

# Legal Loopholes and Judicial Debates: Essays on Russia's 2014 Annexation of Crimea and Its Consequences for International Law<sup>\*</sup>

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These three articles on the 2014 Russian capture of Crimea and its aftermath are the first instalment of a series of special sections in *JSPPS* which aim to provide critical and in-depth coverage on this momentous event in contemporary European history.<sup>1</sup> The annexation's repercussions are ongoing, and were especially palpable on 25 November 2018, when Russian war ships fired on three Ukrainian ships near the Kerch Strait between the Azov Sea and Black Sea. Our special sections, here and later, investigate the legality and impact of the annexation from judicial, political, international, and domestic angles. They bring together scholars with expert knowledge to weigh in on some of the thorniest issues when it comes to assessing the annexation and its various after-effects on international law and East European politics. They seek to complement and advance above all the existing scholarly legal literature on the issue.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See also earlier, in this journal: Andrew Wilson, "The Crimean Tatar Question: A Prism for Changing and Rival Versions of Eurasianism," *Journal of Soviet and Post-Soviet Politics and Society* 3, no. 2 (2017): 1–46.

<sup>2</sup> For references on some of the relevant English- and German-language judicial literature on Crimea's annexation, see the following list from Andreas Umland, "Whom Does Crimea Belong to? Russia's Annexation of the Ukrainian Peninsula and the Question of Historical Justice," *VoxUkraine*, 29 August 2018, [voxukraine.org/en/were-there-any-real-historical-grounds-for-the-annexation-of-crimea-by-russia-no/](http://voxukraine.org/en/were-there-any-real-historical-grounds-for-the-annexation-of-crimea-by-russia-no/); Hans-Joachim Heintze, "Völkerrecht und Sezession: Ist die Annexion der Krim eine zulässige Wiedergutmachung sowjetischen Unrechts?" *Humanitäres Völkerrecht: Informationsschriften* 3 (2014): 129–38; Otto Luchterhandt, "Die Krim-Krise von 2014: Staats- und