Consultation Report on www.Qanouni.org

Providing Easy Access to Human Rights for all in Arab countries

An on-line Arabic legal search engine on Human rights and humanitarian law

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Introduction

The International Public Law is uneasy to access, due to the rising number of international conventions, their complexity, and the multiple stages in the ratification process. Even professionals (lawyers, searchers, etc.) have difficulties to identify and determine all the international obligations of a given State on a given topic. Obviously, the challenge is even more arduous for the public at large. These difficulties seriously limit the implementation of these standards.

Consequently, Mandat International had developed a unique legal search engine which enables anyone, even those without legal training, to have an easier, quicker and more systematic access to the international obligations. This legal search engine was developed in English, French and Spanish. It already covers 334 multilateral conventions on Human Rig(onal) 8014.2(is(ousl)10(y).ousl)10-8(ess)14(co)]TJ -0.0(ouslT)4(o)phco

Qanouni’s description

www.Qanouni.org is an Arabic on-line Legal Search Engine on Human rights and humanitarian law. It provides an easier, quicker and more systematic access to

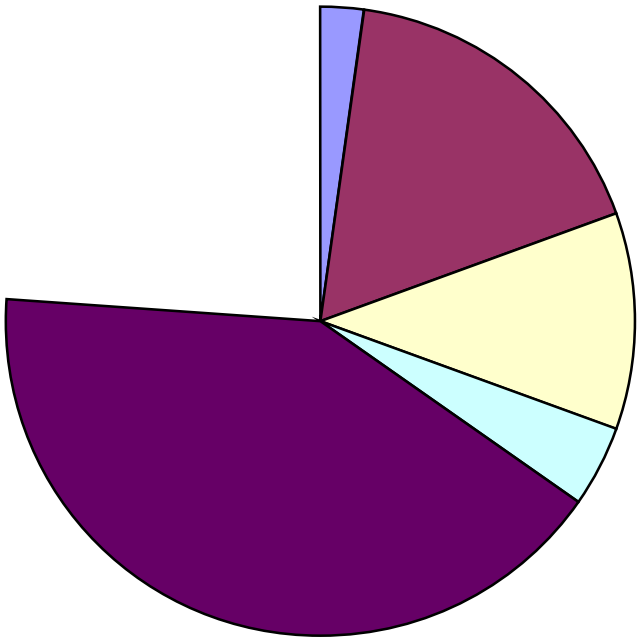
Methodology and panel selection

In order to assess Qanouni and to identify improvements to be made, we have decided to consult Arabic end users. In order to do so, we set up a

Results overview

We contacted the 120 panel members by e-mail, and we recontacted directly by phone the grass root participants (NGOs, think thank Universities, etc). 46 evaluations were provided out of the 120

Ventilation by category of the evaluators



Results

Overall evaluation

The first questions focused on the general evaluation of the legal search engine in terms of qualities and usefulness. The first returns provide a positive appreciation by the evaluators:

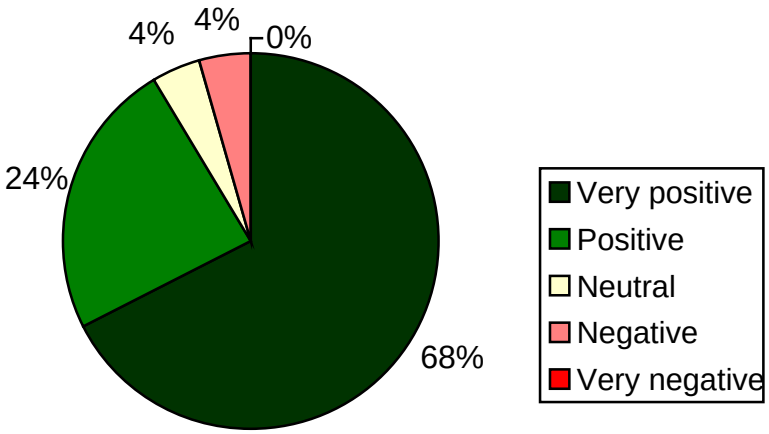
92% of the evaluators expressed an overall positive impression on Qanouni, including 68% of very positive impression.

96% of the participants considered Qanouni as useful, including 66% of very useful.

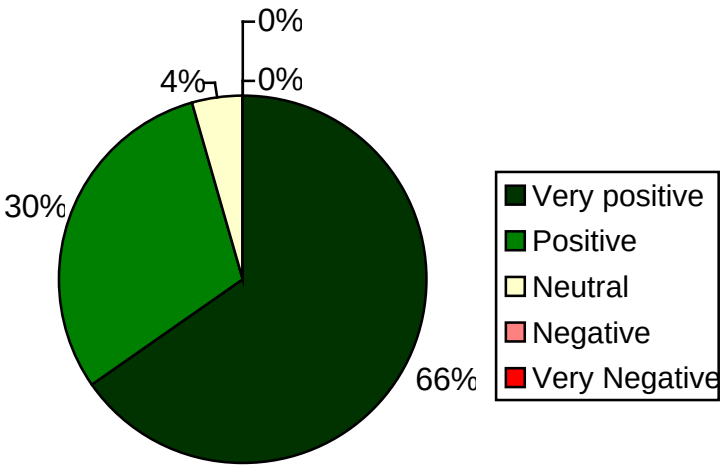
85% of the panel would recommend the legal search engine to others.

It has to be mentioned that 15% of the users would not recommend it as it is. Our investigation with those concerned revealed that their answers were caused by the temporary nature of the legal search engine and the fact that at the time of the survey, several features still needed to be modified and improved. Those features have been corrected since then.

Overall impression of the international legal search engine



Usefulness of the search engine

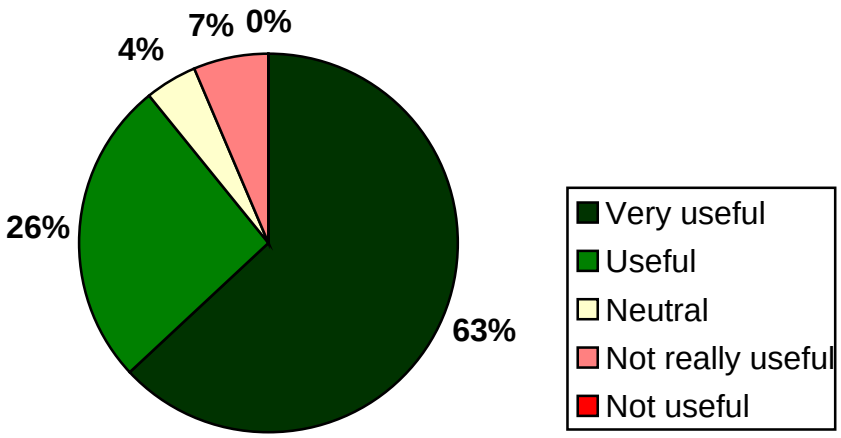


Assessment of the main functionalities

This part further explores in details the point of view of the users concerning the main functionalities of the legal search engine. We proposed four choices that represented the decisive objectives that were to be achieved by the creation of this engine.

The evaluators confirmed that between 85% and 96% of the participants regard the four main functions of the legal search engine as very useful or useful. The function that had the highest rate of “very useful” is the ability to identify obligations of States regarding a particular issue, with 63% of “very useful” and 26% of “useful”.

Ability to identify obligations of a State regarding a particular issue
(ex: Arbitrary detention, corruption, death penalty, etc)



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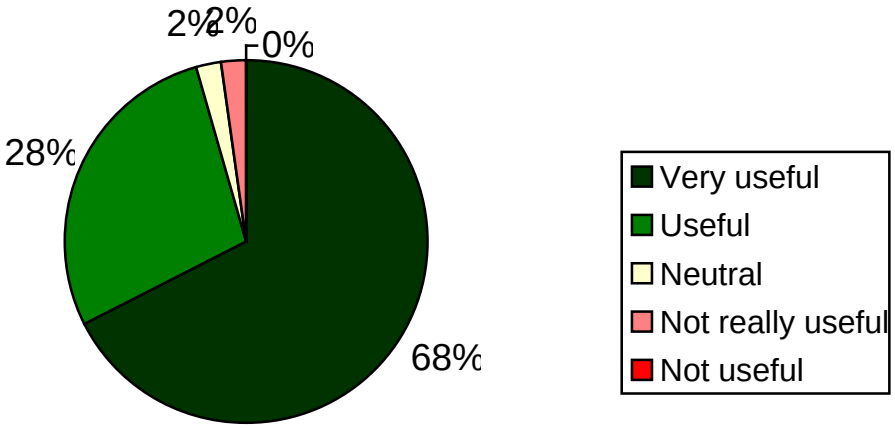
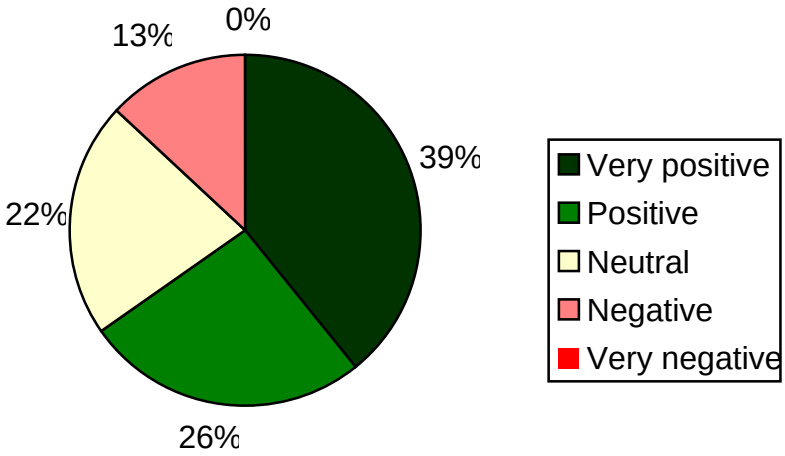
Accessing the list of conventions signed by a State

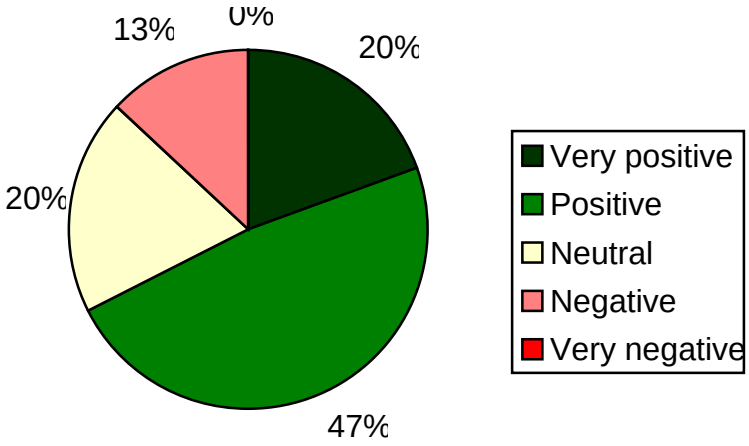


Identifying articles within a treaty that relate to p articular topics

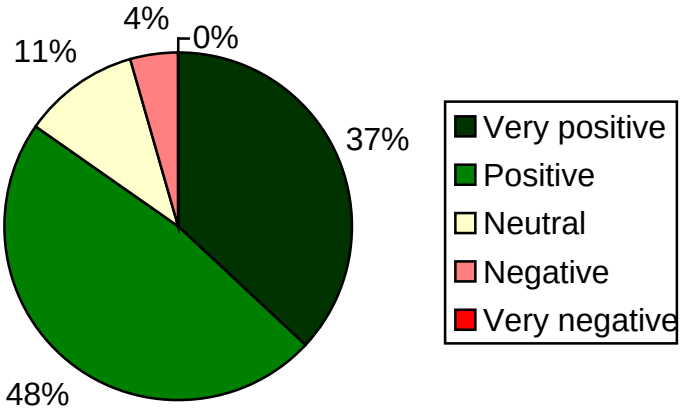
Relevance of the results



Simplicity



Speed

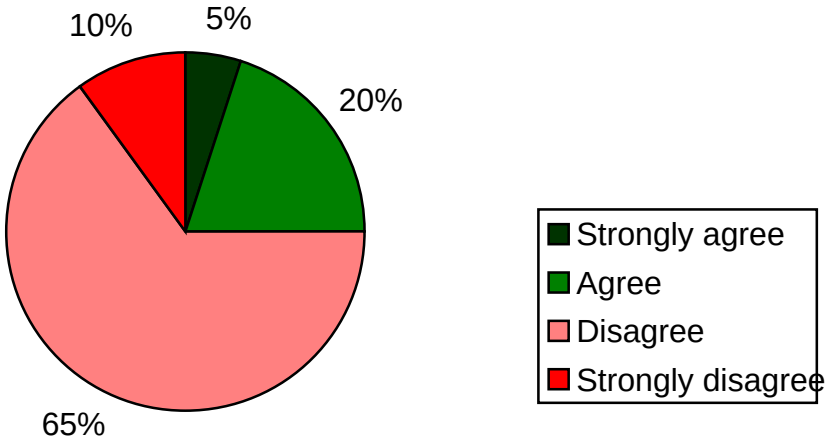


Views on the scope covered by Qanouni

Finally, we inquired the opinions of the evaluators about a possible extension of the scope covered by the legal search engine.

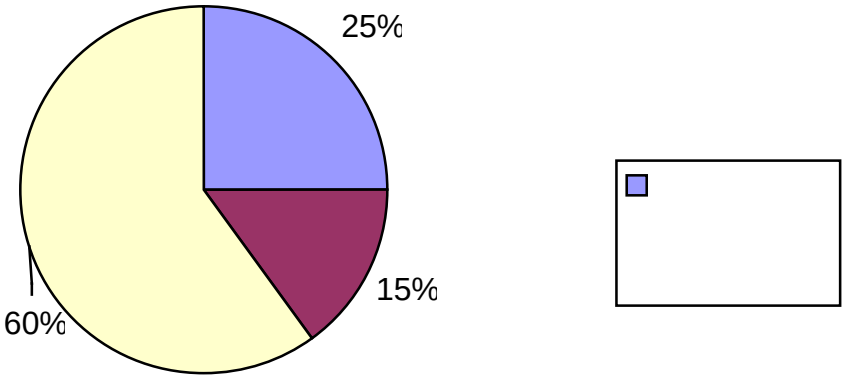
75% of the evaluators considered the scope covered by the legal search engine sufficient and do not believe that it should be extended. This result has to take into account the activity of the evaluators who are all specialized in human rights and humanitarian law issues, and who may not need an extension of the scope already covered.

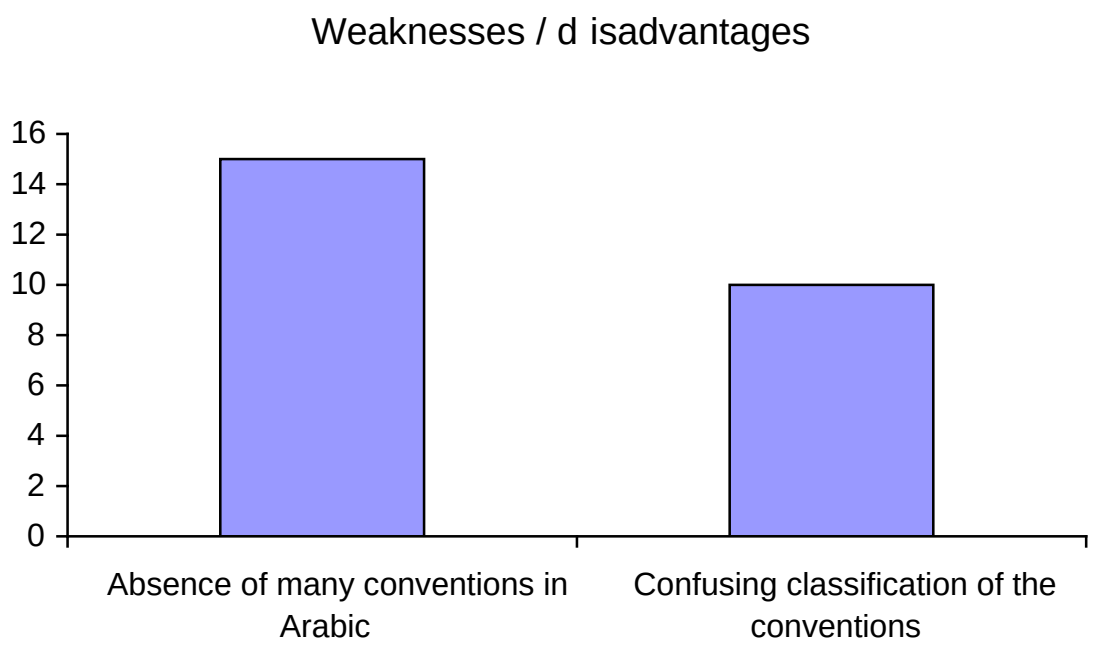
Extension of the scope covered by the search engine

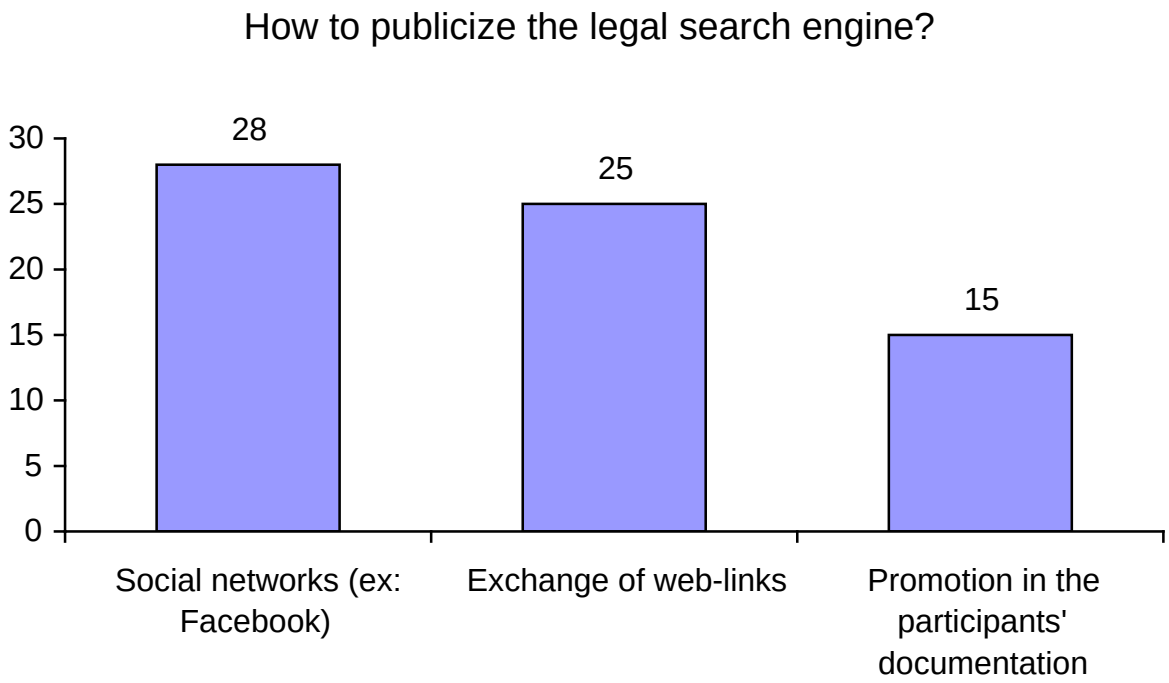


To what fields in particular?

For those who were in favour of an extension of the scope, they were invited to precise their interest.




Weaknesses / d isadvantages
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
Absence of many conventions in Arabic
Confusing classification of the conventions


How to publicize the legal search engine?
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
28
25
15
Social networks (ex: Facebook)
Exchange of web-links
Promotion in the participants' documentation

Conclusions & recommendations

The first conclusions that we can draw from the evaluators are rather positive. It confirmed the positive feedbacks received when we presented Qanouni at the UN Human Rights Council session in June. The subsequent phone contacts and emails with the evaluators led us to the conclusion that the creation of an Arabic language legal search engine on international law filled a long-standing vacuum. Many contacts highlighted the previous lack of information available on international law, human rights and humanitarian law on the Internet as well as in the broader academic environment. Qanouni seems to fulfil a real need, in particular