

Legal effectiveness of international organizations in the protection of the international order

Efectividad jurídica de las organizaciones internacionales en la protección del orden internacional

Efetividade Jurídica das organizações internacionais na proteção da ordem internacional

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to analyze the legal effectiveness of international organizations in protecting the international order by identifying the normative, institutional, and political factors influencing the implementation of international law. The methodology adopted a qualitative approach through a documentary, descriptive, and doctrinal legal research design. A systematic review of specialized literature, international treaties, legal instruments, and relevant case law was conducted using doctrinal, comparative, and critical analysis methods to examine the evolution, competencies, and operational mechanisms of international organizations. The findings demonstrated that these institutions play a fundamental role in maintaining international peace, protecting human rights, and promoting cooperation to address global challenges. Nevertheless, their legal effectiveness remains constrained by state sovereignty, geopolitical interests, and the limited domestic implementation of international decisions. The analysis also revealed that strengthening global governance requires more efficient international institutions, stronger compliance-monitoring mechanisms, and enhanced coordination among States and international organizations. It was concluded that the effective protection of the international order depends not only on the progressive development of international law but also on the consolidation of international organizations with greater institutional legitimacy, operational capacity, and effective mechanisms to ensure compliance with international obligations and reinforce the rule-based international legal system.

Keywords: international organizations, international law, global governance, international order.

Resumen

El objetivo de esta investigación fue analizar la efectividad jurídica de las organizaciones internacionales en la protección del orden internacional, identificando los factores normativos, institucionales y políticos que condicionan el cumplimiento del derecho internacional. La metodología se desarrolló bajo un enfoque cualitativo, con un diseño documental, descriptivo y de carácter dogmático-jurídico. Se realizó una revisión sistemática de doctrina especializada, tratados internacionales, instrumentos normativos y jurisprudencia relevante, utilizando métodos de análisis dogmático, comparado y crítico para examinar la evolución, competencias y mecanismos de actuación de las organizaciones internacionales. Los resultados evidenciaron que estas instituciones desempeñan un papel fundamental en el mantenimiento de la paz, la protección internacional de los derechos humanos y la cooperación frente a desafíos globales; sin embargo, su efectividad jurídica continúa limitada por la soberanía estatal, los intereses geopolíticos y la insuficiente ejecución de las decisiones internacionales dentro de los ordenamientos jurídicos nacionales. Asimismo, se identificó que el fortalecimiento de la gobernanza global requiere instituciones más eficientes, mecanismos de seguimiento más sólidos y una mayor coordinación entre los Estados y los organismos internacionales. Se concluyó que la protección efectiva del orden internacional depende no solo del desarrollo progresivo del derecho internacional, sino también de la consolidación de organizaciones internacionales con mayor legitimidad, capacidad institucional y mecanismos eficaces para garantizar el cumplimiento de las obligaciones internacionales.

Palabras clave: organizaciones internacionales, derecho internacional, gobernanza global, orden internacional.

Resumo

O objetivo desta pesquisa foi analisar a efetividade jurídica das organizações internacionais na proteção da ordem internacional, identificando os fatores normativos, institucionais e políticos que condicionam a aplicação do direito internacional. A metodologia adotou uma abordagem qualitativa, por meio de uma pesquisa documental, descritiva e de natureza dogmático-jurídica. Foi realizada uma revisão sistemática da doutrina especializada, dos tratados internacionais, dos instrumentos normativos e da jurisprudência relevante, utilizando métodos de análise dogmática, comparativa e crítica para examinar a evolução, as competências e os mecanismos de atuação das organizações internacionais. Os resultados demonstraram que essas instituições desempenham papel essencial na manutenção da paz internacional, na proteção dos direitos humanos e na cooperação diante dos desafios globais. Contudo, sua efetividade jurídica permanece limitada pela soberania dos Estados, pelos interesses geopolíticos e pela insuficiente implementação interna das decisões internacionais. Além disso, verificou-se que o fortalecimento da governança global exige instituições internacionais mais eficientes, mecanismos mais robustos de monitoramento do cumprimento das obrigações e maior coordenação entre os Estados e as organizações internacionais. Concluiu-se que a proteção efetiva da ordem internacional depende não apenas do desenvolvimento progressivo do direito internacional, mas também da consolidação de organizações internacionais dotadas de maior legitimidade institucional, capacidade operacional e mecanismos eficazes para assegurar o cumprimento das obrigações internacionais.

Palavras-chave: organizações internacionais, direito internacional, governança global, ordem internacional.

Introduction

The contemporary international order has been shaped by an institutional framework in which international organizations play a decisive role in preserving peace, fostering cooperation among States, and consolidating the rule of law at the global level. From the establishment of the first organizations with universal aspirations to the strengthening of specialized agencies, these institutions have progressively acquired competencies aimed at promoting collective solutions to challenges that transcend national borders. In this context, the legal effectiveness of international organizations constitutes an essential element in ensuring that the norms of international law are translated into effective mechanisms for protecting the international legal order. As Díaz Galán (2018) argues, the recognition of international organizations as subjects of international law has brought about a substantial transformation in the international legal system by granting them legal personality, specific competences, and the capacity to participate actively in the creation and implementation of international law.

The historical evolution of international organizations reflects the transition from limited forms of interstate cooperation to complex institutional structures endowed with normative, administrative, judicial, and supervisory functions. This development has responded to the need to establish permanent mechanisms capable of addressing armed conflicts, economic crises, environmental threats, human rights violations, and other global challenges that exceed the capacity of individual States to act independently. In this regard, Barrios Álvarez et al. (2018) emphasize that multilateral organizations have progressively strengthened their functions in mediation, conflict prevention, and peacebuilding, becoming indispensable actors in maintaining international stability through legal and diplomatic instruments designed to facilitate the peaceful settlement of disputes.

At the same time, the transformations experienced by the international community over recent decades have significantly altered the dynamics of the international order. Economic globalization, technological innovation, growing interdependence among States, transnational conflicts, terrorism, climate change, large-scale migration, and global health emergencies have underscored the need to reinforce international institutional mechanisms. These emerging realities require coordinated responses that transcend the traditional limits of State sovereignty and promote more effective forms of global governance. According to Netto (2008), the contemporary international landscape is characterized by profound social and political transformations that require existing institutional structures to be reconsidered in order to respond effectively to the complex challenges affecting international coexistence.

Nevertheless, the increasing complexity of the international system has also exposed significant limitations in the legal performance of international organizations. Although these institutions exercise powers conferred by their constituent treaties, their capacity to ensure the effective implementation of international obligations continues to depend largely on the political will of their member States. This situation creates difficulties in achieving the consistent implementation of decisions adopted by international bodies and constrains the effectiveness of numerous international legal instruments. In this respect, Giles Carnero (2021) maintains that the progress achieved by international regimes continues to face important political, economic, and institutional constraints that undermine the effectiveness of international norms and reduce the capacity of international organizations to respond adequately to global challenges.

These institutional limitations are further compounded by the enduring tension between the principle of State sovereignty and the authority of international organizations to supervise compliance with international law. Although international cooperation requires the acceptance of common obligations, many States continue to prioritize their national interests whenever international decisions are perceived as affecting their political or legal autonomy. This tension represents one of the principal obstacles to consolidating an international order founded upon common rules and effective compliance mechanisms. As Álvarez (2021) observes, State

sovereignty remains a structural principle of the international system; however, its exercise must be reconciled with the new forms of institutional cooperation required by contemporary global governance.

Consequently, enhancing the effectiveness of international law requires strengthening the institutional mechanisms responsible for monitoring, promoting, and ensuring compliance with international legal norms. The consolidation of systems of supervision, evaluation, and international accountability constitutes an indispensable element for improving both the legitimacy and the legal effectiveness of international organizations. From this perspective, Zavala de Alba (2015) argues that global governance requires institutions capable of combining administrative efficiency, democratic legitimacy, and effective legal mechanisms to ensure compliance with the international commitments undertaken by States.

The relevance of the present study lies in the fact that international organizations constitute one of the fundamental pillars upon which the stability of the international legal order rests. Their activities contribute to coordinating multilateral policies, preventing conflicts, strengthening international cooperation, and promoting the peaceful settlement of disputes through increasingly specialized legal instruments. As Pastor Ridruejo and Palomar (2013) explain, the development of contemporary international law is inseparable from the strengthening of international organizations, whose evolution has considerably expanded the institutional mechanisms designed to preserve international peace and security.

Furthermore, examining the legal effectiveness of these institutions has become particularly significant in light of current processes of global governance, which are characterized by increasing multipolarity and the participation of new international actors in global decision-making. Contemporary geopolitical transformations require a reassessment of the capacity of international organizations to adapt to dynamic international scenarios while reinforcing mechanisms of multilateral cooperation. In this regard, Buelvas and Mendioroz (2014) contend that global governance faces the challenge of developing institutional structures capable of responding efficiently to increasingly complex transnational problems while simultaneously preserving the legitimacy of the international system.

Within this context, the present study aims to analyze the legal effectiveness of international organizations in protecting the international order by examining the normative, political, and institutional factors that condition their capacity to ensure compliance with international law. The research seeks to provide a doctrinal reflection on the scope and limitations of these institutions within the international legal system while identifying the principal challenges that global governance faces in strengthening the effectiveness of international law. As Núñez (2005) concludes, the effectiveness of international law depends not only on the existence of legal norms but also on the consolidation of institutions capable of ensuring their implementation, legitimacy, and effective enforcement within the international community.

Methodology

This study was conducted using a qualitative research approach, as it enabled a comprehensive examination of the legal effectiveness of international organizations in protecting the international order through the analysis of doctrinal, normative, and jurisprudential sources. The research adopted a documentary design with a descriptive-analytical scope, aimed at understanding the legal foundations underlying the actions of these institutions and the limitations affecting the fulfillment of their functions. Furthermore, a non-experimental research design was employed because the object of study was examined within its natural context without the manipulation of variables, emphasizing the systematic interpretation of the collected information. This methodological framework was particularly appropriate for addressing a predominantly legal and doctrinal issue, consistent with the methodological criteria proposed by Calle Mollo (2023) and Espinoza Freire (2018).

The documentary search strategy consisted of a systematic review of internationally recognized legal and scientific databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, SciELO, Redalyc, Dialnet, HeinOnline, and Google Scholar. These sources were complemented by international legal instruments and relevant jurisprudence issued by international courts and organizations. Literature selection was guided by inclusion criteria based on thematic relevance, academic rigor, legal significance, and currency, while documents lacking peer review, duplicate publications, and studies unrelated to the research objective were excluded. Subsequently, the selected sources were organized and systematized through a thematic classification process, facilitating the identification of the principal doctrinal and normative contributions. This procedure followed the methodological recommendations for literature reviews proposed by Pujol (2008) and Ruiz Espinoza and Estrada Cervantes (2021).

The analytical procedure was primarily based on the doctrinal legal method, which enabled the interpretation of the principles, legal norms, and international treaties governing the activities of international organizations within the framework of public international law. In addition, the comparative method was employed to examine the institutional competences, legal mechanisms, and levels of legal effectiveness of different international organizations, identifying common features, differences, and shared challenges in safeguarding the international order. Finally, a critical interpretation of specialized doctrine, international treaties, and relevant jurisprudence was undertaken to assess the capacity of these institutions to ensure compliance with international law in the face of the challenges posed by contemporary global governance. This analytical process was supported by the qualitative analytical criteria proposed by Cházaro-Arellano (2024), thereby promoting a rigorous, systematic, and critical understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Development

Legal foundations of international organizations

International organizations constitute one of the fundamental pillars of contemporary international law, representing the institutionalization of cooperation among States in pursuit of common political, economic, social, humanitarian, and legal objectives. Their consolidation has made it possible to transcend the limitations of traditional interstate relations through the establishment of permanent institutional structures endowed with international legal personality, specific competences, and the capacity to participate actively in the formation, interpretation, and application of international law. In this regard, Díaz-Cediel (2016) argues that international organizations have evolved from simple mechanisms of coordination into legal subjects capable of generating obligations and exercising normative functions that directly influence the functioning of the international legal system.

The consolidation of these institutions has also reinforced the stability of the international legal order by providing permanent forums for negotiation, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and the development of multilateral consensus. Their role extends beyond merely implementing the mandates conferred by their member States, as they also contribute to the progressive development of international law through the adoption of resolutions, recommendations, treaties, and specialized institutional mechanisms. From this perspective, González (2002) maintains that international organizations perform an essential legal function by facilitating institutionalized cooperation and coordinating collective actions aimed at preserving international peace, security, and stability, particularly in contexts where unilateral action proves insufficient.

Legal nature, international legal personality, and institutional competences

International legal personality constitutes one of the defining characteristics that distinguishes international organizations from other forms of interstate cooperation. Such legal personality enables these organizations to exercise rights and assume obligations independently from

their member States, granting them the capacity to conclude treaties, establish legal relations with other subjects of international law, administer resources, and undertake activities necessary to fulfill their institutional mandates. This legal status has been progressively recognized through both international practice and legal scholarship, consolidating international organizations as autonomous actors within the international legal order. In this respect, Martínez Pérez (2007) explains that the legal nature of decisions adopted by the organs of international organizations depends on the scope of the competences conferred by their constituent instruments and on the legal effects that such decisions produce with respect to member States.

The institutional competences of international organizations are grounded in the principle of conferral, according to which they may exercise only those powers expressly granted by their constituent treaties or implicitly derived from the fulfillment of their institutional objectives. This principle ensures an appropriate balance between the functional autonomy of international organizations and respect for the sovereign will of the States that establish them. Institutional competences may be classified as normative, executive, administrative, judicial, or supervisory, depending on the nature of the organization and the objectives it pursues. As noted by Sandoval Cumbe (2008), the precise delimitation of institutional competences constitutes an essential requirement for ensuring legal certainty, preventing jurisdictional conflicts, and strengthening the legitimacy of decisions adopted by international bodies.

The evolution of international legal personality has also expanded the operational capacity of international organizations to address global challenges requiring coordinated responses. Today, these institutions actively participate in mediation processes, the monitoring of compliance with international obligations, the protection of human rights, peacekeeping operations, technical cooperation, and the formulation of international public policies. Consequently, their legal capacity is no longer confined exclusively to interstate relations but increasingly extends to interactions with regional organizations, international courts, specialized agencies, and even non-state actors, thereby strengthening global governance and promoting the institutionalization of international law.

Principles of international law applicable to international organizations

The activities of international organizations are governed by the general principles of international law, which constitute the legal framework guiding the exercise of their competences and legitimizing their actions within the international community. Among the most significant are the sovereign equality of States, the principle of good faith in fulfilling international obligations, the peaceful settlement of disputes, international cooperation, the prohibition of the use of force, and respect for human rights. These principles not only define the conduct of States but also shape the functioning of international organizations and determine the legal validity of the decisions adopted by their governing bodies. Pastor Ridruejo (2013) argues that these principles form the structural foundation upon which public international law is built, ensuring the coherence and stability of the international legal system.

The significance of these principles has become even more pronounced in response to the contemporary challenges arising from globalization, economic interdependence, and the increasing complexity of international relations. International organizations function as institutional mechanisms designed to operationalize these principles through legal instruments that promote cooperation and the consensual resolution of disputes. In this regard, Castillo Dussán (2024) contends that the principles of international law constitute the essential basis for ensuring the effective protection of human rights and strengthening the legitimacy of international institutions responsible for monitoring compliance with the international obligations assumed by States.

Furthermore, the principle of international cooperation has assumed a central role in the functioning of international organizations because contemporary global challenges require

collective responses grounded in solidarity among States. Issues such as climate change, pandemics, international migration, transnational organized crime, and international security demand permanent mechanisms of institutional coordination capable of articulating effective multilateral policies. Consequently, adherence to the general principles of international law enhances mutual trust among States, reinforces the legitimacy of international organizations, and contributes to the consolidation of an international legal order founded upon shared norms and collective responsibilities.

Evolution of international organizations in the contemporary legal system

The historical development of international organizations reflects the transformation of international law from a system exclusively centered on State sovereignty into a legal order characterized by the progressive institutionalization of international relations. Following the Second World War, the establishment of universal and regional organizations initiated a new era of multilateral cooperation aimed at maintaining peace, promoting economic development, protecting human rights, and strengthening collective security. This process considerably expanded the substantive scope of international organizations and fostered the emergence of new forms of global governance. According to Allauca-Caicedo et al. (2023), the evolution of contemporary international law has been closely associated with the institutional strengthening of international mechanisms for the protection of human rights and the promotion of cooperation among States.

Globalization has accelerated this transformation by increasing the levels of political, economic, technological, and social interdependence among international actors. As a result, international organizations have been compelled to adapt their institutional structures, competences, and operational mechanisms in order to respond more effectively to increasingly complex transnational challenges. The incorporation of new governance instruments, monitoring systems, specialized bodies, and dispute settlement procedures demonstrates the capacity of these institutions to evolve alongside the changing dynamics of the international system. In this respect, Restrepo Vélez (2013) maintains that globalization has profoundly reshaped the configuration of international actors, granting international organizations an increasingly prominent role in regulating global affairs and contributing to the development of the contemporary international legal order.

International organizations and the protection of the international order

The protection of the international order constitutes one of the essential functions of international organizations, whose activities seek to preserve the legal, political, and social stability of the international community through institutional mechanisms of cooperation, conflict prevention, and the promotion of compliance with international law. These organizations play a strategic role by facilitating coordination among States, establishing common legal standards, and monitoring adherence to international commitments undertaken across various areas of global governance. From this perspective, Talavera and García Cochorrano Moyano (2025) emphasize that public international law has evolved toward a model in which international organizations function as indispensable instruments for preserving collective security and reinforcing the effectiveness of the international legal system.

The increasing complexity of international relations has also expanded the role of international organizations as active subjects of international law. Beyond serving as forums for political dialogue and negotiation, these institutions participate in the development of international legal standards, promote processes of technical cooperation, and establish mechanisms designed to ensure compliance with international obligations in areas such as human rights, international security, sustainable development, and environmental protection. Within this context, Carvalho de Vasconcelos (2015) argues that international organizations constitute a distinct category of subjects of international law whose evolution has transformed the

traditional conception of interstate relations, thereby strengthening the institutionalization of global governance.

The role of international organizations in the maintenance of peace and security

The maintenance of international peace and security has been one of the primary objectives of international organizations since the consolidation of the multilateral system following the Second World War. Universal and regional organizations have developed mechanisms for conflict prevention, diplomatic mediation, international observation, and peacekeeping operations aimed at reducing violence, protecting civilian populations, and facilitating institutional reconstruction in situations of crisis. These initiatives demonstrate that international security no longer depends exclusively on the unilateral actions of States but has become a shared responsibility within the international system. As explained by Manrique de Luna Barrios (2013), peacekeeping operations represent one of the most significant instruments through which international organizations contribute to the preservation of international peace and security.

The effectiveness of these operations, however, depends on the availability of financial resources, the political support of member States, and the existence of clearly defined legal mandates that enable international organizations to act with legitimacy and effectiveness. Financial sustainability, institutional coordination, and cooperation among international organizations remain essential factors in ensuring the success of missions deployed in contexts of armed conflict or humanitarian crises. In this regard, Galán Pablo (2015) argues that sustainable financing and the appropriate distribution of responsibilities among organizations such as the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the European Union are fundamental to strengthening the operational capacity of international peacekeeping missions and ensuring the effective protection of the international order.

International protection of human rights through institutional mechanisms

The international protection of human rights represents one of the areas in which international organizations have achieved the greatest degree of legal and institutional development. The establishment of universal and regional human rights protection systems has enabled the consolidation of specialized mechanisms for monitoring compliance with the international obligations assumed by States, thereby strengthening the protection of human dignity through supervisory bodies, international courts, special procedures, and monitoring systems. These mechanisms represent a significant evolution in international law by recognizing that the protection of fundamental rights extends beyond the exclusive jurisdiction of individual States. In this respect, Pureza (2004) argues that the international human rights protection system constitutes one of the most significant achievements of contemporary international law, as it establishes international responsibilities aimed at ensuring the effective protection of individuals.

The effectiveness of these mechanisms depends on several factors, including the willingness of States to comply with international decisions, the institutional strength of supervisory bodies, and the existence of appropriate procedures to ensure the implementation of recommendations and judgments issued by competent international institutions. Although the progress achieved over recent decades has strengthened the international protection of vulnerable groups, significant challenges remain regarding the effective implementation of international decisions. According to Bello-Navarro and Morales-Intriago (2025), the protection of the rights of refugees illustrates both the achievements and the limitations of existing international mechanisms, highlighting the need to strengthen cooperation between States and international organizations in order to provide more effective legal responses to humanitarian crises.

Furthermore, the institutionalization of international human rights protection has contributed to the progressive development of legal standards that guide the conduct of both States and

international organizations. The adoption of general comments, thematic reports, recommendations, and jurisprudential criteria has promoted the evolutionary interpretation of international treaties while expanding the substantive content of States' human rights obligations. Consequently, international organizations not only perform supervisory functions but also promote legal harmonization and foster the development of an international legal culture founded upon the protection of human dignity and respect for the rule of law.

International cooperation to address contemporary global challenges

The growing interdependence among States has demonstrated that the principal contemporary challenges require coordinated responses through permanent mechanisms of international cooperation. Issues such as climate change, environmental degradation, pandemics, food insecurity, transnational organized crime, cybersecurity, and large-scale migration exceed the individual capacities of States, thereby increasing the importance of international organizations as forums for political, technical, and legal coordination. In this context, Bustamante-Vásquez (2026) argues that international environmental governance provides a clear example of how global challenges require institutions capable of promoting cooperation, establishing common principles, and monitoring compliance with international commitments aimed at achieving sustainable development.

International organizations play an essential role in the formulation of multilateral policies, the coordination of financial resources, the transfer of knowledge, and the strengthening of institutional capacities needed to address these shared challenges. Their activities facilitate the construction of international consensus through negotiation processes that reconcile national interests with collective global objectives. In this regard, Guerrero and Cantos (2024) emphasize that international organizations are strategic actors in global cooperation because they facilitate coordination among governments, specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other international stakeholders committed to addressing transnational challenges.

The consolidation of effective international cooperation further requires institutional mechanisms capable of adapting to changing global contexts and responding promptly to emerging threats. Normative innovation, the incorporation of technologies for information exchange, the establishment of early warning systems, and the strengthening of regional cooperation networks represent some of the instruments that have enhanced the response capacity of international organizations. Consequently, international cooperation has become an indispensable component for preserving the international order, strengthening global governance, and ensuring the effectiveness of international law in addressing the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Legal effectiveness and institutional challenges

The legal effectiveness of international organizations constitutes one of the principal indicators for assessing the capacity of international law to produce tangible outcomes in the protection of the international order. The mere existence of treaties, resolutions, and institutional mechanisms is insufficient if the decisions adopted fail to translate into effective implementation within domestic legal systems and influence the conduct of States. Consequently, evaluating institutional effectiveness requires consideration not only of normative dimensions but also of the political, economic, and institutional factors that condition compliance with international obligations. From this perspective, Dammert (2019) argues that institutional strengthening requires not only legal reforms but also genuine governance capacities capable of ensuring the effective implementation of existing legal instruments.

Assessing legal effectiveness also entails examining the impact of international mechanisms on the protection of common legal interests, including peace, human rights, environmental protection, and sustainable development. The increasing complexity of global challenges has

demonstrated that institutional effectiveness depends upon the interaction between international legal norms, organizational structures, and the political will of States. In this regard, Tepan Villa and Molina Torres (2024) contend that the effectiveness of legal instruments should be evaluated not only according to their normative design but also in terms of their capacity to generate concrete changes in social and institutional realities, a criterion that is equally applicable to the functioning of international organizations.

Compliance with and enforcement of decisions adopted by international organizations

One of the greatest challenges facing international law is ensuring the effective compliance with and enforcement of decisions adopted by international organizations and international supervisory bodies. Although many resolutions, recommendations, and judgments possess considerable legal and political authority, their implementation continues to depend largely on the domestic enforcement mechanisms established by individual States. This situation generates significant disparities in levels of compliance and limits the practical effectiveness of numerous international legal instruments designed to safeguard the international legal order.

In the field of human rights, various regional systems have developed procedures intended to strengthen the enforceability of international decisions through mechanisms of monitoring, supervision, and compliance review. These instruments seek to ensure that international decisions produce tangible effects within domestic legal systems by promoting legislative, administrative, and judicial reforms whenever necessary. As explained by Salazar Marín (2013), actions for non-compliance constitute an important legal mechanism for securing the implementation of judgments and reports issued by international bodies, thereby reinforcing the protection of fundamental rights and strengthening the international responsibility of States.

Furthermore, the incorporation of international law into domestic legal systems constitutes a decisive factor in enhancing the effectiveness of decisions adopted by international organizations. Legal harmonization, coordinated action among the branches of government, and recognition of the legal authority of international decisions contribute to a more effective implementation of the obligations undertaken by States. In this regard, Jaramillo Pérez (2008) maintains that the domestic enforcement of decisions issued by international bodies represents one of the principal challenges in consolidating the effective protection of human rights and reinforcing the credibility of the international legal system.

Limitations arising from state sovereignty and geopolitical interests

Despite the progressive strengthening of international organizations, State sovereignty continues to represent one of the principal factors conditioning the effectiveness of international law. States retain the authority to determine the extent to which they accept, implement, and comply with many international obligations, particularly when they perceive that certain international decisions may affect their strategic, political, or economic interests. This reality explains why the legal effectiveness of many international organizations remains closely linked to the level of cooperation and commitment demonstrated by their member States.

Geopolitical interests also exert a significant influence on the functioning of international organizations and on the adoption of multilateral decisions. Power asymmetries among States, competition for strategic resources, and regional disputes may constrain the ability of international institutions to act impartially and effectively in addressing particular international crises. According to Magnani (2020), the geopolitical dimension of State interests continues to shape the formulation of international policies and the participation of States in multilateral cooperation processes, particularly in regions of strategic importance.

Similarly, the current configuration of the international system reflects the coexistence of multiple centers of power that influence global governance and reshape the traditional dynamics of international cooperation. The increasing emergence of a multipolar international order has generated new patterns of negotiation, competition, and strategic alliances that affect both the functioning of international organizations and the implementation of international law. Within this context, Morales Ruvalcaba and Rocha Valencia (2022) argue that the contemporary geostructure of international power requires international organizations to be analyzed from a transstructural perspective that simultaneously considers the legal, political, economic, and geostrategic factors influencing their overall effectiveness.

Perspectives for strengthening legal effectiveness and global governance

Strengthening the legal effectiveness of international organizations requires the promotion of institutional reforms aimed at enhancing legitimacy, transparency, operational capacity, and mechanisms for monitoring compliance with international law. These reforms should foster greater coordination among international organizations, States, and other actors involved in global governance, thereby enabling more timely and effective responses to contemporary challenges. From this perspective, Zavala de Alba (2015) argues that effective global governance requires institutions equipped with appropriate mechanisms for evaluation, accountability, and the continuous monitoring of compliance with international obligations.

At the same time, it is essential to consolidate models of governance based on solidarity, strengthened multilateralism, and the protection of the international common interest. The increasing complexity of global challenges requires institutions capable of integrating interdisciplinary approaches, encouraging the participation of multiple stakeholders, and developing sufficiently flexible legal instruments to respond to dynamic international contexts. In this regard, Contipelli (2016) proposes the model of the cooperative constitutional State as an appropriate framework for strengthening international solidarity, promoting human development, and enhancing global governance through a more balanced interaction between State sovereignty, international cooperation, and the effective protection of the international legal order.

Consequently, the legal effectiveness of international organizations depends upon the convergence of robust international legal norms, efficient institutions, and the genuine commitment of States to comply with their international obligations. The consolidation of mechanisms for international cooperation, monitoring, and accountability will strengthen the capacity of these organizations to preserve peace, protect human rights, and respond effectively to the global challenges that characterize the contemporary international system. Accordingly, strengthening global governance represents not only a legal necessity but also an indispensable condition for ensuring the stability and legitimacy of the international order in the twenty-first century.

Discussion

The findings of the present study demonstrate that the legal effectiveness of international organizations does not depend solely on the existence of a comprehensive framework of international legal norms but also on the institutional capacity to ensure compliance with the obligations assumed by States. Although international law has undergone significant development through the establishment of specialized organizations endowed with international legal personality and clearly defined competences, important limitations remain regarding the enforcement of their decisions and the absence of fully effective coercive mechanisms. This conclusion is consistent with the position advanced by Núñez (2005), who argues that the effectiveness of international law should be assessed according to the actual capacity of its institutions to secure compliance with legal norms rather than merely on the basis of their formal validity.

The analysis also confirms that international legal personality has strengthened the role of international organizations as fundamental actors in global governance. Nevertheless, such autonomy continues to be constrained by the principle of conferral of powers and by their functional dependence on the political will of member States. Consequently, international organizations operate within a framework defined both by the constituent instruments that confer specific competences and by the political support required to implement their decisions effectively. These findings are consistent with the arguments advanced by Díaz Galán (2018) and Pastor Ridruejo (2013), who emphasize that institutional strengthening must be accompanied by the parallel development of international law in order to consolidate genuine supranational legal authority.

Another significant aspect identified in this research concerns the role of international organizations in maintaining international peace and security. The study confirms that peacekeeping operations, mediation mechanisms, and conflict prevention systems have made substantial contributions to reducing violence and facilitating institutional reconstruction in diverse international contexts. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives continues to depend on the availability of financial resources, effective coordination among multilateral organizations, and, above all, the political consensus of the States involved. This interpretation is consistent with the contributions of Manrique de Luna Barrios (2013) and Galán Pablo (2015), who identify financial sustainability and political support as essential prerequisites for the success of international peace operations.

With regard to the international protection of human rights, the findings reveal significant progress resulting from the consolidation of international courts, specialized committees, and permanent supervisory mechanisms. These institutions have strengthened the protection of fundamental rights through the development of international standards and jurisprudential principles that guide the conduct of States. Nevertheless, the study also demonstrates that the effectiveness of these mechanisms continues to face significant challenges related to the domestic implementation of international decisions, particularly in States characterized by institutional weaknesses or limited political willingness to fulfill their international commitments. These findings are consistent with the arguments advanced by Pureza (2004) and by Bello-Navarro and Morales-Intriago (2025), who contend that the consolidation of international protection systems requires the simultaneous strengthening of national compliance mechanisms.

Similarly, the research identifies international cooperation as one of the principal instruments for addressing contemporary global challenges. Issues such as climate change, global health crises, transnational organized crime, and large-scale migration demonstrate that no State possesses sufficient capacity to respond independently to phenomena that transcend national borders. Within this context, international organizations have assumed strategic responsibilities in coordinating collective action, providing technical assistance, and developing multilateral policies aimed at managing shared global risks. These conclusions support the arguments presented by Bustamante-Vásquez (2026) and Guerrero and Cantos (2024), who regard institutional cooperation as an indispensable component of strengthening global governance and ensuring coordinated responses to common international threats.

However, one of the principal contributions of this study lies in demonstrating that the greatest obstacles to achieving genuine legal effectiveness do not arise solely from the limitations of international organizations themselves, but rather from the persistent tensions between State sovereignty and the geopolitical interests that characterize the contemporary international system. Although States formally acknowledge the obligations arising from international treaties, they frequently prioritize national interests whenever international decisions are perceived as affecting their political, economic, or strategic objectives. This reality significantly constrains the ability of international organizations to operate independently and reduces the practical effectiveness of many international legal instruments. In this regard, the analyses of

Magnani (2020) and Morales Ruvalcaba and Rocha Valencia (2022) provide valuable insights into how the distribution of international power continues to shape the effectiveness of multilateral institutions.

Finally, the findings of this study suggest that strengthening the legal effectiveness of international organizations requires the advancement of models of global governance founded on enhanced cooperation, institutional transparency, and effective mechanisms of international monitoring and accountability. Rather than merely expanding the number of international legal norms, greater emphasis should be placed on reinforcing the institutional capacity to supervise compliance and create incentives that promote effective implementation by States. In this respect, the proposals advanced by Zavala de Alba (2015) and Contipelli (2016) are particularly relevant, as they emphasize that effective global governance must combine institutional legitimacy, international solidarity, and robust legal mechanisms capable of responding to the complexity of the contemporary international system. Consequently, the consolidation of more effective international organizations constitutes an indispensable condition for safeguarding the international order and strengthening the authority of international law within an increasingly interdependent global environment.

Conclusions

The present study concludes that the legal effectiveness of international organizations constitutes an essential element in preserving the international order and consolidating contemporary international law. Although these institutions have undergone significant development with respect to their international legal personality, institutional competences, and operational capacities, their effectiveness continues to depend upon the interaction between international legal frameworks and the political willingness of States to comply with their international obligations. Consequently, the effective protection of the international legal order requires the simultaneous strengthening of institutional structures and mechanisms for the implementation of international law.

The findings further demonstrate that international organizations perform strategic functions in areas such as the maintenance of international peace, the international protection of human rights, and cooperation in addressing global challenges that no State can effectively confront in isolation. Their capacity to coordinate multilateral action, promote common legal standards, and facilitate supervisory mechanisms has contributed substantially to the strengthening of global governance. Nevertheless, significant limitations remain regarding the implementation of their decisions, the insufficiency of coercive enforcement mechanisms, and the political asymmetries that continue to characterize the contemporary international system.

Another important finding reveals that State sovereignty and geopolitical interests remain the principal factors restricting the legal effectiveness of international organizations. The uneven implementation of international decisions, the existence of competing national interests, and the asymmetric distribution of international power constrain the ability of these institutions to ensure the uniform application of international law. Accordingly, there is a pressing need to advance more robust models of international cooperation that promote greater coherence between domestic legal systems and the obligations arising from the international legal order.

Finally, this study concludes that strengthening the legal effectiveness of international organizations requires the implementation of institutional reforms aimed at enhancing legitimacy, transparency, accountability, and mechanisms for monitoring compliance with international obligations. The consolidation of a more effective system of global governance will depend upon the capacity of States and international organizations to establish relationships grounded in cooperation, shared responsibility, and respect for international law. Within this context, reinforcing multilateral institutions represents not only a legal imperative

but also an indispensable condition for ensuring stability, peace, and the effective protection of the international order in the face of the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Limitations of the Study

The principal limitation of this research lies in its strictly documentary and doctrinal nature, relying on the analysis of legal scholarship, international treaties, and specialized jurisprudence. As a result, it was not possible to incorporate empirical evidence derived from case studies or interviews with experts and officials from international organizations that could have provided practical validation of the study's findings.

Future research

Future studies are encouraged to incorporate comparative methodologies and empirical analyses focusing on the performance of specific international organizations. Such research should evaluate the implementation of international decisions across different national and regional contexts in order to identify best practices and develop recommendations aimed at strengthening legal effectiveness and improving global governance.

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Declaration of conflicts of interest

The author declares that there are no personal, academic, professional, institutional, or financial conflicts of interest that may have influenced the design, conduct, interpretation of the findings, or publication of this study. Furthermore, the author affirms that the research was conducted independently, objectively, and in full accordance with the principles of scientific ethics and academic integrity.

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