The importance and influence of international organizations (IOs) is undoubted, and at times seemingly unbounded, in the present era. Whilst often rivalling the functionality of States, IOs increasingly enjoy a greater degree of jurisdictional immunity. One result of this, is that the employees of IOs are not subject to the labour laws of their State members but instead to the employment law of the international civil service. This law governs the recruitment, performance, pay, independence and ethics of the staff of IOs. To ensure the effectiveness of this law, it is upheld by international administrative tribunals (IATs) constituted by, and granted binding powers over, IOs. In this way, IATs can be the greatest, most regular and rigorous experience of accountability of almost all IOs, from the United Nations to the International Monetary Fund to now, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. The legal competence, constraints and moral authority of IATs is therefore of essential concern to all who wish to see IOs succeed in their many indispensable mandates. This lecture will examine and question the legitimacy of such tribunals.

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