

HUMAN RIGHTS

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Aslan Kh. ABASHIDZE

Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University)
6, ul. Miklukho-Maklaya, Moscow, Russian Federation, 117198
abashidze_akh@rudn.university
ORCID: 0000-0003-0012-8795

Aleksandra E. KONEVA

Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University)
6, ul. Miklukho-Maklaya, Moscow, Russian Federation, 117198
koneva-ae@rudn.ru
ORCID: 0000-0002-5113-2033

Alexander M. SOLNTSEV

Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University)
6, ul. Miklukho-Maklaya, Moscow, Russian Federation, 117198
solntsev_am@rudn.university
ORCID: 0000-0002-9804-8912

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IMPACT OF THE CORE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS TREATIES ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN STATES: DOCTRINAL APPROACH

INTRODUCTION. *The paper considers the problem of the realisation of the core international human rights treaties at the national level from a perspective of the importance of conducting doctrinal research in this area. The authors provide the analysis of the content of the study project "The Impact of the United Nations Human Rights Treaties on the Domestic Level", launched in 2018 in continuation of the study carried out almost 20 years ago initiated by Ch. Heyns and F. Viljoen, professors of the Center for Human Rights of the University of Pretoria (South Africa), with the support of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), to study the impact of the six existing at that time core international hu-*

man rights treaties on the human rights situation in 20 States, including the Russian Federation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS. *The research was based on a variety of study materials, including international treaties, outcome documents of the international conferences, recommendations of the human rights treaty bodies, doctrinal studies, national legislation and the court practice of the Russian Federation. The authors applied historical legal and comparative legal methods when comparing the contents of the 1999 research and the 2018 study project, tracking the developments in the universal human rights system since 1999 till today, comparing the current tendencies in the realisation of the*

human rights treaties in Russia with the conclusions of the previous research on Russia. The method of legal forecasting was used to determine the perspectives of the present and possible future research on the impact of human rights treaties in States.

RESEARCH RESULTS. *Demonstrating the developments in the universal human rights system and the dynamics in the realisation of the human rights treaties in Russia taken place since 1999, the authors examined the tasks of the new research they need to conduct as the successors of professors Yu. Kolosov and Yu. Reshetov and identified the specifics of the approach of the new study comparing to the previous one.*

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS. *The authors demonstrate the potential of the study to determine the measures to enhance the effectiveness of the human rights treaty body system within the ongoing process on its strengthening, including the 2020*

UN comprehensive review of the progress achieved in this field. The paper points out the importance of expanding the research to more than 20 countries, already covered by the research, with a view of forming a comprehensive picture of the way in which the international human rights treaty system influences the situation of rights holders at local level, just where it really matters.

KEYWORDS: *UN core international human rights treaties, human rights treaty bodies, national legal system, implementation, 2020 UN comprehensive review of the human rights treaty body system*

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ПРАВА ЧЕЛОВЕКА

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Аслан Хусейнович АБАШИДЗЕ

Российский университет дружбы народов (РУДН)
Миклухо-Маклая ул., д. 6, Москва, 117198, Российская Федерация
abashidze_akh@rudn.university
ORCID: 0000-0003-0012-8795

Александра Евгеньевна КОНЕВА

Российский университет дружбы народов (РУДН)
Миклухо-Маклая ул., д. 6, Москва, 117198, Российская Федерация
koneva-ae@rudn.ru
ORCID: 0000-0002-5113-2033

Александр Михайлович СОЛНЦЕВ

Российский университет дружбы народов (РУДН)
Миклухо-Маклая ул., д. 6, Москва, 117198, Российская Федерация
solntsev_am@rudn.university
ORCID: 0000-0002-9804-8912

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ВЛИЯНИЕ ОСНОВНЫХ МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫХ ДОГОВОРОВ ПО ПРАВАМ ЧЕЛОВЕКА НА ПРАВООЗАЩИТНУЮ СИТУАЦИЮ В ГОСУДАРСТВАХ: ДОКТРИНАЛЬНЫЙ ПОДХОД

ВВЕДЕНИЕ. В статье рассматривается проблематика реализации основных международных договоров по правам человека на национальном уровне с точки зрения важности проведения доктринальных исследований в данной сфере. Авторы изучают содержание проекта «The Impact of the United Nations Human Rights Treaties on the Domestic Level», инициированного в 2018 г. в продолжение исследования, проведенного 20 лет назад по инициативе профессоров Центра по правам человека Университета Претории (ЮАР) К. Хэйнса и Ф. Вильоза при поддержке Управления Верховного комиссара ООН по правам человека (УВКПЧ ООН) с целью изучения влияния шести действовавших в то время основных международных договоров по правам человека на ситуацию с защитой прав человека в 20 государствах мира, включая Российскую Федерацию.

МАТЕРИАЛЫ И МЕТОДЫ. При проведении исследования использовались разные документы, в том числе международные договоры, итоговые документы международных конференций, рекомендации договорных органов по правам человека, доктринальные источники, национальное законодательство и судебная практика Российской Федерации. Авторы применили историко-правовой и сравнительно-правовой методы при сопоставлении содержания исследования 1999 г. и текущего проекта, при изучении изменений, происшедших в универсальной правозащитной системе после 1999 г., при сравнении текущих тенденций в области реализации договоров по правам человека в России с результатами предыдущего исследования по нашей стране. Метод правового прогнозирования был использован с целью определения перспектив настоящего и возможных

будущих исследований влияния правозащитных договоров на правовые системы государств.

РЕЗУЛЬТАТЫ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ. Демонстрируя изменения в универсальной правозащитной системе и динамику реализации договоров по правам человека в России с 1999 по 2019 г., авторы изучили задачи нового исследования, которое они должны провести как преемники профессоров Ю.М. Колосова и Ю.А. Решетова, и раскрыли специфику своего подхода по сравнению с предыдущим.

ОБСУЖДЕНИЕ И ВЫВОДЫ. Авторы показали потенциал данного исследования в части определения мер по повышению эффективности системы договорных органов по правам человека в рамках продолжающегося процесса ее укрепления, включая предстоящий в 2020 г. всеобъемлющий обзор на уровне ООН прогресса, достигнутого в этой области. В статье подчеркивается необходимость расширения охвата исследования путем включения в него новых стран помимо тех 20, которые уже в нем отражены. Это позволит сформировать всеобъемлющую картину того, каким образом система международных договоров по правам человека влияет на положение носителей прав на национальном уровне – там, где это, действительно, важно.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА: Основные международные договоры ООН по правам человека, договорные органы по правам человека, национальная правовая система, имплементация, Комплексный обзор системы договорных органов по правам человека ООН 2020 г.

ДЛЯ ЦИТИРОВАНИЯ: Абашидзе А.Х., Конева А.Е., Солнцев А.М. 2019. Влияние основных

международных договоров по правам человека на правозащитную ситуацию в государствах: доктринальный подход. – *Московский журнал*

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The United Nations (UN) has a tradition of celebrating anniversaries of significant events and reviewing the changes that have occurred throughout the world and within the UN itself after these events. This tradition became widespread in the field of international protection of human rights. For example, the Tehran International Conference on Human Rights was held in 1968 in order to review the work done over twenty years since the adoption of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹. In 2013, during the Vienna+20 Conference, held under the auspices of the UN, some achievements and challenges after the 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights have been emphasized². In 2016, the UN celebrated the 50th anniversary of the adoption and 40th anniversary of the entry into force of the two Covenants – the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights [50 let... 2017]³. This list of the UN events is not exhaustive.

It seems that this approach allows us to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the adopted international instruments, to follow their genesis and to determine further directions of activity.

A similar approach was developed by the UN with respect to the process of strengthening the system of human rights treaty bodies who monitor the fulfillment by States of their obligations in accordance with the core international human rights treaties⁴. This process, which has more than 30 years of history, is currently characterized by the adoption of measures to implement the 68/268 UN General Assembly Resolution dated April 9, 2014⁵, which completed a two-year intergovernmental process on strengthening and improving the effective functioning of the treaty body system [Egan 2013; Abashidze, Koneva 2013; Abashidze, Koneva, Solntsev 2017:202–246]. In 2020, in accordance with § 41 of the 68/268 Resolution, under the auspices of the UN General Assembly, a comprehensive review of progress will be conducted, within which the results of the implementation of the Resolution will be summarized and proposals for future strengthening of the treaty body system will be developed.

In parallel with the ongoing strengthening process taking place at the UN level different doctrinal researches were launched to study the ways to improve the system⁶. Among them particular attention should be given to the project “The Impact of the

¹ Final Act of the International Conference on Human Rights. Teheran, 22 April to 13 May 1968. URL: http://legal.un.org/avl/pdf/ha/fatchr/Final_Act_of_TehranConf.pdf (accessed date: 01.03.2019).

² Vienna+20: Advancing the Protection of Human Rights. Achievements, Challenges and Perspectives. 20 Years after the World Conference. International Expert Conference. Conference report. June 27-28 2013. URL: https://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Zentrale/Aussenpolitik/Menschenrechte/Conference_Report_-_Vienna_20.pdf (accessed date: 01.03.2019).

³ See also United Nations Human Rights Council Resolution 29/1 “Fiftieth anniversary of the adoption and fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the International Covenants on Human Rights” dated July 2, 2015. URL: http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/29/1 (accessed date: 01.03.2019); O tematicheskoi diskussii vysokogo urovnya v Sovete OON po pravam cheloveka v svyazi s 50-i godovshchinoi prinyatiya Mezhdunarodnykh paktov o pravakh cheloveka [On the thematic discussion in the UN Human Rights Council on the 50th anniversary of the International Human Rights Covenants]. – *Official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation*. March 3, 2016. URL: http://www.mid.ru/ru/maps/ch/-/asset_publisher/OGGeZPtOO3ptm/content/id/2124726 (accessed date: 01.04.2019). (In Russ.)

⁴ Human rights treaty bodies are established in accordance with the provisions of the core international human rights treaties, the fulfillment of which they monitor. In order to ensure the balance with intergovernmental human rights bodies, these mechanisms consist of independent experts with recognized competence in various human rights fields. Currently, there are 10 human rights treaty bodies functioning in the form of 9 committees and one subcommittee, bringing together 172 independent experts [Abashidze, Koneva 2015].

⁵ Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on April 9, 2014 No. 68/268 “Strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system”. URL: <https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/A/RES/68/268> (accessed date: 01.03.2019).

⁶ See for instance: Academic platform report on the 2020 review “Optimizing the UN Treaty Body System”. May 2018. URL: <https://www.geneva-academy.ch/joomlatools-files/docman-files/Optimizing%20UN%20Treaty%20Bodies.pdf> (accessed date: 01.03.2019).

United Nations Human Rights Treaties on the Domestic Level”, launched in 2018 in continuation of the study carried out almost 20 years ago initiated by Ch. Heyns and F. Viljoen, professors of the Center for Human Rights of the University of Pretoria (South Africa), with the support of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), to study the impact of the six existing at that time core international human rights treaties on the human rights situation in States.

The research project in 1999 covered 20 States representing five regions of the world (four States from each region): Australia, Brazil, Egypt, Zambia, India, Spain, Iran, Canada, Colombia, Mexico, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Jamaica, Japan, Philippines, Romania, the Russian Federation, Senegal and the South Africa. These States were selected in order to identify the most representative group of States which human rights systems have undergone changes due to their participation in the core international human rights treaties.

The results of this study, published in 2002 in the monograph with the title “The Impact of the United Nations Human Rights Treaties on the Domestic Level” [The Impact... 2002], were supposed to be used during the process of developing proposals for improving the activities of human rights treaty bodies. In structural terms, this monograph included an introductory part, containing an overview of the results achieved, and the chapters dealing with the analysis of each country, prepared by the country researchers. The attention of researchers was specifically focused on the assessment of international treaties’ impact at the national level. The term “impact” meant any interrelation of the norms of these international treaties with the changes in the field of the protection of human rights in the State. For example, such an impact may take place due to: the inclusion of the norms of international treaties in the system of the sources of law in the State; the adoption by government authorities of measures to implement the recommendations of the human rights treaty bodies (committees) on the basis of the consideration of periodic reports, communications and conduct of inquiries; or as a result of activities of the civil society organizations guided by these recommendations; due to the coverage of information about these treaties and their monitoring bodies in the mass-media; as a consequence of the inclusion of human rights

issues in the educational programs in schools and universities [The Impact... 2002:1–2].

The chapter on the Russian Federation was prepared by two eminent professors of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (MGIMO University): professor Yu.M. Kolosov (1934–2015), Doctor of Laws, Honored Scientist of the Russian Federation, Head of the Department of International Law of the MGIMO University (1987–2005), Member of the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (1991–1999), Member of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (2002–2010) [Kolosov 1989; Kolosov 1991; Kolosov 2005], and professor Yu.A. Reshetov (1935–2003), Doctor of Laws, professor at the MGIMO University, Member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (1988–2003), Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Ambassador of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Iceland (1992–1997) [Reshetov 1995; Reshetov 1991; Reshetov et al. 1991; Clark, Reshetov 1995; Reshetov 2001; Reshetov 2002].

Professors Yu.M. Kolosov and Yu.A. Reshetov, on the basis of a list of questions (template) approved by the authors of the project for the country researchers from all States, carried out the comprehensive analysis of Russia’s participation in all six core international human rights treaties in force at that time⁷, with a particular focus on the Russia’s relationship with the relevant treaty bodies and the impact of their recommendations on the human rights situation within the State. Thus, the Russian professors revealed the legal status and significance of international human rights treaties in the Constitution and the legislation; the impact of these international treaties on the development of national strategies and policies; assessed the level of awareness about the treaties and the work of the treaty bodies among the population, civil society and legal professionals; identified the overall picture in the sphere of education in terms of teaching human rights disciplines, and also analyzed the involvement of the civil society organizations and the mass-media in the implementation of international treaties.

Within the context of the limited information on the practice of the treaty bodies, national mechanisms for implementing their recommendations, as well as sufficient data on the activities of the relevant

⁷ The 1965 International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the 1984 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child.

authorities involved in the realization of the international human rights treaties Yu.M. Kolosov and Yu.A. Reshetov, however, revealed the current tendencies in the implementation of the human rights treaties in Russia and determined perspectives for strengthening the cooperation of Russia with treaty bodies in order to improve the implementation of their recommendations at the national level.

Thus, the Russian experts, indicating the problem of the lack of implementation of the concluding observations of the committees, pointed out the necessity for the treaty bodies to prepare shorter and more specific concluding observations, as well as recommended to the government to send the concluding observations and draft plans of action to the parliament for taking appropriate decisions in this respect with due regard to cooperation with non-governmental organizations [Kolosov, Reshetov 2002:516].

Yu.M. Kolosov and Yu.A. Reshetov, among other things, have also referred to the need to disseminate information about the activities of the human rights treaty bodies and international human rights mechanisms in general. In this regard, noting the small number of communications forwarded to the committees by the Russian citizens on the violations of their rights⁸, as well as the time consuming nature of the procedure for examining communications, the Russian experts suggested “to appoint one or more persons from among the nationals of a given state as Committee ‘correspondents’”, who will “accept communications inside the country, advise the individuals on how to conform with the requirements and dispatch the communications to the Committee with their own conclusions” [Kolosov, Reshetov 2002:516]. Such an appointment should be made public, mainly through a wide coverage in the media.

Furthermore, the authors recommended for the distribution of the brochure with the text of the six treaties with the commentaries among all the courts [Kolosov, Reshetov 2002:517].

Noting the minimal NGO impact on the reporting process, Yu.M. Kolosov and Yu.A. Reshetov pointed to the need for NGOs to get access to TV and radio broadcasts on a regular basis [Kolosov, Reshetov 2002:517].

Today, 20 years later, a study conducted in 1999 remains the most comprehensive research work in

the field of studying the influence of international human rights treaties at the national level and provides a solid foundation for further researches in this area.

Over the past two decades, the system of the international human rights treaties and committees has changed significantly in many aspects. At this moment, nine core international human rights treaties have already been adopted and ten treaty bodies were created. The number of ratifications of international treaties has increased significantly, and a greater number of committees have received competence to consider communications and interstate complaints, as well as to undertake inquiries⁹. Furthermore, since the 1999 study, the States Parties to human rights treaties have undergone several review cycles of their reports in the committees, resulted in concluding observations. The treaty bodies considered a bigger number of communications and, in their views, gave States recommendations on providing remedies in relation to the violations of human rights enshrined in the respective treaties. The committees adopted new general comments [Abashidze 2011] and modernized the existing ones as well as developed new working methods and rules of procedure.

As the work of the treaty body system has expanded, the new initiatives were launched to improve their activities. Over the past twenty years, many research papers have been prepared on the effectiveness of the treaty bodies as a system or on improving its various components. However, among them there are practically no empirical studies on the assessment of the results of their work at the national level.

Against the background of the above-mentioned, we should also take into account some changes in the UN human rights architecture resulting from the reform of its human rights mechanisms, namely the replacement in 2016 of the UN Commission on Human Rights with the new intergovernmental body – UN Human Rights Council (HRC). The creation in 2006 of the new mechanism within the framework of the HRC – the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) – is particularly significant, as well as the expansion of the system of special procedures of the HRC [Abashidze, Goltvaev 2013; Connors 2017]. The interaction of these mechanisms with the human

⁸ At that time Yu. Kolosov and Yu. Reshetov mentioned that only 10 communications were submitted to the Human Rights Committee with only one case finalized by the Committee [Kolosov, Reshetov 2002:515].

⁹ Note by the UN Secretary-General “United Nations reform: measures and proposals”, dated June 26, 2012 (UN Doc. A/66/860). URL: <https://undocs.org/en/A/66/860> (accessed date: 01.03.2019); Report of the UN Secretary-General “Status of the Human Rights Treaty Body System”, dated August 6, 2018 (UN Doc. A/73/309). URL: <https://undocs.org/A/73/309> (accessed date: 01.03.2019).

rights treaty bodies is increasing every year, thereby affecting the implementation of the international human rights treaties at the national level.

In addition, we cannot ignore the expansion of the activities of the regional human rights mechanisms [Koneva 2014; Regional Human Rights Systems... 2018], as well as of the national human rights bodies and the civil society organizations at the national level.

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for 2016–2030¹⁰ stimulated the international human rights mechanisms, including treaty bodies, and States to draw the attention to the need to take measures to achieve the SDGs in the framework of the implementation of the core international human rights treaties.

All these achievements and events at the international and national levels of the protection of human rights provided professors Ch. Heyns and F. Viljoen with the opportunity to initiate a new study in 2018 in cooperation with the OHCHR with a view to reconsidering the impact of the core human rights treaties on the situation with the protection of human rights in the previously indicated 20 States¹¹. However, it was also agreed that the scientific work conducted 20 years ago should serve as a starting point for conducting this new research in order to identify new tendencies in the implementation of international treaties at the national level and to form a vision of the future prospects for the development of the system of international treaties and treaty bodies.

The project results will be taken into account in the framework of the comprehensive review of the progress achieved in strengthening the treaty bodies, which will be held in 2020 at the level of the UN General Assembly.

The international academic publishing house "Brill," the successor to the publishing house "Kluwer Law International" founded in 1683 in Leiden (the Netherlands), which published the results of the previous research, agreed to publish in 2020 the results of the new research to be conducted by the specialists of the same 20 States.

On 28 February and 1 March 2019 the authors of the project held a meeting of the country researchers from all 20 countries, hosted by the OHCHR at Palais Wilson and Palais des Nations in Geneva

(Switzerland). In the course of the meeting the country researchers met different experts from the OHCHR, academia, NGOs, who work in the field of the application of the human rights treaty system and discussed with them the current developments in the system as a whole as well as other studies on the implementation of the findings of the international human rights bodies and the methodology used in these studies. The participants of the meeting also exchanged information on the progress made in their ongoing research, including the methodology used, identified the problems faced by them and discussed the ways to address them.

The successors to the professors Yu.M. Kolosov and Yu.A. Reshetov for conducting research in Russia became professor A.Kh. Abashidze, Doctor of Legal Sciences, Professor, Honoured Lawyer of the Russian Federation, Head of the Department of International Law, Law Institute, RUDN University, Member of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Chair of the International Law Committee of the United Nations Association of Russia; A.M. Solntsev, Candidate of Legal Sciences, Associate professor, Deputy Head of the Department of International Law, RUDN University, and A.E. Koneva, Candidate of Legal Sciences, Senior Lecturer at the Department of International Law, RUDN University.

Guided by the list of questions (template) prepared for the researchers from all 20 States, and based on the material on Russia, previously elaborated by Yu.M. Kolosov and Yu.A. Reshetov, A.Kh. Abashidze, A.M. Solntsev and A.E. Koneva will study the level of influence of the main international human rights treaties and treaty body recommendations on the Russian legislation, judicial practice, the development of national strategies, human rights education, as well as assess the level of awareness of these treaties and the work of their monitoring bodies.

When carrying out the study, the Russian experts take into account the fact that since 1999, in addition to changes at the UN level and in the treaty body system, the human rights situation in the Russian Federation has changed significantly.

Russia has developed a sound experience in the participation in the human rights treaty system, giving significant attention to cooperation with the

¹⁰ General Assembly Resolution 70/1 "Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", dated September 25, 2015 (UN Doc. A/RES/70/1). URL: https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_70_1_E.pdf (accessed date: 05.03.2019).

¹¹ See Press Statement "University of Pretoria announces mayor new study with United Nations on the global human rights system". URL: <http://www.icla.up.ac.za/news/261-university-of-pretoria-announces-mayor-new-study-with-united-nations-on-the-global-human-rights-system> (accessed date: 05.03.2019).

treaty bodies and considering them as an important element of the universal human rights system.

Having inherited the participation in the six human rights treaties as a successor of the USSR, since 1999 the Russian Federation has significantly expanded its international human rights obligations. Russia joined one core human rights treaty (the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) and two optional protocols to the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child¹². Russia also accepted the competence of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to consider communications and conduct inquiries.

Participating in the majority of the human rights treaties (7 out of 9), Russia regularly submits its periodic reports, takes part in the dialogues with the treaty bodies and presents follow-up information on the recommendations given.

Since 1999 a more institutionalized process of the preparation of reports and implementation of the treaty bodies' recommendations was set up mainly due to the adoption of the 2003 Governmental Decree on the distribution of the responsibilities of Russian governmental bodies with regard to cooperation with the UN system¹³.

Today more governmental bodies are involved in the preparation of reports and implementation of concluding observations. The increased participation in these processes of the civil society organisations is also evident due to the growth in the number of Russian NGOs specializing on various human rights issues and being more active in cooperating with the treaty body system through submission of alternative reports and providing information on follow-up to committees' recommendations.

The higher level of awareness of the treaties and the committees is also achieved through awareness raising programs launched by the Government, increased attention to these issues in media and civil society environment, due to the development of educational programs in human rights as well as better awareness among professional lawyers and academics.

Furthermore, comparing to the previous research, there is an increased tendency to apply the norms of the human rights treaties in the court prac-

tice. The courts tend not only to apply the treaties and the general comments, but they implement the views of the treaty bodies, especially through allowing the reopening of cases. The raised awareness of the treaty system is achieved through publication by the Supreme Court of the summaries of the views of the treaty bodies with instructions given to the general courts on their obligation to follow the human rights treaties and the views of the treaty bodies¹⁴.

By analogy with the previous study, the country researchers will need to conduct both the deeper analytical work in terms of a comprehensive study of the legal status of international treaties in national legal systems, and a sociological study in identifying the level of awareness of the representatives of the government authorities, the population and the civil society, their perception of the treaty bodies work and their effectiveness at the national level, as well as determining the level of the mass-media involvement in dissemination of knowledge about the international treaties and the treaty body system.

The results of this research will be addressed to specialists who work in relevant areas (representatives of the State bodies, the national human rights institutions, the civil society organizations, and the practicing lawyers), as well as directly to the rights holders. The results of the study will also be widely used in the educational process, for instance, within the Master Program "International Protection of Human Rights", jointly realized by the Consortium of 9 Russian Universities with the support of the OHCH¹⁵.

At the same time, compared to the previous research, the new project will focus not only on identifying quantitative indicators and disclosing the factual side of the process of realisation of the international human rights treaties in the States, which is now easily accessible to readers due to the open placement of information in various sources, including the official website of the OHCHR. The new study will reveal current tendencies and provide the comprehensive picture of the implementation of international treaties at the national level.

In order to cover more countries in the research project, the authors of the project encouraged researchers based in any country beyond the list of

¹² The 2001 Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the 2001 Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

¹³ Government Decree dated June 3, 2003 No. 323 "On Approval of the Interdepartmental Distribution of Responsibilities for Ensuring the Participation of the Russian Federation in International Organizations of the UN System".

¹⁴ See, for example, Review of Judicial Practice of the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation No. 1 (2018). (In Russ.) URL: <http://supcourt.ru/documents/practice/26591/> (accessed date: 05.04.2019).

¹⁵ The official web-site of the Program. URL: <http://humanrights.ru/> (accessed date: 05.04.2019).

20 countries already studied, to start their own study on the impact of the treaty system in their States on the basis of the template used for the domestic impact study¹⁶.

Thus, it appears that this research project is extremely timely. Its outcome will be in demand at the stage of the comprehensive review of the treaty body system in 2020 and in the further stages of the system strengthening process, since the results reached by the researchers will demonstrate the real effect of these mechanisms functioning at the national level and thus point to those aspects that are should be

strengthened in the work of the system to make it more efficient in order to ensure the well-being of the right holders on the ground. In the long-term perspective, the outcomes of the project with regard to a bigger number of States, going beyond 20 initially selected countries, may serve as a valuable resource of information for those who want to gain a detailed, in-depth, evidence based, understanding of the way in which the international human rights treaty system influences the behavior of States and other stakeholders worldwide.

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¹⁶ See the web-page of the call for human rights researchers. URL: <http://www.icla.up.ac.za/news-events/news/353-the-impact-of-the-un-human-rights-treaty-system-on-the-domestic-level-a-call-for-human-rights-researchers-worldwide-to-contribute-to-a-global-study> (accessed date: 05.03.2019).

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About the Authors

Aslan Kh. Abashidze,

Doctor of Juridical Sciences, Professor, Head of the Department of International Law, Law Institute, People's Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University)

6, ul. Miklukho-Maklaya, Moscow, Russian Federation, 171198

abashidze_akh@rudn.university
ORCID: 0000-0003-0012-8795

Aleksandra E. Koneva,

Cand. Sci. (Law), Senior Lecturer at the Department of International Law, Law Institute, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University)

6, ul. Miklukho-Maklaya, Moscow, Russian Federation, 117198

koneva-ae@rudn.ru
ORCID: 0000-0002-5113-2033

Alexander M. Solntsev,

Cand. Sci. (Law), Associate Professor, Deputy Head of the Department of International Law, Law Institute, Peoples' Friendship University of Russia (RUDN University)

6, ul. Miklukho-Maklaya, Moscow, Russian Federation, 117198

solntsev_am@rudn.university
ORCID: 0000-0002-9804-8912

Информация об авторах

Аслан Хусейнович Абашидзе,

доктор юридических наук, профессор, заведующий кафедрой международного права, Юридический институт, Российский университет дружбы народов (РУДН)

171198, Российская Федерация, ул. Миклухо-Маклая, д. 6

abashidze_akh@rudn.university
ORCID: 0000-0003-0012-8795

Александра Евгеньевна Конева,

кандидат юридических наук, старший преподаватель кафедры международного права, Юридический институт, Российский университет дружбы народов (РУДН)

117198, Российская Федерация, Москва, ул. Миклухо-Маклая, д. 6

koneva-ae@rudn.ru
ORCID: 0000-0002-5113-2033

Александр Михайлович Солнцев,

кандидат юридических наук, доцент, заместитель заведующего кафедрой международного права, Юридический институт, Российский университет дружбы народов (РУДН)

117198, Российская Федерация, Москва, ул. Миклухо-Маклая, д. 6

solntsev_am@rudn.university
ORCID: 0000-0002-9804-8912