



February 22, 2012

Dear Colleagues

It gives me great pleasure to report that once again the past year proved to be challenging and exciting for the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists ("the **IAJLJ / Association**"). On a personal level I would add that so too was it for me

Our aims are set and our work is constantly increasing and therefore 2012 is expected to be a demanding year in particular because of increasing world wide anti-Semitism, a phenomenon against which the IAJLJ is waging a constant battle.

Following is a description of the main activities of the IAJLJ during 2011. I shall conclude my remarks with some information about our plans for 2012:

1. In early February, the 14th Congress of the IAJLJ took place in Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. During the course of these proceedings elections were held for the Executive Committee and the Board of Governors, and with your support I was elected to serve as the President of the Association. I am certain that together we can work well and initiate more activities. I take this opportunity to again thank our former President, Advocate Alex Hertman. As President of the IAJLJ for seven years, Alex led the Association proudly and contributed to its ongoing growth.

The theme of the 14th Congress was: **'Israel as a Jewish and Democratic State'** - a matter of continuing relevancy to the State of Israel and the Jewish people. Key jurists offered their greetings at the formal opening in Jerusalem, including President of the Israeli Supreme Court Dorit Beinisch and the Minister of Education Mr. Gideon Saár. International law expert, Professor Ruth Gavison, was the keynote speaker. Well known jurists took part in the sessions. I welcome you to read the addresses in our on-line *JUSTICE* magazine at:

http://www.intjewishlawyers.org/main/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=49&Itemid=57 .

It is with pleasure that I wish to inform you that our dear member Professor Irwin Cotler was awarded a **Lifetime Membership in the Association** in recognition of all the fine and dedicated work he has devoted to the IAJLJ over the years.

2. Also in February, the IAJLJ organized a videoconference that enabled Israeli victims of rocket attacks perpetrated by Hamas and other terrorist groups operating from the Gaza Strip, to testify before the UN Committee of Independent Experts following the Goldstone Report. The IAJLJ's actions in this regard (hearing the voices of the victims) were clearly described in the final report of the Committee.
3. On June 19, 2011, the IAJLJ addressed Dr. Navanethem Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, asking her to exercise her authority by demanding that the Government of Egypt help Israeli citizen Ouda (Seliman) Tarabin, who at the age of nineteen was sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment for the offence of espionage without being given the opportunity of a fair trial. The Association has been dealing with this matter for some years as there are clear violations of human rights involved in this unfortunate matter that will continue to exist until the release of Tarabin.



4. Two evening seminars were held by the Association in which the matter of refugees was examined from two different aspects. The first concerned Israel's immigration policy relating to refugees. This event held in association with the American Jewish Committee in Jerusalem raised important legal questions that were followed by a debate. The second seminar concerned the definition of the Jewish people who came to Israel from Arab countries after 1949 (were they refugees, immigrants, or uprooted nationals?).
5. In March, and subsequent to the 14th Congress, a letter was sent to the President of the United States Barack Obama asking for the commutation of Mr. Jonathan Pollard's sentence to time served and an order for his immediate release in accordance with various legal and humanitarian arguments. For the full resolution, please see:

http://www.intjewishlawyers.org/main/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52&Itemid=64.

6. In mid November, the IAJLJ, in association with Humboldt University, hosted its bi-annual conference in Berlin on the theme '**Holocaust Denial and Freedom of Speech in the Internet Era**'. This international conference was of the utmost importance. The decision to hold it in Berlin ensued from our appreciation of the complexity of Berlin's history and its meaning for the Jewish people in particular. The formal opening event of the conference took place at the prestigious Akademie der Konard-Adenauer Stiftung and was attended by distinguished speakers among whom the key note speaker was the Minister of State, Eckart von Klaeden. The conference sessions were conducted at Humboldt University. Prominent professors such as David Matas, Justice Stephen Rothman, Christopher Wolf and Nimrod Kozlovsky, as well as other respected speakers participated in the discussions. 140 jurists from 22 different countries attended and actively participated in the legal debates and exchange of opinions that were held after each session.
7. At this conference, the Board of Governors, at its annual meeting, adopted a resolution concerning some legal and educational issues arising from the propagation of hate messages and the distortion of Shoah history through the Internet. It was agreed that the IAJLJ must act on three levels: legal, technological and educational. For the full text of the resolution, please see:

http://www.intjewishlawyers.org/main/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52&Itemid=64.

Further to the resolution, the IAJLJ is due to meet with Google's legal advisors in Israel to discuss future cooperation.

8. At the end of November, and subsequent to the Berlin conference, the IAJLJ adopted an important resolution concerning the Iranian leaders' on going calls for the annihilation of the State of Israel. While the world remains silent, the IAJLJ decided to take a stand. On December 10, 2011 we sent both to the UN Secretary General and to the UN Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide our resolution calling upon all states to take immediate action to expel Iran from the United Nations and recommending that the UN Security Council refer the case of Ahmadinejad and Khamenei to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, for charges to be brought of directly and publicly inciting others to commit genocide, contrary to the Genocide Treaty and the Rome Statute.

This resolution was sent to Parliaments world wide with a copy to the press.
For the text of the resolution, please see:



http://www.intjewishlawyers.org/main/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52&Itemid=64

9. In the last few days, the IAJLJ published another resolution concerning the recent examples of religious fundamentalism in Israel.

For the full resolution, please visit:

http://www.intjewishlawyers.org/main/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52&Itemid=64

10. In the near future you will be able to enjoy our new website which will be modern, dynamic and youthful. Concurrently, we will launch our new social platforms on LinkedIn and Facebook. Notification of this accompanied by some brief remarks, will be delivered to you in due course by our Internet Relations Manager.

The new website project is part of the global revision and ultra modern marketing approach that we have adopted at the IAJLJ. At this point I wish to draw your attention to the new logo on our letterhead.

11. Two editions of *JUSTICE* magazine were successfully published (Spring and Autumn volumes) with grateful thanks to the Nevzlin Family Foundation, and thanks to the diligent work of our editorial and academic board.
12. These days our Executive Director, Ronit Gidron-Zemach, and I are concluding a number of meetings with all the leading law firms in Israel. We introduced the Association to potential new members and explained our mission. In addition, we asked that each law firm make an annual donation of US\$ 2,000 for five years which would allow them to appear on our letterhead as sponsors. So far, most responses have been positive.

At the beginning of 2012, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my colleagues on the Executive Committee who devote their time and efforts to the Association and express my appreciation to all the members who take an active part in the Association's work including our devoted staff at the office.

Plans for 2012

- Actions concerning Iran and its leaders with respect to their incitement to genocide;
- Holding a seminar in cooperation with the Schechter Institute for Jewish Studies in Jerusalem on March 22, 2012, entitled: **Religion and State – Orthodox people, Price tag and Exclusion of woman – where are we headed?**;
- Holding a conference in Lausanne in association with the Swiss Institute of Comparative Law on the subject of religious and state laws entitled: **Religion in a Multicultural Society**;
- Dealing, ad-hoc, with legal matters that are of major public interest;
- Additionally, a number of institutions have approached the IAJLJ seeking to collaborate on different issues. We are currently looking into these suggestions.



הארגון הבינלאומי של עורכי-דין ומשפטנים יהודים (ע"ר)
THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH LAWYERS AND JURISTS (R.A.)

This year 2012, and for the first time since the Association was established, the annual membership fee has been increased and now stands at US\$ 100 (or the equivalent in shequels). Enclosed, please find, the membership form. I call upon all members to renew their membership for the current year and to encourage new members to join and become part of the IAJLJ.

The IAJLJ's budget is extremely limited and therefore I call upon all of you, in addition to paying your membership fees, to donate money to the Association. By doing so, you will allow us to pursue our common goals and missions.

In addition, I ask each and every one of you to try and raise funds in your country. I am aware that this is not an easy task and that it has become more difficult over the years, however, it has become crucial for our existence.

As described above, the IAJLJ has continued to broaden its activities and I believe that 2012 will be a special year, continuing to be fruitful, enriching and challenging, in all spheres. I invite you all to take part in our activities and bring new thoughts and suggestions and I welcome you to address me on any matter relevant to our goals.

I wish you and your families a happy and peaceful New Year and may we all succeed in our important mission of advocating for the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

Yours sincerely,

Irit Kohn, Adv.
President