



FROM FRAMEWORK TO ENFORCEMENT: CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS THROUGH WORKER-DRIVEN RESPONSIBILITY

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INTRODUCTION

The transition from normative structures to applicable mechanisms in corporate human rights responsibility in global supply chains became a pressing legal and ethical imperative. This change resonates deeply with constitutional values, such as the right to equality, dignity and subsistence means, which are generally compromised by exploiting labor practices. Jurisprudentially, there is a growing recognition that companies, although private entities, assume social and moral responsibilities, especially when operating transitionally. Courts and human rights bodies are increasingly recognizing the need for binding business obligations. Globally, this is aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 8 (decent work and economic growth), SDGs 10 (reduced inequalities) and ODS 12 (responsible consumption and production), all of which require ethical conduct of commercial conduct and strengthened mechanisms. A model of worker-oriented responsibility ensures the inclusion of the most affected-workers-feeding and applying standards, ensuring that human rights are not only protected in principle but performed in practice.

DEFINITIONS:

1.1.1 Human Rights-

United Nations- “Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination.”¹

UNICEF “Human rights are standards that recognize and protect the dignity of all human beings. Human rights govern how individual human beings live in society and with each other, as well as their relationship with the State and the obligations that the State have towards them.”²

1.1.2 Global Supply Chain- “A global supply chain is the worldwide system a business uses to produce products or services.”³

1.1.3. Corporate Accountability- Howard R. Bowen gave one of the first definitions of corporate accountability in 1953. In Bowen’s View Expectations Placed On Businesses breed a higher standard of living, economic growth And Security, Order, Rights And Freedom, And compliance with society’s values. (Bowen, 1953)

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this study is to understand and to analyse on From Framework To Enforcement: Corporate Accountability And Human Rights In Global Supply Chains Through Worker-driven Responsibility. The specific objectives of the study are mentioned below:

- To analyse the effectiveness of existing corporate structures in maintaining fundamental human rights within global supply chains in the 21st century.
- To examine the traditional CSR mechanisms that lacks in addressing modern human rights violations such as forced labor, unsafe work status and wages theft.
- To analyse the Activist-operated responsibility.
- To understand the role of states, international bodies and corporations in institutionalizing human rights on due analysis through legally binding enforcement mechanisms.

¹United Nations. Human Rights. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/human-rights> [Jul 1, 2025]

² UNICEF. What are Human Rights? Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/what-are-human-rights> [Jul 1, 2025]

³Geoff Williams. (2023). What is a Global Supply Chain? American Express. Available at: <https://www.americanexpress.com/en-us/business/trends-and-insights/articles/what-is-a-global-supply-chain/> [Jul 1, 2025]

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the proliferation of voluntary corporate social responsibility (RSE) structures, human rights abuses persist in global supply chains, particularly in low wage sectors. Traditional top-down monitoring mechanisms usually fail to deal with energy imbalances and lack effective application. This gap raises concerns about the responsibility of the real world of multinational companies. The workers oriented models, which are the center of workers in the application, emerged as a promising alternative, but remain underused and poorly researched.

1.4 RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

This is highly relevant because it researches corporate responsibility, business and human rights or international labor law. It addresses the legal change of voluntary corporate social responsibility mechanisms to compulsory laws of due diligence of human rights, particularly in the EU and other jurisdictions. This article explores the evolving legal scenario, where companies are increasingly responsible for rights violations in their global supply chains, not only through politics, but through binding legal obligations and application mechanisms. This includes developments such as the DUE Diligence Directive of Corporate Sustainability of EU and national laws in Germany, France and Norway. More significantly, the focus on worker-oriented liability introduces an innovative model in which the application is guided by the most affected workers themselves. This opens critical discussions about the application from the bottom up, access to medicines, responsibility and corporate obligations under domestic and international law.

1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method used in this research is doctrinal. The sources of data collection are from primary sources like Articles and Journals from Google Scholar, Shodh Ganga etc;

1.6 HYPOTHESIS

Worker oriented liability initiatives lead to a more effective application of human rights standards in global supply chains compared to traditional CSR structures led by companies.

1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

- **Askin, E. (2022):**

The relevance of the research paper is high because it addresses a critical issue in the global economy: the human rights responsibilities of corporations in global supply chains. The title of the paper is "The Human Rights Responsibilities of Corporations in Global Supply Chains." This research paper addresses the critical issue of human rights responsibilities of corporations in global supply chains. It explores recent developments and the feasibility of these responsibilities under international human rights law. Though the methodology is not explicit, it appears to be a doctrinal legal study. The paper discusses social, economic, and political implications, highlighting the lack of direct human rights obligations on private actors and reliance on soft regulations. It analyzes legal developments and new initiatives, focusing on the feasibility of corporate human rights responsibilities.

- **Boeva, B. (2022):**

The paper's relevance is its focus on human rights within global supply chains, which is a critical issue in international business and corporate governance. The title of the paper is "Sustainable Global Supply Chains: The Human Rights Aspect." The aim of the study is to examine global supply chains from a human rights perspective and how they are addressed by academic researchers, governments, and businesses. The research methodology involves theoretical and methodological ideas from different academic schools, including case studies and literature reviews. The implications include social, economic, and political impacts related to human rights abuses in global supply chains. The findings highlight the underestimation of human rights issues in global supply chains and the need for interdisciplinary approaches. The conclusion is that the paper contributes to academic studies in international business and corporate governance. The research gap identified is the need for further study on local suppliers and human rights traceability within global supply chains. The framework for the study involves interdisciplinary approaches combining international business, corporate governance, and human rights.

- **Nolan, J. (2017):**

The relevance of the research paper is indicated by its focus on corporate responsibility and human rights in global supply chains, which is a significant issue in business and human rights. The title of the paper is "Business and human rights: The challenge of putting principles into practice and regulating global supply chains." This research paper explores the critical issue of corporate responsibility and human rights in global supply chains. It examines companies' obligations to respect human rights, particularly through the analysis of legislative initiatives within human rights frameworks. While the methodology is not explicit, the paper assesses social, economic, and political implications of these responsibilities, emphasizing recent legislative measures to enforce corporate respect for human rights. The research highlights challenges in implementing human rights principles in practice and analyzes how legislative efforts are influencing corporate behavior in supply chains.

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH

CHAPTER 1

Effectiveness of existing corporate structures in maintaining fundamental human rights within global supply chains in the 21st century

In a globalized economy, transnational companies in all sectors are directly or indirectly linked to global supply chains, in particular through transnational commercial activities and foreign investments. That this represents a potential threat to individuals and the environment was revealed by persistent violations of human rights and environmental damage. In practice, human rights abuse by transnational companies usually occur in global southern countries and affect the most vulnerable people, such as working women, children's workers and residents of poor and rural areas. However, the existing international human rights system does not impose direct human rights obligations on private actors, including transnational companies. The responsibilities of transnational human rights companies in global supply chains are based mainly on a smile of scraps of smooth regulations. In recent years, however, new initiatives have come to light at national and international levels, such as the development of internationally binding treaty to regulate business activities in relation to human rights or domestic laws for corporate fixed hard work. Most of these initiatives emphasize the role of the state in incorporating the "mediation" approach to the responsibility of human rights of international corporations.⁴

International organizations (iOS) have been widely criticized as ineffective. Nevertheless, scholars and physicians assess the IO performance, often focus on traditional methods of governance such as treaties and inter-state dispute-resolution mechanisms. In addition, they often strengthen the same activities when they observe poor performances. We call this dependence on the traditional state-based mechanism "International Old Regime" (IOG). A better way to understand and improve IO performance is to consider iOS methods in which iOS and work - including reaching private actors and institutions, collaborating with them, and supporting and shaping their activities. Such action is helping to develop a complex global network of public, private and mixed institutions and criteria, partially orchestrated by iOS, which we call "transnational new governance" (TNG). With proper orchestration by iOS, TNG can modify both "state failure"-insufficiency of IOG and "market failure"-which is the result of problems resulting from problems that resulted in problems that are highly decentralized. The orchestration thus offers iOS an important way to improve their regulatory performance. Some iOS are already actively engaged with private actors and institutions - we provide several images, highlighting the activities of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). Nevertheless, there is an important "orchestration deficit" that provides real opportunities for iOS.⁵

The management of global supply chains is mainly concerned with the planning and organization of the supply process that ultimately provides the buyer in the head of the chain the goods or pieces they have asked to maximize efficiency in terms of delivery and costs. Prevention of human rights violations in these chains is a matter of corporate social responsibility. This article discusses the ways in which corporate social responsibility can reconcile human rights and supply chain management. To this end, it will present the public barriers of international law and private international law to weaving the legal responsibility of human rights in the global management of the supply chain. This discussion will be complemented by a case study of the smartphone industry, which is an area in which frequent violations of corporate social responsibility were reported in global supply chains.⁶

CHAPTER 2

Traditional CSR mechanisms lack in addressing modern human rights violations such as forced labor, unsafe work status and wages theft

Modern business has changed dramatically and "became global" to foreign markets and secure resources, including work. Family family names, such as Nike and Apple, "outsourced" many of their functions for suppliers abroad. As multinational buyers, they dominate one end of the global value chain. At the opposite end of the value chain are local managers and owners of factories and aggression where tablets are mounted, running sneakers are made and dresses are sown. These facilities are often places of serious human rights violations, such as forced labor and child labor. Some actors have tried to control transnational corporate misconduct through disputes in domestic courts on the actions of the corporation abroad. However, after *Kiobel v. Royal Dutch Petroleum*, it is unclear how these strategies will be successful in the future. This article adopts a different approach and focuses on preventing these human rights violations, strengthening corporate social responsibility practices (RSE). Unfortunately, current CSR approaches focus on encouraging better corporate diligence regarding the behavior of their suppliers. These approaches rely on auditing, monitoring and revelations and rely on efforts to combat human rights violations to follow the efforts of international (United Nations Conservation, Honor and Measures structure), National (Danish Act on Financial Description) and Pratidor (California's transparency in California's transparency Act 2010). However, this article suggests that these and similar efforts will be limited in their effects due to the problem of wrong encouragement between buyers and suppliers in global value chains. Suppliers have separate professional profiles, interests and obstacles than their multinational buyers. Therefore, traditional drivers for CSR who rely on iconic risks and consumer boycotts will not work for suppliers. Instead, public actors and other stakeholders should identify the incentives that are suitable for suppliers. Second, they should also adopt a reflective law governance approach to effectively transmit these incentives to global value chains.⁷

Since the early 1990s, a series of corporate monitoring initiatives and multi participants have sought to address the violation of workers' rights, monitoring suppliers in the global supply chain and trying to remedy violations. However, its effectiveness in the area of freedom of association rights has been limited, especially in repressive labor regimes. This is because these initiatives have sought inadequate strategies and lack traditional ways of state power,

⁴ Elif Askin. (2022). The Human Rights Responsibilities of Corporations in Global Supply Chains. Nomos E library. Available at: <https://www.nomos-elibrary.de/de/10.5771/1435-439X-2022-2-319/the-human-rights-responsibilities-of-corporations-in-global-supply-chains-jahrgang-25-2022-heft-2?page=1> [Jul 1, 2025]

⁵ Kenneth W. Abbott. (2010). International regulation without international government: Improving IO performance through orchestration. Springer Nature Link. Available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11558-010-9092-3> [Jul 9, 2025]

⁶ Kasey L. McCall-Smith et al. (2016). Reconciling Human Rights and Supply Chain Management Through Corporate Social Responsibility. SSRN. Available at: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2888553 [Jul 9, 2025]

⁷ University of Washington School of Law. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.law.uw.edu/> [Jul 9, 2025]

especially the ability to sanction violators or leverage provided by activist campaigns. Recent approaches to the Social Conformity Program, such as the formation of workers management committees, are largely limited in regimes in which workers face the employer or state -controlled unions. And most production in light industry supply chains, such as clothing, occurs in repressive work regimes.⁸

CHAPTER 3

Activist-operated responsibility- Role of models promoting human rights enforcement more equally and continuously in today's global economy

The multinational corporations are a possible force for human rights in the global workplace. Multinational corporations face considerable investigation into their business practices and vigorous debate on the role of business in promoting and protecting international human rights. To date, business interests and human rights activists have often been seen engaged in an intimate conflict. But for those who really care about improving situations for people living in the global economy, the real challenge is how to integrate business and human rights. The increasing number of activists, businessmen and policy makers now believes that the interests of business and human rights advocates are not always in conflict. For example, cooperation between private companies and non-governmental organizations emerged as the most effective way to eliminate child labor in football ball production in Pakistan. Human rights and professional communities are able to better deploy themselves to achieve their goals in the rapidly changing international scenario, comprehending their views to take care of each other's concerns and obstacles. The convergence of three trends - globalization of international human rights standards, globalization of international commerce, and proliferation of international networks - has made the increasing pressure on multinational enterprises accountable to the condition of human rights in factories and countries where they work. Today, the way a government treats its citizens has become a legitimate subject for international investigation, discussion and action. In addition, the volume of commerce and investment that goes through national and international borders increasingly connect economic subsistence means to the global market. Equally important, individuals and organizations can now gather and disseminate information in support of human rights and trade with ease and unprecedented power. International human rights for centuries, as a government dealt with its citizens was not considered an appropriate research on other governments or by the international community. This doctrine of international law was attacked in the mid -twentieth century, when a series of international agreements rejected the absolute supremacy of state sovereignty over individual rights. The United Nations Charter of 1945 has asked the States -Members to promote and protect human rights. Nuremberg Courts after World War II established individual responsibility for specific international crimes, including crimes against humanity. In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights fundamentally expanded international law, recognizing that all individuals are entitled to certain rights. The second half of the twentieth century witnessed a proliferation of patterns that define the basic freedoms and freedoms that constitute human rights. The United Nations, as well as regional international organizations such as the European Union, codified human rights standards that address civil and political rights; Economic, social and cultural rights; and the extension of human rights to specific groups, including women, children and minorities. The International Labor Organization, created in 1919 and became part of the United Nations System in 1945, developed hundreds of patterns for working conditions and workers' rights, including international conventions on children's work and forced labor, freedom of association and collective bargaining. Almost without exception, these standards require governments to protect, promote and promote the rights of their citizens. As the number of standards proliferated, also the size and scope of the international human rights community.⁹

The role of models in promoting the application of human rights in the global economy is multifaceted. International Human Rights Law provides a protection structure, but faces challenges in execution due to issues of jurisdiction, state sovereignty and globalization.¹⁰ The models of social and human rights of disabilities are complementary, with different subjects and functions in political contexts.¹¹ EU's commercial policy incorporates non -economic values through various externalization models, including unilateral and bilateral actions, accompanied by compliance mechanisms.¹² Business agreements, such as USMCA, are seen as potential tools for promoting labor rights and economic recovery, with a change to regional supply chains and local production.¹³ Effective enforcement of labor rights globally requires cooperation between states, international organizations and actors of civil society to address the complications of the modern global economy.¹⁴

CHAPTER 4

Role of states, international bodies and corporations in institutionalizing human rights on due analysis through legally binding enforcement mechanisms

⁸ Mark Anner. (2017). *Monitoring Workers' Rights: The Limits of Voluntary Social Compliance Initiatives in Labor Repressive Regimes*. Wiley. Available at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1758-5899.12385> [Jul 9, 2025]

⁹ Ralph Wilde. (2016). *Dilemmas in Promoting Global Economic Justice through Human Rights Law*. Oxford Academic. Available at: <https://academic.oup.com/book/5623/chapter-abstract/148631017?redirectedFrom=fulltext> [Jul 11, 2025]

¹⁰ Astika Biswa. (2024). *International Human Rights Law: Enforcement Mechanisms and Challenges in a Globalized World*. JRPS. Available at: <https://jrps.shodhsagar.com/index.php/j/article/view/1403> [Jul 11, 2025]

¹¹ Anna Lawson. (2020). The social and human rights models of disability: towards a complementarity thesis. *The International Journal of Human Rights*. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13642987.2020.1783533> [Jul 1, 2025]

¹² Urszula Jaremba. (2020). *Non-Economic Values and Objectives in EU Trade Policy: Different Models of Externalization and Enforcement*. Springer Nature Link. Available at: https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-34588-4_8 [Jul 1, 2025]

¹³ Aneta Tyc. (2021). *Global Trade, Labour Rights and International Law*. Tylor & Francis Group. Available at: <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9781003159612/global-trade-labour-rights-international-law-aneta-tyc> [Jul 11, 2025]

¹⁴ Astika Biswa. (2024). *International Human Rights Law: Enforcement Mechanisms and Challenges in a Globalized World*. JRPS. Available at: <https://jrps.shodhsagar.com/index.php/j/article/view/1403> [Jul 11, 2025]

The application of the International Human Rights Law faces significant challenges in a globalized world, particularly in relation to the regulation of transnational companies (TNCs).¹⁵ The argument is that voluntary mechanisms are inadequate, which emphasize the need to bind human rights standards for TNCs with meaningful enforcement mechanisms.¹⁶ Checks the role of soft laws in regulating businesses, highlighting its boundaries by accepting its ability to incremental changes. It is suggested that to increase effectiveness legally to connect soft laws with binding obligations.¹⁷ It explores various mechanisms for the application of the International Human Rights Law, including treaties, regional bodies and domestic legal systems. The article emphasizes the challenges of jurisdiction, state sovereignty and restrictions on appeals in the application of human rights rules.

When it comes to authors, state authorities are the most common authors of abuse against HRDs, as they seek ways to intimidate them and prevent them from challenging government policy and interests. Although traditionally being responsible for human rights, states serve paradoxically as violators and guarantees of these rights in the context of HR abuse (NASH 2015). State authorities, including police, security forces and national intelligence agencies, may be directly or indirectly implicated in violations such as arbitrary arrests, torture, illegal searches and surveillance (OHCHR 2004). In addition to these violations and attacks against defenders, HRD criminalization has emerged as a recent trend and a method of abuse. Restrictive laws that undermine freedom of association, expression and peaceful assembly, along with unfounded processes and misuse of existing laws, are common tactics used to prevent defenders in their activities (front line defenders 2023). Failure to comply with justice for violations and crimes against defenders results in high levels of impunity for crimes committed against HRDs, perpetuating more abuses against them (Koula 2020). Non-state actors also commit human rights violations. The word 'non-state actors' includes individuals, corporations, groups and organizations, which are not agents and mechanisms of the state (Claphum 2017). This means that many people can be responsible for abuses against defenders. However, according to the United Nations special synergy over the position of HRDs, individuals, private corporations and news media are among the non-state actors who are the most regular accused of misusing HRDS (UNGA 2010).¹⁸

Guiding Principles (UNGPs) of Differential Trade and Human Rights in Conservation and United Nations: The responsibility of non-state actors for human rights violations is a controversial and challenging issue in the International Human Rights Act, as all human rights treaties worry about the states and form a set of obligations for the states. The International Human Rights Law first applies to the state that it holds the final public power on its people (Rodley 1993). Obviously, non-state actors play their role in the pleasure of human rights, so some regulation seems necessary. However, private corporations are not bound by human rights law; Rather, as legal institutions deserve human rights protection. Their conduct should be regulated by domestic law, while mainly ignored by international law. Under international law, the general rule is that the state can be held responsible, which is of its organs, which uses Groups exercise legislative, executive, judicial or any other functions, whatever situation they place in the state's organization (ILC 2001), which creates a scuffle in relation to human rights violations located in international law.¹⁹

SUGGESTION

The article concludes by suggesting the development of a hybrid regulatory approach to the promotion of corporate social responsibility, which transcends the limitations of public and private international law in supply chain management. Send the robust requirements of human rights due diligence in all global supply chains, along with executive legal liabilities at national and international levels. Incorporate worker-oriented responsibility structures to enable individuals directly affected and ensure that corporate compliance is not merely procedural but substantive. Integrate these legal reforms with benchmarks and constitutional guarantees, encouraging responsible practices while providing rapid redress for violations

CONCLUSION

Translating aspirations in real accountability demands to move forward from voluntary norms for standards, legal liabilities and activist-centered rule for voluntary norms. This development aligns constitutional security, judicial trends and corporate conduct with SDG, ensuring that transnational businesses are carried forward - human rights were not reduced in their supply chains.

¹⁵ Anwood Mzikenge Chirwa. (2017). The Long March to Binding Obligations of Transnational Corporations in International Human Rights Law. South African Journal On Human Rights. Available at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/19962126.2006.11864882> [Jul 11.2025]

¹⁶ Justine Nolan. (2013). The corporate responsibility to respect human rights: soft law or not law? Cambridge University Press. Available at: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/human-rights-obligations-of-business/corporate-responsibility-to-respect-human-rights-soft-law-or-not-law/BFEDCB2C62FB804ABAE7533196E4545E> [Jul 11.2025]

¹⁷ Astika Biswa. (2024). International Human Rights Law: Enforcement Mechanisms and Challenges in a Globalized World. JRPS. Available at: <https://jrps.shodhsagar.com/index.php/j/article/view/1403> [Jul 11.2025]

¹⁸ Aikaterini-Christina Koula. (2024). *Corporate Responsibility to Respect Human Rights Defenders Under the UNGPs and Steps Towards Mandatory Due Diligence*. Springer Nature Link. Available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10991-023-09359-1> [Jul 10, 2025]

¹⁹ Aikaterini-Christina Koula. (2024). *Corporate Responsibility to Respect Human Rights Defenders Under the UNGPs and Steps Towards Mandatory Due Diligence*. Springer Nature Link. Available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10991-023-09359-1> [Jul 10, 2025]