hussein's Individual Responsibility in the Subject of International Law

Elvita Septia Liza^{1*}, Padrisan Jamba²

¹ Universitas Putera Batam, Batam, Indonesia

² Universitas Putera Batam, Batam, Indonesia

* Corresponding Author : Elvita Septia Liza

Abstract: This article analyzes Saddam Hussein's individual responsibility as a subject of international law based on crimes committed during his rule in Iraq. Saddam Hussein was charged with various serious crimes such as war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. This review covers relevant international legal instruments, Saddam Hussein's trial process, as well as criticism of the legitimacy and fairness of the trial. This research highlights the importance of applying the principle of individual responsibility in international law to uphold justice and prevent impunity for state leaders who commit serious violations. Apart from that, this article also discusses the challenges faced by the international justice system in dealing with cases involving heads of state, as well as the implications of court decisions for the development of international law and global human rights enforcement. In this way, this study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the evolution of international criminal responsibility, as well as its role in preventing similar atrocities in the future.

Keywords: Genocide, Crimes against Humanity, International Law, Individual Responsibility, Saddam Hussein, War Crimes

1. Introduction

The concept of individual responsibility in international law is one of the fundamental concepts that must be adhered to in order to ensure that victims of serious crimes that violate international law are provided with justice. The Nuremberg and Tokyo Trials, which took place after World War II, were two examples of international tribunals that contributed to the further development of this idea. This idea emphasizes that those who have power, such as state leaders, are not exempt from the law for the criminal activities that they perform within their positions of authority.

Saddam Hussein, the former President of Iraq, is one of the state leaders who was brought before international legal authorities for allegations of significant crimes that were committed during his tenure as president. In particular, when viewed in the context of contemporary international law, the trial process that Saddam Hussein went through brought up a number of different legal and political aspects that are interesting to think about.

The United States of America and its allies carried out a military invasion in 2003, which resulted in the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's government. This event marked the beginning of the trial process against Saddam Hussein. Following his capture, Hussein was confronted with a number of serious charges, some of which included crimes against humanity, violations of the laws of war, and genocide. Due to the fact that it included the individual accountability of a state leader who had previously held absolute power, as well as the fact that it touched

Received: January, 17 2025

Revised: February, 30 2025

Accepted: March, 15 2025

Published: March, 31 2025

Curr. Ver.: March, 31 2025



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on questions of state sovereignty and international meddling in domestic affairs, this case garnered the attention of people all over the world.

The Special Tribunal for Iraq was the entity that was responsible for carrying out the legal proceedings against Saddam Hussein. This tribunal was founded with the assistance of the international community, particularly by the United States of America and the countries that are a part of its coalition. Hussein was brought before this court for a number of events, including the murder of Kurds in Halabja in 1988 and the suppression of political opposition, both of which resulted in the deaths of thousands of people. Despite the fact that this court was attacked by certain organizations due to the fact that it was thought to be not completely independent and was thought to be affected by the political interests of certain parties, the ongoing legal process continued to place an emphasis on the idea of individual responsibility in the framework of international law.

Following the completion of a number of different trial procedures, Saddam Hussein was ultimately found guilty and condemned to death on November 5, 2006. As a symbol of worldwide attempts to uphold justice for foreign crimes, the death penalty became one of the most prominent examples. Nevertheless, despite the fact that this court was successful in imposing a sentence on Hussein, the legal process that he went through revealed significant difficulties in maintaining justice on a global scale. These difficulties were particularly associated with legal procedures, perceived unfairness in the execution of the trial, and the possibility that politics could have an impact on the trial process.

The Saddam Hussein case had a considerable impact on the evolution of international law, particularly in terms of the strengthening of international institutions that are burdened with the responsibility of trying serious crimes. This particular case contributes to the expansion of the conversation regarding international jurisdiction, judicial systems, and the recognition of individual rights in accordance with international law. Furthermore, when comparing the examples of other world leaders, such as Slobodan Milošević of Yugoslavia and Charles Taylor of Liberia, it becomes evident that there is a greater pattern in the implementation of the concept of universality and the idea that no individual is above the law, regardless of the level of power they possess. The purpose of this article is to present a legal analysis of Saddam Hussein's individual culpability under international law, as well as the trial process that he went through and the impact that it had on the evolution of international law. In addition, this article draws parallels between the circumstances surrounding Saddam Hussein's trial and those surrounding previous world leaders who have been convicted for participating in international crimes.

2. Literature Review

It is essential to have a solid understanding of who might be considered a subject of international law in order to comprehend Saddam Hussein's specific responsibility in order to comprehend international law. The basic subjects of international law are, according to the conventional understanding, individuals or governments. On the other hand, as a result of the growth of international law, particularly after World War II, individuals started to be recognized as subjects of international law who are able to be held accountable for violations of international law.

Subjects of International Law According to Their Theories

Due to the fact that states possess both sovereignty and the ability to exercise legal authority, this argument maintains that only states are capable of being subjects of international law. As the 19th century and the early 20th century progressed, this notion was utilized increasingly frequently. The Objectivism Theory contends that international law has the ability to recognize entities other than states. These entities include persons, international organizations, and other entities that possess specific legal capacities. The understanding of the various topics that fall under the purview of international law underwent a substantial transformation following the conclusion of World War II and the foundation of the international court system. Individuals are recognized as legal subjects who are capable of being held accountable in this scenario, particularly in cases involving international crimes such as crimes against humanity, genocide, and war crimes.

The concept of individual legal responsibility in international law emphasizes that individuals, not just states, can be held accountable for their actions that violate international norms. Historically, international crimes such as genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes were seen as the responsibility of state entities. However, over time, international legal frameworks have evolved to recognize that individuals—particularly those in positions of power—can also be held criminally liable for such acts. This shift is particularly evident in the establishment of various international tribunals, which play a crucial role in prosecuting individuals for their involvement in severe violations of international law.

A foundational principle in this legal theory is *Nullum Crimen Sine Lege*, which translates to "no crime without law." This principle dictates that an individual cannot be punished unless the act they committed is specifically defined as a crime by law. In the context of international law, this principle is enshrined in the articles of the Rome Statute, which serves as the legal basis for the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC). This statute outlines the prosecution of international crimes and underscores the growing recognition of individual responsibility under international law.

International crimes refer to grave offenses that transcend national borders and concern the international community as a whole. These crimes include genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, all of which have devastating consequences on both individuals and entire societies. The international community, through various legal instruments, has increasingly focused on holding individual perpetrators accountable for their actions. The role of individuals in the commission of these crimes is crucial, as state actions are often carried out by specific individuals who may direct or execute such acts. The idea of individual criminal responsibility gained prominence following the Nuremberg Trials, which held Nazi officials accountable for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. This marked a turning point in international law, where individuals were seen as personally liable for their participation in violations of international law.

The authority of international courts is central to enforcing individual criminal responsibility under international law. These courts have the mandate to prosecute individuals accused of

committing international crimes, ensuring that justice is served on a global scale. Among the most significant of these courts are the Nuremberg Tribunal, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). These tribunals were established to address specific regional conflicts and serve as precedents for future international criminal prosecutions. The establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) through the Rome Statute in 1998 marked a milestone in the international legal landscape. The ICC is the first permanent international court dedicated to prosecuting individuals for international crimes, including genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. However, the ICC's jurisdiction is not universal, and it can only prosecute cases involving states that are parties to the Rome Statute. This limitation became evident in the case of Saddam Hussein, whose prosecution was pursued by an Iraqi court rather than the ICC, as Iraq is not a member of the Rome Statute.

Saddam Hussein's case presents a complex example of how the international legal system addresses individual responsibility for international crimes. As the leader of Iraq, Saddam Hussein was implicated in a range of atrocities, including the use of chemical weapons against the Kurds during the 1988 Anfal campaign, which resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands. These actions, among others, were not confined to Iraq and were recognized as violations of international law, particularly crimes against humanity. Following his capture in 2003, Hussein was put on trial in an Iraqi court, established by the interim Iraqi government with support from an international coalition. The trial focused on his role in the chemical attacks and other military actions that led to the deaths of over one hundred thousand Kurds. Although the trial took place at the national level, the international community closely monitored the proceedings due to the nature of the crimes involved. The question of whether Hussein should have been prosecuted in an international court, such as the ICC, arises due to the international scope of his crimes. However, the ICC could not pursue his case because Iraq is not a party to the Rome Statute. This highlights a significant challenge within the international legal system: the reliance on state participation in international agreements. The absence of a universal legal framework to address all international crimes creates barriers to justice, particularly when the crimes affect both national and international interests.

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3. Method

The method of research that was utilized in this investigation was a qualitative legal research strategy, which was a normative approach. The purpose of this research is to investigate various aspects of Saddam Hussein's individual legal responsibility in relation to his actions within the framework of international law. More specifically, the study will concentrate on the principles that are applicable in international criminal law and how they are applied in situations where individuals are the subjects of international law litigation. In order to investigate and interpret pre-existing legal norms, the normative approach is utilized. This approach is utilized to evaluate and understand both conventional legal norms, such as international agreements, as well as norms that are formed via international legal practices (customary international law). In this context, the normative method seeks to evaluate international legal laws relating to individual accountability for criminal acts committed, with a particular emphasis on Saddam Hussein as an individual who is confronted with the international legal process.

The strategy that is being taken in this research is qualitative, and it is descriptive and analytical. Rather than concentrating on the collection of quantitative data, the purpose of this study is to conduct a comprehensive examination of a variety of international legal norms and practices in relation to individual responsibility. This study will investigate in great detail the concepts that underpin individual international criminal responsibility in the instance of Saddam Hussein, as well as the pertinent legal interpretations that can be derived from sources of international law.

The following types of data sources were utilized for this study:

1. International legal documents such as the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Geneva Conventions, decisions of international courts (particularly the International Criminal Tribunals for Yugoslavia and Rwanda), and other international regulations that are pertinent to individual responsibility in international law are those that are considered primary sources.
2. Books, scientific articles, journals, and other forms of literature that explore individual responsibility in relation to international law and the Saddam Hussein case are examples of secondary sources.
3. Tertiary sources are supplementary sources that include legal dictionaries, encyclopedias of international law, and texts that explore the history and development of international law in terms of individual criminal responsibility. Tertiary sources are also known as secondary sources.

4. Results and Discussion

The international trial process, involving the accountability of individuals, is an important instrument in achieving justice related to international crimes such as war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. Several international legal instruments are relevant in the context of individual accountability, including:

1. Nuremberg Trials (1945) The Nuremberg Trials mark the first major international legal effort to hold individuals accountable for international crimes, especially those committed by officials during wartime. The trials emphasized that even heads of state could

not evade responsibility for their actions during wartime and affirmed the principle of individual accountability in international law.

2. Geneva Conventions (1949) The Geneva Conventions emphasize the protection of civilians and prisoners of war during conflicts. Violations of these conventions, including acts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, are held accountable under international law.

3. Rome Statute (1998) The Rome Statute established the International Criminal Court (ICC), tasked with prosecuting individuals for crimes such as war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. The principle outlined in Article 27 of the Rome Statute states that no one is exempt from prosecution, including high-ranking state officials.

4.1. Crimes Committed by Saddam Hussein

Saddam Hussein is known as one of the most controversial leaders in modern history due to his oppressive actions during his rule in Iraq from 1979 to 2003. His regime was marked by widespread human rights violations, including political repression, systemic use of violence, and attempts to maintain power through brutality. Below are some of the key crimes committed under Saddam Hussein's rule that led to his eventual trial:

1. Crimes Against Humanity Saddam Hussein's regime was responsible for numerous crimes against humanity, including torture, executions, and ethnic cleansing. One of the most notable crimes was the mass killing of 148 Kurdish civilians in Dujail in 1982, which was framed as a revenge attack following an assassination attempt against Hussein.

2. Genocide Against the Kurdish People Saddam Hussein's regime conducted a genocidal campaign against the Kurdish population, particularly through the Anfal Campaign, which targeted the Kurdish people with military operations aimed at destroying Kurdish villages, forcibly displacing civilians, and committing atrocities like chemical warfare. The campaign led to the deaths of more than 100,000 Kurds and thousands of village destructions, with a significant massacre in Halabja in 1988 that killed around 5,000 people.

3. Use of Chemical Weapons Against Iran During the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), Saddam Hussein used chemical weapons against both Iranian military forces and Kurdish civilians, violating the Geneva Conventions and international law regarding chemical weapons use.

4.2. Trial Process of Saddam Hussein

After the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime following the 2003 invasion of Iraq, he was captured and tried for his crimes. The process leading to his trial included several legal steps and considerations:

1. Iraqi Special Tribunal Structure The Iraqi Special Tribunal was established in 2003 to prosecute Saddam Hussein and other high-ranking members of his regime for crimes committed during their rule. The tribunal had jurisdiction over crimes such as genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity committed during the period from July 17, 1968, to May 1, 2003.

2. Crimes Related to Dujail Massacre Saddam Hussein was tried for the 1982 Dujail massacre, in which 148 Kurdish civilians were executed in retaliation for an assassination attempt on Hussein. The trial found him guilty, and he was sentenced to death for his role in the massacre.

3. Execution of Saddam Hussein Saddam Hussein was executed on December 30, 2006, following his conviction and sentencing. The execution was controversial, with criticisms about the fairness of the trial and the conduct of the execution.

4.3. Criticism of Saddam Hussein's Trial Process

Saddam Hussein's trial process has faced significant criticism from various international organizations, legal scholars, and human rights advocates. Some of the key criticisms include:

1. **Independence of the Tribunal** Many critics argue that the Iraqi Special Tribunal lacked independence, as it was established by the United States-led coalition after the invasion of Iraq. This raised concerns that the tribunal could be influenced by political considerations and lacked impartiality.
2. **International Legal Standards** The trial was criticized for failing to meet international standards of fairness. For instance, some argued that the tribunal did not provide adequate protection for Hussein's defense team or give him a fair trial in accordance with international norms.
3. **Execution Controversies** Saddam Hussein's execution sparked significant controversy, particularly in how it was carried out and the criticisms surrounding its timing. Critics argued that the execution undermined the justice process and could be viewed as politically motivated.

4.4. Other International Cases Involving Leaders and Accountability

Saddam Hussein's case is not the only example of a leader being tried for international crimes. Other instances of political leaders being held accountable for crimes include the trials of leaders from various countries accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. These cases serve as a reminder of the importance of international accountability and the ongoing struggle for justice in global governance.

The trial of Saddam Hussein exhibits several key differences compared to other international trials:

1. Saddam Hussein was tried by a national tribunal (Iraqi Special Tribunal), while leaders such as Slobodan Milošević and Charles Taylor were tried by international tribunals.
2. Saddam Hussein's trial did not meet international standards, while international tribunals generally place a stronger emphasis on established legal procedures.
3. Saddam Hussein's execution occurred swiftly, whereas other leaders, such as Charles Taylor, faced prolonged trial processes.

This comparison highlights that international trials are typically more fair and transparent, while national tribunals can be influenced by political interests.

4.5. Impact of Saddam Hussein's Trial on the Development of International Justice

Saddam Hussein's trial had a significant impact on the development of international justice, particularly in advancing the principles of individual accountability. Below are some key impacts of this trial:

1. Strengthening the Importance of Holding National Leaders Accountable

This trial underscored the importance of holding national leaders accountable under international law. It reinforced the principle that political immunity cannot be used as a shield against international justice.

2. Influence on Future Trials

Saddam Hussein's trial set an important precedent for international criminal justice, despite criticism of the fairness of the process. It raised awareness within the international community about the need for independence and fairness in legal proceedings.

3. Advancement of International Justice Mechanisms

Following the trial of Saddam Hussein, there was an increasing focus on strengthening international justice mechanisms, such as the International Criminal Court (ICC), to ensure that international crimes are addressed impartially and justly. International tribunals are viewed as a more fair and objective solution compared to national courts, which may be subject to political influence.

5. Conclusion

The trial of Saddam Hussein serves as a significant example in the application of individual accountability principles within international justice. Despite the fact that his trial involved political interests, critics raised concerns about the independence and fairness of the process. The trial conducted by the Iraqi National Court was more politically charged compared to international trials, which generally adhere to higher judicial standards. This highlights the challenges faced by national courts in ensuring impartiality when political considerations are at play. In the context of international justice, the case of Saddam Hussein underscores the importance of holding not only individuals but also state leaders accountable for their actions. The trial demonstrated that the pursuit of fair and transparent proceedings is crucial to maintaining the integrity of international law. However, achieving such fairness is often complicated by political influences, and it is essential to ensure that legal processes remain free from political manipulation.

To address these challenges, there are several recommendations. First, international bodies such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) should be further supported to handle international criminal cases independently and impartially. Strengthening the capacity and authority of these institutions would help improve the fairness of trials and ensure that they are conducted without political interference. Second, countries responsible for handling international criminal cases at the national level must ensure that their judicial processes align with international standards of justice. This includes ensuring the independence of the judiciary and safeguarding the fairness of trials. Finally, enhancing public education and awareness regarding international criminal justice is essential. By increasing understanding of human rights and individual accountability, we can prevent the recurrence of similar violations in the future and strengthen global justice systems.

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