



Kobe Seminar on International Law

Unilateral Sanctions Against Russia and the International Rule of Law

The international response to Russia's unlawful invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has once again brought to the fore the use of unilateral sanctions in international law. Recent scholarship has focussed mainly on the lawfulness of particular sanctions practices such as confiscation of state assets and secondary sanctions. But focus on these discrete issues has left other important questions unanswered. For instance, what is the relevance of the fact that recent practice is driven by a select group of states, and that that sanctions are imposed in response to certain violations of international law and not others? Is their increased use a sign of a concerning unilateralism or a threat to the rules-based order?

It is argued that we can begin to answer such questions by thinking in terms of the international rule of law. Through an enumeration of certain formal and substantive rule of law considerations, it is shown that that the triggering and implementation of sanctions with these considerations in mind can provide international legal subjects with weightier reasons for action. Ultimately, it is argued that our present system of collective security means that unilateral sanctions are inevitable, but the rule of law provides guidance on how to design and implement such sanctions in the most normatively desirable way.

Speaker: Dr James Devaney (University of Glasgow)

Date & Time: 4 July 2024 (Thursday) 17:00-18:30

Venue: Frontier 406, Rokkodai 1st Campus, Kobe University (in-person)



Dr James Devaney is Senior Lecturer in Law and Programme Convenor of the LLM in International Law. He has studied law at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy (PhD 2015, LLM 2012), the University of Glasgow (LLM (distinction) 2010) and the University of Strathclyde (LL.B (Hons) 2009). He has previously been a visiting scholar at the Lauterpacht Centre for International Law at the University of Cambridge, the University of Sydney, and been a fellow of the Berlin Potsdam Research Group "International Law – Rise or Decline?"

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