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THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN YEMEN AND ITS COMPLIANCE WITH THE TRIPS AGREEMENT

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Universiti Utara Malaysia

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA
2026

THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LEGAL FRAMEWORK IN YEMEN AND ITS COMPLIANCE WITH THE TRIPS AGREEMENT

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A thesis submitted to the Ghazali Shafie Graduate School of Government, Universiti Utara Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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(College of Law, Government and International Studies)
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Program Pengajian *(Programme of Study)*	:	**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (LAW)**
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ABSTRACT

The protection of intellectual property rights (IPRs) has become a central component of national economic strategies, particularly for developing and least developed countries (LDCs) that are seeking to participate effectively in global trade and transition towards knowledge-based economic activity. In line with this development, the World Trade Organization (WTO) requires all member countries to establish their national intellectual property (IP) legislation framework based on the provisions of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights 1994 (TRIPS Agreement). As the seventh LDC to join the WTO in 2014, Yemen must comply with the TRIPS Agreement requirements by 1 July 2034. This study examines the current statutory IP provisions in Yemen, focusing on the three primary types of IP: copyrights, patents, and trademarks. The discussion is based on the Copyright Act 2012, the Patents Act 2011, and the Trademarks Act 2010, evaluating the extent to which the provisions of these statutes substantively and procedurally comply with TRIPS standards. This study represents the first comprehensive and systematic analysis of Yemen's IP law, contributing to the development of knowledge and filling a significant gap in Yemeni legal scholarship on IP law by recommending a framework for future work on this subject for scholars, policymakers and researchers. Through a combination of doctrinal and non-doctrinal legal approaches to achieve the research objectives, this study has gathered and analysed a diverse body of data sources, including legislation, case law, legal scholarship, and institutional materials. This is further complemented and triangulated through the interviews with key figures, comprising Yemeni public officials, members of the judiciary, and legal practitioners. The findings demonstrate that Yemen's IP laws, to some extent, conform with the TRIPS requirements but some non-compliance issues relating to Articles 43, 50, 51, and 61 of the TRIPS Agreement must be resolved. To address these gaps, the study recommends incorporating detailed provisions on provisional measures into the Patent Act, revising criminal enforcement provisions in the Trademarks Act and the Copyright Act, respectively, and operationalizing border-measure procedures. The study concludes that the implementation of these reforms would strengthen Yemen's IP regime and enhance its compliance with TRIPS Agreement obligations.

Keywords: Minimum Standards Requirements, TRIPS Agreement, Developing and Least-Developed Countries (LDCS), Protection and Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRS), Yemen Intellectual Property (IP) Laws.

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ABSTRAK

Perlindungan hak harta intelek (IPR) menjadi komponen utama strategi ekonomi sesebuah negara, terutamanya bagi negara membangun dan negara kurang maju (LDC) yang ingin mengambil bahagian secara berkesan dalam perdagangan global dan peralihan ke arah aktiviti ekonomi berasaskan pengetahuan. Selaras dengan perkembangan ini, Pertubuhan Perdagangan Dunia (WTO) menghendaki semua negara anggota menubuhkan rangka kerja perundangan harta intelek (IP) negara masing-masing berdasarkan peruntukan Perjanjian Perdagangan Berkaitan Hak Harta Intelek 1994 (Perjanjian TRIPS). Sebagai negara ketujuh dalam kategori LDC yang menyertai WTO pada tahun 2014, Yaman mesti mematuhi keperluan Perjanjian TRIPS selewat-lewatnya pada 1 Julai 2034. Kajian ini mengkaji peruntukan perundangan IP yang berkuatkuasa di Yaman dengan memfokus kepada tiga jenis IP yang utama: hak cipta, paten dan cap dagangan. Perbincangan adalah berdasarkan kepada Akta Hak Cipta 2012, Akta Paten 2011, dan Akta Cap Dagangan 2010, bagi menilai sejauh mana peruntukan statut ini secara substantif dan prosedur mematuhi piawaian TRIPS. Kajian ini adalah yang pertama menganalisis perundangan IP di Yaman secara komprehensif dan sistematik sekaligus menyumbang kepada kesusasteraan akademik mengenai undang-undang IP di Yaman dengan meletakkan kerangka untuk kajian selanjutnya kepada para sarjana, pembuat dasar dan penyelidik. Kajian ini mengguna pakai gabungan kaedah kajian perundangan doktrinal dan bukan doktrinal untuk mencapai objektif dengan menggunakan pelbagai sumber data termasuk instrumen perundangan, kes undang-undang, karya undang-undang serta laporan institusi. Data ini seterusnya dianalisis dan disahkan melalui triangulasi temu bual bersama tokoh-tokohdari kalangan penjawat awam, badan kehakiman dan pengamal undang-undang di Yaman. Dapatan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa undang-undang IP di Yaman sebahagiannya mematuhi keperluan Perjanjian TRIPS, namun beberapa isu ketidakpatuhan yang berkaitan dengan Artikel 43, 50, 51, dan 61 Perjanjian TRIPS perlu ditangani. Bagi menangani perkara tersebut, kajian ini mengesyorkan supaya memasukkan peruntukan terperinci mengenai langkah-langkah sementara dalam Akta Paten, menyemak semula peruntukan penguatkuasaan jenayah, masing-masing dalam Akta Cap Dagangan dan Akta Hak Cipta, di samping mengoperasi prosedur kawalan sempadan. Kajian ini menyimpulkan bahawa pelaksanaan pembaharuan ini akan mengukuhkan kerangka undang-undang IP di Yaman dan meningkatkan pematuhan terhadap keperluan Perjanjian TRIPS.

Keywords: Syarat Piawaian Minimum, Perjanjian TRIPS, Negara Membangun dan Negara Kurang Maju (LDC), Perlindungan dan Penguatkuasaan Hak Harta Intelek (IPRS), Undang-Undang Harta Intelek (IP) Yaman.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, all praise and thanks are due to Almighty Allah, whose countless blessings, mercy, and guidance have sustained me throughout my academic journey and made this achievement possible. Without His divine support, this work would not have come to fruition.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr Khadijah Mohamed, for her unwavering support, insightful guidance, and continuous encouragement throughout the course of my research. Her mentorship has been a source of inspiration and strength. My heartfelt thanks also go to my late supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr Ahmad Shamsul, for his valuable guidance and support during the writing of this thesis. May Allah grant him mercy and peace.

To my beloved mother and father, I owe a debt of gratitude that words can never fully express. Your unwavering love, endless prayers, and lifelong sacrifices have been the foundation upon which every step of my academic journey has been built. You believed in me even in moments when I doubted myself, and your faith gave me the strength to persevere through challenges, setbacks, and moments of exhaustion. My mother's patience, compassion, and constant supplications, and my father's wisdom, guidance, and steadfast encouragement, have been a source of comfort and resilience throughout my life. Every achievement I attain is a reflection of your sacrifices and devotion. This work stands as a humble testament to your immeasurable support, and I pray that Allah rewards you abundantly for all that you have given, grants you health and peace, and accepts this achievement as a source of joy and pride for you both. I also extend my warmest gratitude to my dear brothers for their constant support and encouragement.

This thesis is lovingly dedicated to my dearest parents, whose love, prayers, and sacrifices have been the light of my life.

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LIST OF INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS AND STATUTES

CONVENTIONS

Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS Agreement 1994).

Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works (1886).

Convention Establishing the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO Convention, 1967).

Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property (1883).

Rome Convention (1961).

YEMEN STATUTES

Act No. 15 of 2012 on the Protection of Copyrights and Related Rights. (Copyright Act 2012).

Act No. 2 of the Year A.D. 2011 relating to Patents, Utility Models, Integrated Circuit Layouts and Undisclosed Information. (Patents Act 2011).

Act No. 23 of the Year A.D. 2010 relating to Trademarks and Geographical Indications (Trademarks Act 2010).

Civil Law No. (14) of 2002.

Constitution of the Republic of Yemen 2015.

Criminal Procedures Law No. 13 of 1994.

Evidence Law No. (21) of 1992.

Judicial Power Act 1991.

Presidential Decree No. 19 of 1994 on Intellectual Property.

MALAYSIA STATUTES

Copyright Act 1987, Act No. 332, amended up to Act No. A1645

Trademark Act 2019, Act 815.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BC	: Berne Convention
EPO	: European Patent Office
EU	: European Union
FDI	: Foreign Direct Investment
GDIPP	: General Department for Intellectual Property Protection
GDP	: Gross Domestic Product
IMF	: International Monetary Fund
IP	: Intellectual Property
IPRs	: Intellectual Property Rights
JPA	: Judicial Power Act
LDCs	: Least Developed Countries
MoIT	: Ministry of Industry and Trade
OECD	: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PC	: Paris Convention
PDRY	: People's Democratic Republic of Yemen
SJC	: Supreme Judiciary Council
TDA	: Trade Description Act
TMA	: Trademarks Act
TRIPS	: Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
UDHR	: Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNCTAD	: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
WIPO	: World Intellectual Property Organization
WTO	: World Trade Organization
YAR	: Yemen Arab Republic

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CHAPTER ONE

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Intellectual property (IP) is a category of property that comprises intangible creations of the human intellect. Early precursors to some forms of IP, such as copyright and trademark, existed in ancient societies, such as Ancient Rome. Historical records indicate that one of the earliest instances of recognizing and protecting creative works occurred around 500 BC, when chefs in Sybaris, a Greek colony in Italy, were granted a one-year monopoly on the creation of specific recipes.[1]

The modern concept of IP began to take shape in England during the 17th and 18th centuries, most notably with the introduction of the Statute of Anne in 1709. Known also as the Copyright Act, the Statute of Anne was the first formal manifestation of a modern copyright protection regime in the United Kingdom.[2] In the 19th century, many countries began recognizing the necessity of enacting regulations to protect and regulate intellectual property rights (IPRs), which became prevalent in most of the world's legal systems by the late 20th century.[3] The international significance of IP was first formally acknowledged through the Paris Convention for the Protection of

[1] Adam Moore, *Intellectual Property and Information Control: Philosophic Foundations and Contemporary Issues* (Routledge, 2017).
[2] Jane C. Ginsburg, "Overview of Copyright Law," forthcoming in *Oxford Handbook of Intellectual Property*, eds. Rochelle Dreyfuss & Justine Pila, Columbia Public Law Research Paper 14-518 (2016).
[3] Brad Sherman and Lionel Bently, *The Making of Modern Intellectual Property Law*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Questions

Section I: Interviewee Information This section is designed to gather information about the experts, including their background, qualifications (whether gained through training or experience), areas of specialization, role within their organization, and their key responsibilities.
1. What is your post? 2. How long have you been in this current position? 3. How did you qualify? Did you qualify by training or by experience? 4. What is your area of interest? 5. Other than your official duty, have you become a member in any other professional bodies involving IP matters?
Section II: Expert Views This section aims to explore the experts' perspectives, based on their knowledge and experience, regarding Yemeni intellectual property laws, the minimum standards for intellectual property rights (IPRs) protection as outlined in the TRIPS Agreement, and the procedures for enforcing IPRs. Additionally, this section seeks to identify the challenges they have encountered, as well as their needs and concerns, in overcoming these obstacles.
Part I: Own Perception on Intellectual Property Rights (Research Objective 1)
6. Various studies have shown that the protection of intellectual property rights contributes to the economic growth of a country. What is your perspective on this? 7. In your experience, how effectively are Yemen's IP laws implemented? 8. Are there specific areas within the existing IP laws that you find unclear or outdated?

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9. Do the existing intellectual property laws in Yemen provide adequate protection for intellectual property rights?

10. What are the main problems encountered with the current intellectual property laws in Yemen? How can these problems be addressed?

Part II: Compliance with the Minimum Standards of IPRs Protection in the TRIPS Agreement (Research Objective 2)

11. In your opinion, do the existing Yemeni IP laws align with the minimum requirements set by the TRIPS Agreement? If not, what improvements should be made?

12. What specific provisions of the TRIPS Agreement do you believe are not adequately addressed in Yemen's IP laws?

13. What are the positive effects of complying with the minimum protection standards set out in the TRIPS Agreement?

Part III: The Enforcement Procedures (Research Objective 3)

14. Based on your experience in handling IP infringement cases, which is the most common type of intellectual property rights that had been infringed?

I. Trademarks

II. Copyright

III. Patent

15. In your opinion, among civil, criminal and border measures, which proceeding is the most effective in addressing IP infringement cases?

16. Are the criminal remedies provided in Yemen's IP laws appropriate and sufficient to prevent and punish infringements? If not, what improvements should be made? How can the punishment for IP offences be made more severe to provide a stronger deterrent?

17. Do you think that the effectiveness in addressing the IP infringement cases needs cooperation among the agencies?

18. What are the challenges and difficulties facing the competent authorities in enforcing intellectual property rights in Yemen?

Section III: Closing (Research Objective 4)

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Do you think that the current statutes are sufficient in handling IP matters? And what do you suggest to improve IP laws in Yemen?

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