



January, 2010

Dear Member,

The year just ended has been challenging and stirring for the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists (“IAJLJ”). It is particularly noteworthy in that 2009 marked the fortieth year of IAJLJ’s founding by Supreme Court Justices Haim Cohn of Israel, Arthur Goldberg of the United States and Nobel Prize Laureate René Cassin of France. It is a great pleasure and honor for me to chair our association and to follow the vision of our founders. I believe in IAJLJ’s cause and will see that its goals and ideals are served properly.

I wish to highlight a number of activities and events over this past year and to provide a brief overview of our programming for 2010.

1. Last February, IAJLJ held an evening seminar in Tel Aviv entitled “The media: objective reporter or setter of the public agenda?” The purpose of this event was to raise awareness of the role being played by the media while highlighting matters that IAJLJ deals with every day. A secondary purpose was to raise funds after the financial difficulties we experienced during 2008 due to the global financial crisis. The evening included a fascinating panel moderated by Efraim Halevy, former head of the Mossad as well as a presentation by Philippe Karsenty on the *Mohamed al Durra* case. Also contributing to the success of the panel were Israeli journalists Nahum Barnea, David Witztum and Arnon Perelman, who addressed the subject from the perspective of the media.
2. During May, IAJLJ wrote to Justice Richard Goldstone regarding his nomination as chairman of the United Nations Human Rights Council committee charged with investigating the recent war in Gaza. IAJLJ clearly expressed its reservations about his nomination and asked Judge Goldstone to decline the chairmanship.
3. Also in May, IAJLJ wrote to Israeli Attorney General Menachem Mazuz requesting, per Israel’s laws of defamation, the filing of the claim by him against Mohammed Bakri, director of the film *Jenin Jenin*. This was done subsequent to an appeal by a group of soldiers who had fought in Jenin. In its letter IAJLJ argued that the film wrongfully presented this group of soldiers, other officers and the Israeli Defense Forces in general. We recently learned that The Israeli Attorney General decided to join the appeal against Bakri at the Supreme Court of Israel.



4. In June, IAJLJ, together with Casa Sefarad-Israel, organized a legal encounter in Madrid. The conference was convened to enlighten the Spanish legal community about the Israeli legal system as well as the concept of universal jurisdiction, which due to its delicate nature, has repercussions in both countries. Distinguished jurists from the Spanish legal system attended this encounter, as did some 25 Israeli, most of them are scholars of international law. The encounter was fully sponsored by Casa Sefarad-Israel, an organization whose primary goal is to strengthen relations between the Spanish people and the Jewish people, and with Israel.
5. On September 9, a legal opinion, prepared by a well-known jurist, regarding the declaration of acceptance of the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (“**ICC**”) made by the Palestinian Authority’s minister of justice was sent to the prosecutor of the ICC. IAJLJ explained how this application should be overruled as the Palestinian Authority is not a state and therefore the jurisdiction of the ICC does not and cannot apply.
6. In October, IAJLJ, in association with the France-Israel Foundation, hosted a delegation of 22 well-known French judges and lawyers, headed by the president of the Court of Appeals in Paris - **Jean-Claude Magendie**. Joseph Roubache, Chairman of IAJLJ’s French branch and former Representative to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, was the driving force behind this event. The delegation met with Israeli Minister of Justice Yaakov Neeman and Speaker of the Knesset Ruby Rivlin. During its visit, the delegation learned about the Israeli legal system and also met with Supreme Court Justice Edna Arbel. Another aim of the event was to ensure that the French delegates better understand the reality Israel confronts every day. During their visit, the delegates also enjoyed a successful symposium entitled “Ethics and Law in the War against Terror” prepared by IAJLJ in co-operation with Bar-Ilan University.
7. In November, IAJLJ held an engaging seminar entitled “Democracy fights Terror” at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for a delegation of eight distinguished Spanish justices, prosecutors and government officers. The seminar, a continuation of the legal encounter held in Madrid in June, showed Israel’s daily struggle, as a democracy, in fighting against terror regimes. We believe that IAJLJ succeeded in bringing about a healthy exchange of views between the Spanish and Israeli jurists who attended.
8. In December, IAJLJ’s new website was launched, enabling greatly improved access to our online materials, including JUSTICE magazine. We hope that you find the new site attractive and useful.

Lastly, but of great importance: As many of you know, this year we parted from a very dear friend, Daniel Lack, who served as a vice president of IAJLJ and was a Permanent Representative to the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva. Over the years Daniel contributed mightily to our association and was seen by many as an ambassador for Israel in the Diaspora. We will cherish him always and ensure that his legacy is honored. Now serving as IAJLJ’s representatives at the Human Rights Council are his son Jeremy and Michael Hessel. We wish them both much success.



Plans for 2010

1. In March, IAJLJ, together with the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center, will hold an evening symposium on transitional justice.
2. IAJLJ has obtained a donation that will allow the publication of JUSTICE magazine twice each year. We expect the first edition of 2010 to be published in April and the second to be published in October.
3. Save the date! On June 30th IAJLJ will hold a conference in London entitled "Democratic and Legal Norms in the Age of Terror." London was chosen as the venue for several reasons. England has a highly developed legal system that recognizes universal jurisdiction and it is important to review the many arrest warrants issued against visiting Israeli army officers and Israeli officials. Also to be considered, among other topics, are the boycotts declared by British universities and professional organizations against Israeli institutions in response to its hold on the West Bank and Israel's reaction to terror attacks. We call upon all members of IAJLJ to attend this important conference. Further information will be provided soon.

I call upon all members to renew their membership for 2010 and to try and bring new members to the IAJLJ. You will find a membership form enclosed.

Finally, at the threshold of a new decade, I would like to wish you and your families a healthy, happy and peaceful new year!

Sincerely,

Alex Hertman, Adv.
President