

# Welcome to Another Demanding and Exciting Year

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The year we have left behind was a good year for the *Arctic Review on Law and Politics*, especially when we look at the number of published articles, readers, and downloads. In 2023, the journal published eleven original scientific articles and a significant number of debate and news articles. Four of the original articles have well over 1,000 downloads. The two most read are “[Science at Stake – Russia and the Arctic Council](#)” by Serafima Andreeva, and “[Wind Energy on Trial in Saepmie: Epistemic Controversies and Strategic Ignorance in Norway’s Green Energy Transition](#)” by Eva Maria Fjellheim. It is good to see that articles with such themes have a large readership, as these themes constitute the core of the journal’s publication strategy.

Looking at the world around us, a more accurate description would be that the past year has been challenging and demanding. At the start of 2024, the news is no longer dominated by one, but two large and painful wars. Both of these wars are characterized by gross violations of international law and a lack of respect for humanitarian principles, with primarily innocent civilians the victims. On Christmas Day 2023, the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) reported that Christmas Eve and the following night had been one of the deadliest days so far in the war in Gaza, with around 250 killed and 500 wounded. The majority of those killed were in the *Al-Maghazi* refugee camp. NRK also showed images of Israel’s prime minister, who said that the military operation should continue and expand, and that the war would only be stopped “when we have put an end to them.”

Likewise, people in *Kyiv*, *Kharkiv* and elsewhere in Ukraine are experiencing the heaviest bombings since the brutal war of invasion began. Apparently, this is the start of an escalation that will affect civilians to an even greater extent. Tensions and disagreements within the EU and the US have also created uncertainty as to whether the West will continue to support Ukraine to the same extent in the future as they have until now.

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These wars are not only cruel and devastating to those affected, but they have also contributed to increasing international tension, including in the northern regions as well as the Baltic Sea. This tension raises a number of issues within international law and politics, particularly within international law of war and humanitarian issues. Even if such topics are not at the core of the journal's publication strategy, the current situation and the necessity to discuss human rights, security issues and conflict resolution at an academic level indicate that the journal will consider such submissions for publication.

The green shift and transition to use of more emission-free energy also raise a number of legally challenging issues. One issue is energy security and energy legislation. Another issue is related to conflicts that may arise between Indigenous peoples' right to enjoy and develop their culture, and the world community's need for emission-free energy. At the end of 2023 in Norway, we experienced that a violation of Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (in the Fosen Case), was resolved through negotiations between those affected by the violation and the energy company. A question that has arisen afterwards is whether human rights violations can be repaired through private law agreements, and if so, what are the requirements? Another question regards the legal considerations that must be made when measures to reduce climate change are weighed against interventions that challenge the livelihoods of Indigenous peoples and minorities.

In its first publication of 2024, *Arctic Review* is pleased to have the opportunity to publish two original articles that analyse security policy related to Norway as an Arctic state. Beate Steinveg's article "Small States in World Politics: Norwegian Interests and Foreign Policy Challenges in the Arctic" gives a thorough overview of Norway's Arctic policy priorities and interests, and examines the rationale behind Norway's policy and whether it contributes to strengthening Norway's position internationally.

Bjørn Olav Knutsen and Elisabeth Pettersen's article "War in Europe, but Still Low Tension in the High North? An Analysis of Norwegian Mitigation Strategies" investigates a set of Norwegian mitigation strategies related to current security dilemmas. They conclude that the Russian attack on Ukraine has made these mitigation strategies far more difficult to pursue. Nevertheless, by building upon insights from security dilemma theory, they show how Norway can contribute to maintaining lower levels of tension in the North.

For the coming year, *Arctic Review* has a wish: to receive many good articles related to the journal's publishing strategy. We welcome articles related to security issues, international law, humanitarian law, resource-related issues of the northern regions, legal and political issues related to Indigenous peoples, minorities, and local populations in the circumpolar north, as well as other legal and political issues related to the northern regions and the Arctic.

Happy New Year and lots of exciting new reads in 2024.

Tromsø, 12 January 2024