

**Aleksa Škundrić, *The Crime of Aggression
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The crime of aggression occupies a distinctive position within the system of International Criminal Law. Unlike the other core international crimes, its definition and prosecution are closely connected with the prohibition of the use of force in international relations and, consequently, with the rules governing relations between sovereign states. The development of individual criminal responsibility for acts of aggression has therefore been marked by a particularly complex interaction between international criminal law, the law on the use of force, and the principle of state sovereignty. Aleksa Škundrić's monograph *The Crime of Aggression in International Criminal Law*, published in 2026 within the Young Researchers' Monographs series of the Central European Academic Publishing, provides a comprehensive examination of this development and of the contemporary legal framework governing individual responsibility for the unlawful use or threat of use of force in international relations.

The book represents an expanded, revised and updated version of the author's LL.M. thesis, entitled *Aggression as the Crime Against Peace*, defended

at the Faculty of Law of the University of Belgrade in 2023. The original work has been substantially supplemented with additional literature and analysis of the recent developments in the field. In particular, the updated version takes into account recent initiatives concerning the establishment of a Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine, thereby placing the analysis within the context of some of the most significant contemporary developments in International Criminal Law.

The author approaches the subject from several complementary perspectives, and, following the Introduction, the book first traces the historical development of individual criminal responsibility for the unlawful use of force, beginning with early attempts to restrict the resort to war and continuing through the post-First World War developments, and the establishment of the International Military Tribunals at Nuremberg and Tokyo, following with the subsequent efforts to define and criminalize aggression, culminating in the establishment of the International Criminal Court. The historical analysis provides the foundation for understanding the gradual transformation

of aggression from a matter primarily concerning state responsibility into an international crime giving rise to individual criminal responsibility, while also highlighting the continuing legal and political difficulties surrounding this transformation.

The third, and the central, chapter of the monograph examines the crime of aggression within the legal framework of the International Criminal Court. Particular attention is devoted to the incorporation of the crime into the Rome Statute through the Kampala Amendments. The substantive elements of the crime are examined in detail, including its protected object, *actus reus* and *mens rea*, as well as the applicable forms of participation and extended forms of criminal responsibility. The analysis further addresses grounds for excluding criminal responsibility and the applicable penalties and measures under the Rome Statute. An important part of the book concerns the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court over the crime of aggression. The author examines the mechanisms established under Articles 15 *bis* and 15 *ter* of the Rome Statute, distinguishing between situations involving State referral or *proprio motu* investigations and those initiated through a United Nations Security Council referral. The legal force and practical implications of the Kampala Amendments are considered separately, allowing the author to address one of the most complex aspects of the contemporary legal regulation of the crime of aggression. The chapter also considers the practical prospects for the prosecution of the crime of aggression, taking into account the jurisdictional, legal and political constraints that continue to shape its application.

The final section of this chapter examines the future of the crime of aggression within International Criminal Law, with particular attention to the International Criminal Court and the recently established Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine. The author considers the jurisdictional limitations of the ICC in relation to the situation in Ukraine and addresses the legal framework of the Special Tribunal, including its definition of the crime of aggression, the leadership criterion, and the particularly complex issue of immunities of state officials, thereby highlighting some of the practical challenges surrounding the prosecution of aggression.

In the fourth chapter the book broadens its perspective beyond the International Criminal Court framework, where selected questions arising in domestic criminal law are examined, including the principles of complementarity and universal jurisdiction. Particular attention is given to the regulation of the crime of aggression in Serbian criminal law, including the offence of the “war of aggression” under Article 386 of the Criminal Code of the Republic of Serbia. This part of the analysis complements the predominantly international perspective of the preceding chapters and demonstrates the relevance of the criminalization of aggression at the domestic level, illustrated in the case of Serbia.

Overall, *The Crime of Aggression in International Criminal Law* offers a systematic and comprehensive examination of the historical development, legal regulation and practical prospects of one of the most distinctive and complex international crimes. By combining histori-

cal analysis with a detailed examination of the Rome Statute and the Kampala Amendments, while also addressing relevant aspects of domestic criminal law and recent institutional developments, the book provides a broad and coherent account of the legal questions surrounding individual criminal responsibility for the unlawful use of force in international relations. One of the particular strengths of the monograph lies in this extensive approach, which connects the historical development of the crime with its contemporary legal framework and practical prospects for prosecution. It therefore represents a valuable contribution to the study of contemporary International Criminal Law and

will be of particular interest and significance to scholars and researchers who are dealing with the both International Criminal Law and International Humanitarian Law, as well as more specific subjects such as crime of aggression and the evolving framework of international criminal responsibility.

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