I would like to thank a number of individuals who have contributed to this research in a variety of ways.

Special appreciation goes to several academics who gave their time generously to review earlier versions of this work, either in whole or in part: Professor Niels Blokker, Professor Sergey Vasiliev, as well as the editors of The ACUNS Series on the UN System: Professor Alistair Edgar, Professor Lorraine Elliott and Professor Charlotte Ku. Their guidance and wisdom greatly improved the content of the final manuscript.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to a number of scholars and international practitioners who directly or indirectly shaped my ideas through their work or discussions: Dr Daley Birkett, Dr Serge Brammertz, Professor Catherine Brölmann, Professor Kris Gledhill, Professor Gregory Gordon, Dr Tomas Hamilton, Professor Nina Jørgensen, Professor Dominic McGoldrick, Dr Yasmine Nahlawi, Professor Giulia Pinzauti, Professor Göran Sluiter, Professor Carsten Stahn, Professor Jennifer Trahan and Professor Nigel White.

I have also benefitted from collaboration with various organisations during the period in which this book was written. From those involved in the International Rule of Law Initiative, I thank Andrew Carswell, Rebecca Barber, Professor Walter Dorn and Professor John Packer for many fruitful interactions. I also thank Marc Limon from the Universal Rights Group, particularly for his expert insights into the inner workings of the Human Rights Council and Commissions of Inquiry. I am also very grateful for the conducive research environments provided to me at various stages in the completion of this book by the British Institute of International and Comparative Law, Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies (Leiden University) and The Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Finally, I thank all of the team at Edward Elgar Publishing for having faith in this project and for their invaluable support throughout the publication process.

Michael Ramsden
Hong Kong, June 2021