

## President's Message

The International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists was established in 1969. The founders were Nobel Peace Prize laureate René Cassin of France, US Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg and Israel Supreme Court Justice Haim Cohn.

In accordance with our charter, our Association focuses on issues that are of critical importance to the Jewish people, chief of which is the fight against racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, Holocaust denial and delegitimization of the State of Israel.

In order to achieve our goals we must also engage in advancing the human rights of people everywhere and in promoting the facilitation of international law.

If we thought that anti-Semitism would diminish after all these years, unfortunately, the opposite is true. We have recently been witness to numerous incidents of local anti-Semitism around the world. Individuals too face uncertainty as young Jews encounter anti-Semitic incitement in universities everywhere, but especially in the United States, a friend and ally of Israel.

Organized activities are being launched against the State of Israel with the object of delegitimizing it. These activities are often based on lies and blatant distortions of the truth. Our adversaries are adept at using the legal system of their country to fight Israel from within, and exploiting democracy in other countries to fight it from without.

In saying this I am not complaining of the criticism that is voiced against the State of Israel or against particular individuals – such criticism is legitimate and can even be constructive. My warning and call to action relates to combating those who desire to destroy and undermine, who express the visceral hatred of all things Jewish and Israeli felt by growing numbers of extremist elements around the world.

I believe that one of the important ways in which we can contend with these dangers is by massively increasing the membership of the Association, thereby increasing our ability to respond to various phenomena around the world through the use of legal resources. Links between Jewish lawyers around the world will allow a safety net to be spread, aimed at protecting both individual Jews attacked because of their Jewish identity and the State of Israel, attacked as the homeland of the Jewish people. I therefore call upon lawyers and jurists around the world to join our ranks and take part in our activities.

We invite you to be a part of the work of our Association which makes itself heard professionally on a variety of matters of concern by creating meeting points for discussion, organizing mock trials, conferences, issuing widely distributed policy statements, and publishing a magazine, *JUSTICE*, as a forum for the exchange of ideas.

It should be recalled that the Association has a recognized Category II Status as a Non-Governmental Organization at the United Nations, enabling it to express its views in the various fora of the United Nations, as well as formal status in the Council of Europe, where too it can participate in deliberations.

Reports of the activities of the Association may be found in its internet site and those interested are also invited to read the on-line editions of the magazine *JUSTICE* which is now celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> edition.

My own decision to take an active part in the work of the Association stems from my upbringing in a Zionist home where I was taught the value of contributing to society. I believe that a large organization of Jewish lawyers with like-minded values can make a difference when its members are united. I call upon those who wish to make a difference to join us in the difficult but rewarding work which still lies ahead.