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REGIONAL COURTS AND THEIR ROLE IN THE RESOLUTION AND ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL DISPUTES

Nabiyev Akram Bekmurodovich
Master's student at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy
Akramnabiyev886@gmail.com

Abstract. Regional courts have become an important component of the contemporary international justice system. They contribute to the peaceful settlement of international disputes, the protection of human rights, and the development of international legal standards. This thesis examines the role of regional judicial institutions in resolving and analyzing international disputes, with particular attention to the European Court of Human Rights, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The study analyzes their jurisdiction, legal mechanisms, judicial decisions, and interaction with national legal systems.

Keywords: regional courts, international disputes, international law, judicial settlement, human rights, jurisdiction, international justice, regional legal systems.

Introduction. The peaceful settlement of international disputes is one of the fundamental principles of contemporary international law. International disputes may arise from territorial issues, interpretation of treaties, human rights violations, political disagreements, economic interests, or other international obligations. In this context, judicial settlement provides states and other authorized actors with a legal mechanism for resolving disputes through established procedures and international legal norms.

Regional courts occupy a significant position within the international judicial system. Unlike universal judicial institutions, regional courts operate within specific geographical and legal frameworks. Their activities reflect both universal principles of international law and the particular historical, political, and legal characteristics of their regions.

Among the most significant regional judicial institutions are the European Court of Human Rights, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Their judicial practice has contributed to the development of regional standards and to the interpretation of international human rights instruments.

Main Part. Regional courts perform several important functions in the settlement of international disputes. First, they provide an institutional forum where legal disagreements can be considered according to international law. Second, their judgments contribute to the interpretation and development of international legal norms. Third, regional courts can strengthen accountability for violations of international obligations.

The **European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR)** represents one of the most developed regional judicial mechanisms. It operates within the framework of the European Convention on Human Rights and considers both individual and inter-State applications. Its jurisprudence has significantly influenced national legislation and judicial practice in European states. The Court's inter-State jurisdiction is particularly important when alleged violations concern broader disputes between states.

The **African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights** operates within the African human rights system. It was established under the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. The Court considers cases concerning the interpretation and application of the African Charter, its Protocol, and other relevant human rights instruments ratified by the states concerned. Its activities complement the work of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

The **Inter-American Court of Human Rights** is an autonomous judicial institution within the Organization of American States. It exercises contentious and advisory jurisdiction under the American

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Convention on Human Rights. The Court's decisions have contributed to the development of important legal principles concerning state responsibility, reparations, judicial guarantees, and the protection of fundamental rights.

A comparative analysis demonstrates that regional courts have both common and distinctive characteristics. Their common feature is the use of legal procedures for the settlement of disputes and the protection of international obligations. However, the scope of jurisdiction, access procedures, enforcement mechanisms, and relationships with national courts differ between regions.

An important aspect of regional judicial practice is the relationship between international and national law. Decisions of regional courts may require states to modify legislation, administrative practices, judicial approaches, or mechanisms for protecting individual rights. Therefore, the influence of regional courts extends beyond individual cases and may contribute to broader legal reforms.

Analysis. The analysis of regional judicial mechanisms shows that courts can transform international disputes from predominantly political disagreements into legally structured proceedings. Judicial procedures provide opportunities to examine evidence, interpret treaties, establish legal responsibility, and determine appropriate forms of remedy. Regional courts also contribute to the development of international legal doctrine. Through repeated judicial decisions, they establish interpretative approaches that may influence national courts, legislators, international organizations, and other judicial institutions. Another important feature is judicial dialogue between regional courts. The exchange of legal approaches between European, African, and Inter-American judicial institutions contributes to the development of common standards while preserving regional legal particularities. However, regional courts should not be regarded as substitutes for diplomacy or political negotiation. Negotiations, mediation, arbitration, and judicial settlement represent complementary instruments of peaceful dispute resolution. The appropriate mechanism depends on the nature of the dispute, the applicable international instruments, and the consent of the states concerned.

Conclusion. Regional courts play an important role in the contemporary system of international dispute settlement. The European Court of Human Rights, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the Inter-American Court of Human Rights demonstrate different models of regional judicial protection, while sharing the common objective of strengthening international legality and judicial protection.

Their importance lies not only in resolving particular disputes but also in developing international legal standards, interpreting international treaties, strengthening state responsibility, and influencing national legal systems.

The effectiveness of regional courts depends on several factors, including recognition of their jurisdiction, access to judicial mechanisms, implementation of judgments, and cooperation between states and regional institutions. Therefore, strengthening judicial dialogue and improving the implementation of regional court decisions are important conditions for further development of international justice.

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