



NEWSLETTER

SAVE THE DATE!
International Law Weekend
October 22-24, 2026
New York City

ILW 2025: A Recap

International Law Weekend (ILW) 2025 took place from October 23-25, 2025, in New York City. The unifying theme was Crisis as Catalyst in International Law, which the American Branch explored during the 103rd Members Meeting.

The annual event explored how crises can serve as transformative moments that challenge and reshape the framework of international law. With 35 panels, a Presidential Opening Plenary, Two Keynotes, a Canadian Permanent Mission Reception, awards ceremonies, over 200 speakers, and participants from over 30 countries, ILW 2025 offered the opportunity to engage in critical discussions on the evolving role of international law in addressing global crises. Attendees explored pressing issues such as artificial intelligence, crimes against humanity, cultural heritage destruction, global energy governance, state capture and kleptocracy, and more.

Inside this Issue:

Message from the President	2
ILW 2025	3-5
Thank You to Our Sponsors	6
ILW Organizing Committee	6
Charles Siegal Distinguished Service Award	7
Outstanding Achievement Award	7-8
Book Awards	9
ILW25 Panel Reflection	10
CLE Webinar Series	11
ILW-West 2026	12
ASIL Annual Meeting	13
ILW 2026	14-16
International Law Chats	17-18
ILA Biennial in Vienna	19
CaH Study Group	20
New Committees	21
Branch Members News	22-24
Board Statements	25-26
ABILA Board	27
Upcoming Events	28



Message from our American Branch President

The world awoke on the morning of January 3, 2026, to the news that President Trump had ordered the invasion of Venezuela and the kidnapping of its president, Nicolás Maduro. President Trump announced that the United States will run Venezuela for a transitional period and seize some of its oil “in the form of reimbursement.”

At our quarterly meeting on January 16, 2026, Board Chair Leila Sadat, President Elect Amity Boye, and I asked the ABILA Board of Directors to issue a strong statement condemning the invasion and attacks against Venezuelan and Columbian vessels as clear violations of international law that cannot be justified as a legitimate exercise of the right of self-defense in response to the threat posed by narco-terrorists and/or as a law enforcement action to arrest an indicted narcotics trafficker.

The ABILA is dedicated to the study, clarification, and development of International Law and the advancement of peace, human rights, and justice worldwide. Our Board comprises experts from across the political spectrum, academia, NGOs, and law firms. We discussed the risks to each of us and to our organization as a whole. And then we voted. The tally of those present and voting was 30 in favor, 0 opposed!

While ABILA presidents and committees have issued statements on salient events and developments affecting international law and international institutions before (e.g., my March 6, 2026, President's Statement about the U.S. attacks on Iran), this was the first time in history that the ABILA Board has done so. I have no illusion that this Statement will alter President Trump's policies, but I am emboldened by something Robert Kennedy Sr. said when he visited Apartheid South Africa in 1966: “Each time a person stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, they send forth a tiny ripple of hope.” Lawlessness feeds on fear and silence. When academics, business executives, law firm heads, and leaders of international associations like the ABILA take a stand, those ripples can build into a tsunami of change.

Michael P. Scharf



President of the American Branch of the International Law Association

Associate Dean for Global Legal Studies and Joseph C. Hostetler - BakerHostetler Professor of Law, Case Western Reserve University School of Law



ILW 2025 Recap (cont'd)

ILW 2025 opened at the New York City Bar Association on Thursday with the 2025 Emerging Voices session. Moderated by **Christine Carpenter** (Cambridge University) and **Mark Janis** (UConn School of Law), speakers were **Kazım Berkay Arslan** (Kabine Law Offices), **Annika Knauer** (Max Planck Institute, Heidelberg), **Emmanuel O. Osayande** (Columbia Law and Harvard), and **Naida Softić** (Loyola University).

The day continued with the Presidential High-Level Opening Plenary. President-Elect **Amity Boye**, Chair **Leila N. Sadat**, and **Muhammad U. Faridi** (New York City Bar Association) gave welcome remarks. President **Michael P. Scharf** then interviewed **Ana Peyró Llopis**, Principal Legal Officer at the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs, about her fascinating international legal experience and recent developments affecting the United Nations. Following an animated question and answer session with the plenary speaker, the evening concluded with a reception at the New York City Bar Association.

ILW 2025 continued on Friday at Fordham University School of Law. It began with the Women's Networking Breakfast, co-sponsored by ArbitralWomen, Arnold & Porter LLP, Low & Kinnear Dispute Resolution, and the American Society of International Law's Women in International Law Interest Group.

Next, **Mélida Hodgson** (Arnold & Porter LLP; ASIL) interviewed **Lucinda Low** (Low & Kinnear Dispute Resolution) and **Meg Kinnear** (Low & Kinnear Dispute Resolution) for Friday's Keynote: The Future of International Arbitration. Low and Kinnear spoke about their over 40 years of experience practicing international and domestic law, founding their own practice, and previous roles as President of the American Society of International Law and Secretary-General of the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes. **Jess Peake** (UCLA Law) and Dean **Joseph Landau** (Fordham University School of Law) gave welcome remarks.



Top row, from left: the 2025 Emerging Voices with discussant **Mark Janis**; **Ana Peyró Llopis**, **Michael P. Scharf**, and **Amity Boye** at the President's Opening Plenary. Bottom row, from left: **Meg Kinnear**, **Lucinda Low**, and **Mélida Hodgson** at Friday's Keynote: The Future of International Arbitration; **Jess Peake** providing welcoming remarks.

ILW 2025 Recap (cont'd)

ILW 2025 attendees included leading academics, ambassadors, government officials, NGO leaders, students, journalists, and other interested persons. The conference offered an array of public and private international law panels, including:

- Customary International Law: What Role Can It Play in Responding to Contemporary Global Crises?
- UN Roundtable: Leading Diplomats Reflect on the UN at 80
- General Counsel Roundtable: Local Practice on a Global Scale
- A “New” Role for the ICJ?
- Progress in International IP? Implications of the Riyadh Design Law Treaty
- What Today’s Wars Mean for Tomorrow’s International Legal Order
- Does Investor-State Arbitration Impede Responses to Climate Change?
- Charting the Deep: An Oxford-Style Debate on the Future of Seabed Governance

American Branch Committees sponsored 12 panels, many of which were eligible for Continuing Legal Education (CLE), thanks to our CLE Officer, Laurie Farid. Several panels are available to watch on ABILA’s YouTube page.

The Friday program concluded with a reception at the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations. **Leila N. Sadat**, **Beatrice Maille** (Minister-Counsellor and Legal Adviser, Permanent Mission of Canada), and **Valerie Oosterveld** (Western University; ILA Canada) gave remarks. Thank you to the Canadian Mission for their warmth and generosity.



International Tribunals and Cultural Heritage Destruction: War Crimes, Persecution, Genocide & Discrimination



Global Energy Governance - Strategic Weapon or Tool for Peace?



Top row, from left: the Canadian Mission; **Craig Martin** and **Frédéric Sourgens**; **Jess Peake** and **Julia Liston**. Bottom row, from left: **Beatrice Maille**; **Valerie Oosterveld**; **Leila N. Sadat**.

ILW 2025 Recap (*cont'd*)

The Saturday program began with the 103rd Members Meeting, led by President **Michael P. Scharf** and Chair **Leila N. Sadat**. ILW 2025 Co-Chairs **William Aceves**, **Amity Boye**, and **Jess Peake** praised the 2025 Emerging Voices and Student Ambassadors (see p. 8) and thanked the ILA Canadian Branch for its support of the Canadian Mission Reception. **JC Johnson**, a colleague of **Brenda Hollis**, the recipient of the Outstanding Achievement Award, delivered a Keynote Address on her behalf (see pp. 7-8). **Andrea Bjorklund**, **Mortimer Sellers**, **David Stewart**, and **Jennifer Trahan** presented the various American Branch awards, including the Charles Siegal Award and Book Awards (see pp. 7, 9).



William Aceves, Jess Peake, and Amity Boye; Mortimer Sellers; Andrea Bjorklund and David Stewart.

Saturday continued with a variety of panels and a Lunch Keynote Address from **Sir Howard Morrison**, Former Judge at the International Criminal Court and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Judge Morrison focused on the central theme of ILW 2025, *crisis as catalyst in international law*. He was introduced by **William Aceves**.

This year, we held a Jessup Compromis Q&A - a session dedicated to the 2026 Jessup Competition Problem, providing students in person and online with the opportunity to ask leading experts questions about the topic and best approaches to the competition. Thank you to **Benjamin Salas Kantor**, **Chiméne Keitner**, **Asaf Lubin**, and **Jess Peake** for taking the time to help our students.

ILW 2025 concluded with a packed *Pathways to Employment in International Law* session, moderated by **Angela Benson** (American Bar Association, International Law Section) and **Michael Peil** (International Law Students Association). Thank you to **Gergő Balázs** (UN Office of Legal Affairs), **Edmund Bao** (Paul, Weiss LLP), **Federico Euforbio** (White & Case LLP), **Sara Kaufhardt** (Debevoise & Plimpton LLP), **Paulina Macías Ortega** (RFK Human Rights Center), and **Olga Pototskaya** (Winston & Strawn LLP) for speaking about their varied paths into international legal employment.



Sir Howard Morrison (over Zoom) and William Aceves; the *Pathways to Employment in International Law* session.

Thank You to the Sponsors of ILW 2025

Diamond: Fordham University School of Law, Just Security, and the Silicon Valley Community Foundation.

Platinum: The Dean Rusk International Law Center at the University of Georgia School of Law, The Leitner Center for International Law and Justice, and Toppan Merrill.

Gold: E. J. Brill Koninklijke Publishing, Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, Case Western Reserve University School of Law, The Fletcher School at Tufts University, Freshfields LLP, Georgetown University Law Center, King & Spalding LLP, and Washington University in St. Louis School of Law.

Silver: The American Society of International Law, the American Bar Association International Law Section, ArbitralWomen, the University of Baltimore School of Law, California Western School of Law, Chaffetz Lindsey LLP, University of Chicago Law School, Ford & Paulekas LLP, Harvard Law School, the International Law Students Association, New York University Law, University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School, University of Pittsburgh Law, Seton Hall University School of Diplomacy and International Relations, and Winston & Strawn LLP.

ILW 2025 Organizing Committee

ILW 2025 was made possible by the Organizing Committee and Student Ambassadors, as well as the efforts of **Freya Doughty-Wagner**, ABILA Chief Operating Officer, **Laurie Farid**, ABILA CLE Officer, and **Julia Liston**, ABILA Membership Officer. The ILW 2025 Co-Chairs were **William Aceves**, Chief Justice Roger Traynor Professor of Law, California Western School of Law in San Diego; **Amity Boye**, President-Elect, American Branch of the International Law Association; and **Jess Peake**, Director of the International and Comparative Law Program, UCLA School of Law. **Freya Doughty-Wagner**, **Laurie Farid**, **Julia Liston**, **Leila N. Sadat**, and **Michael P. Scharf** served *ex officio*.

Other members of the ILW 2025 Organizing Committee were **Christine Carpenter**, PhD Candidate, Cambridge University; **Perpétua B. Chéry**, Associate, Debevoise & Plimpton LLP; **Megan Corrarino**, Managing Editor, Just Security; **Julia Eppard**, Counsel, Akin Gump LLP; **M. Imad Khan**, Partner, Winston & Strawn LLP; **Konstantine Kopaliani**, Associate, White & Case LLP; **Brady Mabe**, Legal Adviser, International Committee of the Red Cross; **S. Priya Morley**, Director of the Racial Justice Initiative at the Bernstein Institute for Human Rights and Project Advisor of the Global Justice Clinic, NYU School of Law; **Douglas Pivnichny**, Legal Officer, United Nations' Codification Division; **Lisa Reinsberg**, Executive Director, International Justice Resource Center; **Christine Ryan**, Director of the Reproductive Justice Project, Human Rights Institute, Columbia University; **Alveena Shah**, Assistant Professor of Law, University of Pittsburgh School of Law; **Milena Sterio**, Charles R. Emrick Jr – Calfee, Halter & Griswold Endowed Professor of Law, Cleveland State University College of Law; **Peter Tzeng**, Partner, Foley Hoag LLP; and **Elisabeth Wickeri**, Executive Director, Leitner Center for International Law and Justice and Adjunct Professor of Law, Fordham Law School.



William Aceves, Amity Boye, and Jess Peake

2025 Charles Siegal Distinguished Service Award

The Charles Siegal Distinguished Service Award was established by the ABILA Board of Directors in 2020 to recognize outstanding contributions to the Branch. Contributions may include to the ABILA Board, ABILA Committees, and/or the ABILA's International Law Weekend. In choosing the recipient, the Selection Committee may consider an individual's specific extraordinary service initiatives and/or sustained superior contributions to the ABILA over a number of years. This year's recipient was **Houston Putnam Lowry**.

Houston is ABILA's longstanding Treasurer with over 20 years with the American Branch. Since becoming our incredibly consistent Treasurer, Houston has transformed the organization's financial present and future. He is a key feature at every ABILA event, always happy to help and provide a smile. Houston has taken on various roles with ABILA, including serving as the first Webmaster, Chair of the International Commercial Law Committee, and ABILA Secretary.



David P. Stewart, Andrea Bjorklund, Houston Putnam Lowry, Michael P. Scharf, and Leila Nadya Sadat

Outside of his work with the ABILA, Houston is a Partner with Ford & Paulekas, LLP in Connecticut and has worked on projects at the American Law Institute since 1989. Through this honor, we acknowledge Houston's outstanding and generous dedication to the efforts and achievements of ABILA over many years, for which he fully deserves our gratitude, esteem, and sincere respect.

2025 Outstanding Achievement Award

The ABILA Outstanding Achievement Award was established to recognize outstanding contributions in the field of international law. Such contributions might include, but are not limited to, service to an international organization, a State, or an international court or tribunal; or to teaching, research, or scholarship in the field of international law. While candidates are reviewed comprehensively, factors considered may include consideration of an individual's specific extraordinary service initiatives and/or sustained superior contributions to the field of international law over a number of years, as well as visionary and innovative leadership. This year's recipient was **Brenda Hollis**.



Brenda has served as the Principal Trial Lawyer (D-1 level), Office of the Prosecutor, International Criminal Court, in which capacity she leads the investigation into possible international crimes committed in Ukraine, reporting directly to the ICC Prosecutor. Prior to assuming her duties with the ICC OTP, Ms. Hollis served as the International Co-Prosecutor of the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia from July 2019 until July 2022, having been the Reserve International Co-Prosecutor from April 2015.

Prior to her appointment as the ECCC's International Co-Prosecutor, she was the Prosecutor of both the Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone and the Special Court for Sierra Leone (2010–2019).

2025 Outstanding Achievement Award (cont'd)

Brenda could not be present at International Law Weekend to accept the award. **Jim Johnson**, her colleague, accepted the award in her place and shared her remarks.

“Thank you for honoring me with this award. It is an honor to be recognized in this way, but even more of an honor to have been nominated by outstanding professionals who are deserving of the award based on the contributions each has made to the development of international criminal law. And to stand in the company of such distinguished former recipients, who have made immeasurable contributions to the advancement of international law.

I write to you from Ukraine, where the men and women of the investigative and prosecutorial branches of the Ukrainian government continue to advance the rule of law in most challenging times. So, to my regret, I cannot be with you to thank you in person. Jim Johnson, my longtime friend and colleague, is accepting the award on my behalf. Jim has himself made significant contributions to international criminal law, and I thank you, Jim, for standing in for me today.

It is of particular significance to me that I receive this honor at a conference dedicated to exploring how crises can shape international law. My involvement in investigation and prosecution of international crimes has been possible because of the international community’s response to crises – those arising from the horrific crimes of the Nazis in WWII, those carried out against the peoples of the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Cambodia, Ukraine, Palestine and Israel, and of too many other countries. The response to each of these crises, and the efforts of the exceptional men and women who ensured the effective implementation of these responses, has shaped international criminal law as we know it today.

I accept this honor with great humility, for many reasons. First and foremost because I am being given an award for work I have been privileged to do, both as an Air Force officer and judge advocate who prosecuted crimes, and as a prosecutor at several international criminal tribunals and courts. It is my great and continuing privilege to be part of the effort to bring some measure of justice to victims of life altering crimes, and some measure of accountability to those responsible for these crimes.

Also, because throughout my career in the Air Force and at the international criminal courts and tribunals, I have had the privilege of working with gifted, dedicated women and men. Women and men who have remained steadfast in their commitment to the rule of law, and to the most critical component of justice and accountability measures – independent, impartial investigation and prosecution based on facts and law, not on political affiliations or beliefs. I accept this award on their behalf.” (Keep reading on the [ABILA Blog](#)).



Jennifer Trahan, JC Johnson, Michael P. Scharf, and Leila Nadya Sadat



Jim Johnson

2025 ABILA Book Awards

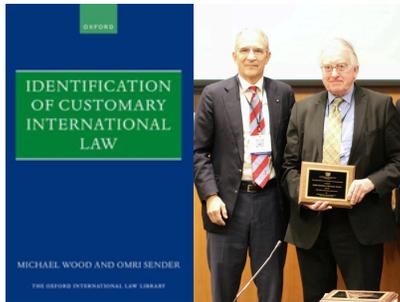
The American Branch accepts nominations for its annual Book Awards every spring. Members are encouraged to submit nominations by the summer deadline. The Committee was chaired by **Mortimer Sellers** and included **Fernanda Nicola** and **Alison Dundes Renteln**.

ABILA Book of the Year Award: José E. Alvarez and Judith Bauder

For **Women's Property Rights Under CEDAW** (OUP, 2024). José E. Alvarez is the Herbert and Rose Rubin Professor of International Law at New York University School of Law. Judith Bauder is a Researcher with the European University Institute's Department of Law in Florence, Italy. This book utilizes the CEDAW Committee's own texts, including its General Recommendations, Views in response to communications, Concluding Observations in response to State reports, and Reports on Inquiries.



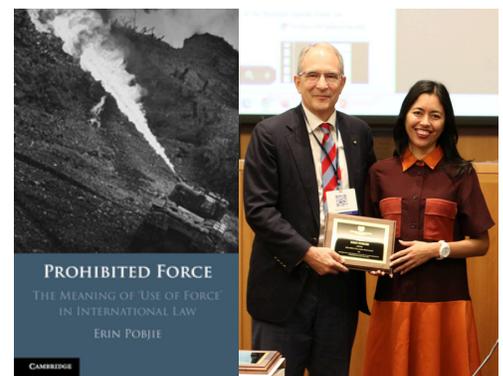
ABILA Practitioners Book Award: Omri Sender and Michael Wood



For **Identification of Customary International Law** (OUP, 2024). Sir Michael Wood KC is a Barrister with 20 Essex Street Chambers. Omri Sender is a Partner and Chair of the Public International Law Practice Group with S. Horowitz & Co. Customary international law remains a central source of international law and the core of the international legal system. This book serves as guidance to those seeking to determine the existence of rules of customary international law and their content.

ABILA New Authors Book Award: Erin Pobjie

For **Prohibited Force: The meaning of "Use of Force" in International Law** (CUP, 2024). The 'use of force,' prohibited under Article 2(4) of the UN Charter and customary international law, has until now not been clearly defined, despite its central importance in the international legal order and for international peace and security. This book accordingly offers an original framework to identify prohibited uses of force, including those that use emerging technology or take place in newer military domains such as outer space. Pobjie explains the emergence of the customary prohibition of the use of force and its relationship with Article 2(4).



ABILA Edited Volume Award: Alejandro Chehtman, Alexandra Huneeus, and Sergio Puig



For **Latin American International Law in the Twenty-First Century** (OUP, 2025). Alejandro Chehtman is Dean and Professor of Law, Universidad Torcuato Di Tella, Argentina, and Executive Director of the Latin American Society for International Law. Alexandra Huneeus is Evjue Bascom Professor of Law and Director of the Center for Law, Society and Justice at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Sergio Puig is Chair in International Economic Law at the European University Institute and Evo DeConcini Professor of Law at UArizona.

ILW25 Panel Reflection: Does Investment Arbitration Impede Climate Change?

by *Chioma Menankiti*, an LLM candidate at Harvard Law School*

From the growing wave of states renegotiating bilateral investment treaties to critics decrying the expanding powers of arbitral tribunals, the international arbitration landscape is undergoing rapid transformation. Meanwhile, international bodies like the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development push for multilateral treaty reforms, and a surge in renewable energy cases against European countries further fuels the debate. With these developments reshaping the conversation, four esteemed panelists gathered at International Law Weekend to tackle a critical question: Does investment arbitration, as it stands, hinder or help efforts to combat climate change?

David Attanasio, partner at Womble Bond Dickinson and Co-Chair of ABILA's International Investment Law Committee, opened the discussion by providing context on recent criticisms of investment treaties and the European Union's efforts to modernize the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT). Given the ECT's role in providing "a multilateral framework for energy cooperation," he underscored the importance of these reform efforts in combating climate change by reducing protections for hydrocarbon investments and expanding exceptions for regulatory measures aimed at environmental protection, which in turn helps counter regulatory chill. Additionally, the reforms aim to terminate the ECT's protections for new fossil fuel investments while phasing out protections for existing investments. According to Mr. Attanasio, these substantive modifications were implemented with the understanding that investment arbitration poses a significant barrier to climate change mitigation. The rationale is clear: investors challenge climate change regulation through investment arbitration, thereby discouraging states from enacting legislation in this area.



Having set the stage for an engaging discussion, **Sven Volkmer**, a partner with White & Case's international arbitration practice, provided an overview of the types of climate-related state actions that have given rise to investor-state dispute settlement cases. Mr. Volkmer's discourse centered on three notable categories of disputes.

The first category involves disputes arising from states' efforts to phase out fossil fuels, as exemplified by *Rockhopper v. Italy*. Brought under the ECT, this case concerned a ban on oil production off the Italian coast and a subsequent denial of the British claimant's oil concession, despite the claimant having completed exploration and steps to secure the concession. While the tribunal in this case ultimately sided with the claimant, it acknowledged the tension between the state's right to regulate and its obligations under the ECT.

To keep reading this article, please visit the ABILA blog at <https://www.ila-americanbranch.org/ilw25-panel-reflection-does-investment-arbitration-impede-climate-change/>



*Chioma Menankiti is an LLM candidate at Harvard Law School. She previously earned a Master's in Economic Law from Sciences Po Paris, specializing in Global Business Law and Governance, as well as a Bachelor's degree in Politics and International Relations from the same university.

ABILA CLE Webinar Series

Throughout 2026, ABILA Committees will host a variety of free, quarterly webinars that qualify for New York Continuing Learning Education credits. Register for upcoming events on our website.

A Report Card on the Laws of Armed Conflict - February 17, 2026

Co-Sponsored by the International Humanitarian Law Committee

The observation that these are challenging times for international law and that armed conflict is the crucible in which so many of the challenges arise has graduated to the level of cliché and truism. On a more granular level, debate centers on whether the norms of International Humanitarian Law (the law of armed conflict) remain fit for purpose, and on whether there is a critical mass of compliance and political will to enforce the law. The panel explored these propositions in contemporary contexts, including the so-called “War on Terror,” Russia/Ukraine, Israel/Palestine, Sudan, Venezuela, and U.S. drug boat strikes, among others. Watch on the [ABILA YouTube now](#). With:



Professor Janina Dill
Oxford Institute for Ethics,
Law, and Armed Conflict



Cordula Droeger
Legal Division, International
Committee of the Red Cross



Professor Oona Hathaway
Yale Law School & Department
of Political Science



Professor Gabor Rona
Benjamin N. Cardozo
School of Law



Professor Mike Schmitt
University of Reading
School of Law; Former JAG

Indigenous Legal Orders, Legal Pluralism, and the Coloniality of Method Across Comparative Law, International Law, IP, and Trade Governance - June 1, 2026

Co-Sponsored by the International Law, China, and the Reconfiguration of the Global Order Committee

This webinar will examine how international and comparative law continue to be shaped by enduring colonial structures, both in doctrine and method, and how Indigenous legal orders challenge, complement, and reconfigure dominant legal paradigms. Bringing together comparative, doctrinal, and policy perspectives, and drawing on case studies from multiple regions, the panel will examine: the role of Indigenous law and knowledge systems within international development frameworks; methodological coloniality in comparative law and its implications for global justice and institutional reform; legal pluralism as an alternative architecture for equitable and inclusive global governance; and the emerging influence of Indigenous jurisprudence, traditional knowledge, and community-based normative orders within international legal discourse. With:



Professor Elena Baylis
University of Pittsburgh
School of Law



**Professor Carliss N.
Chatman**
SMU Dedman School of
Law



**Professor Paolo Davide
Farah**
University of Tulsa
College of Law



**Professor Dana G.
Jones**
NC Central University
Law



**Professor Srividhya
Ragavan**
Texas A&M School of
Law



**Professor Sergio
Alberto Gramitto Ricci**
Hofstra Law School

International Law Weekend-West 2026

From February 20-21, 2026, ABILA and the International and Comparative Law Program at UCLA School of Law hosted International Law Weekend - West at UCLA School of Law. The theme of the conference was *New Frontiers, Evolving Rules: The Future of International Law*.

The first panel on Friday, "Cities as Global Norm-Shapers: Urban Power at the New Frontiers of International Law, featured a conversation with **Ambassador Nina L. Hachigian (ret.)**, Alliance for Local Leaders International, moderated by **Kai Raustiala**, UCLA School of Law. The second panel, "Revisiting the Use of Force: Legal Norms, State Practice, and Emerging Contours in International Law," included **Michael Kelly**, Creighton University School of Law; ABILA President **Michael Scharf**, Case Western Reserve University School of Law; **David Glazier**, Loyola Law School; and **Rachel VanLandingham**, Southwestern Law School. The third panel, "Reflecting on the Ongoing Negotiations for a New Treaty on Crimes Against Humanity: Challenges and Prospects," was composed of **Leila Sadat**, Washington University in St. Louis School of Law; **Gissou Nia**, Strategic Litigation Project at the Atlantic Council; **Hannah Garry**, USC Gould School of Law; and **Saira Mohamed**, UC Berkeley Law.

Saturday began with a Keynote Speech on "Standing Up for International Law" by **Michael Scharf**. At a time when international law and institutions are under attack, he said that academics, business executives, law firm heads, judges, and leaders of international associations like the ABILA can make a difference by taking a stand. The first Saturday panel, "Artificial Intelligence and the Boundaries of International Law," featured **Julia Powles**, UCLA School of Law; **Peter Yu**, Texas A&M School of Law; **Ioanna Tourkochoriti**, University of Baltimore School of Law; and **Nina Toft Djanegara**, UCLA School of Law. Speaking on the second panel, "A Necessary IDEA: International Human Rights Law and U.S. Public Policy in Differential Treatment of Social Groups," were **Chandra Bhatnagar**, ACLU of Southern California; **Kevin R. Johnson**, University of California Davis; **Kelley Loper**, University of Denver Sturm College of Law; **Jerry Kang**, UCLA School of Law; and **Aaron Fellmeth**, Arizona State University, Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law. The final panel, "Protest and International Law," included **Alison Dundes Renteln**, University of Southern California; **Shenali Pilapitiya**, University of Southern California; **Florian Kriener**, Max Planck Institute, Yale Law School; **Federico Barillas Schwank**, International Center for Not-for-Profit Law; **Bahar Mirhosseni**, Cornell Law School; and **Jess Peake**, UCLA School of Law.

ILW West was organized by Professor **Jess Peake**, Director of UCLA's International and Comparative Law Program, and **Alyssa Krieger**, Program Coordinator. Articles generated by the conference speakers will be published in the UCLA Journal of International Law in its 30th volume in 2026.



American Society of International Law Annual Meeting

2026 ASIL Annual Meeting

April 22-25, 2026

From April 22-25, 2026, the American Society of International Law will convene its 120th Annual Meeting with the theme, "Advancing and Defending The Rule of Law."

The rule of law is a foundational concept and a precondition for a just world order. Today, it faces profound challenges that undermine international norms and standards, and multilateralism itself. Fundamental tenets of the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and other consensus-based instruments, including in trade and environmental law, are under threat. Core elements of the rule of law – including separation of powers, equality before the law, accountability, fairness in the application of the law, legal certainty and independent adjudication – are in jeopardy, even in some democracies, with far-reaching consequences.

The municipal and international manifestations of the rule of law are interdependent. As the United Nations Secretary General affirmed in 2023: "The rule of law is fundamental to lasting peace and security. It is the foundation for conflict prevention, peace-making, peacekeeping, sustaining peace and peacebuilding. It is essential for addressing injustices and inequalities that fuel conflict and for protecting civilians in crisis and post-conflict situations."

See more here: <https://www.asil.org/annualmeeting>

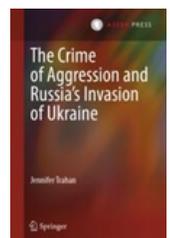
ABILA April Board Meeting

The American Branch will host its April Board meeting in person at the Annual Meeting on **Thursday, April 23, at 11:00 AM**. For those unable to attend in person, Zoom participation will also be available. All Board Members will be emailed with further details.

ABILA and Friends Reception

The American Branch will host a Reception at the Annual Meeting on **Thursday, April 23, at 6:30 PM**, in the Kalorama Room on the lobby level, for all ABILA Members and friends. We will be celebrating 2026 publications and releases from ABILA Members, including ABILA Vice-President **Jennifer Trahan's** *The Crime of Aggression and Russia's Invasion of Ukraine*, published by Springer, ABILA Chair **Leila Nadya Sadat**, **Mark Janis**, and **John Noyes'** *International Law: Cases and Commentary, 7th Edition*, published by West Academic, and **Yvonne Dutton**, ABILA President **Michael P. Scharf**, ABILA Co-Director of Studies **Milena Sterio**, and **Paul R. Williams'** *Ukraine and the Legal Accountability of Russia: The Emergence of a New Global Order*, published by Routledge. Registration is not required.

Do you have a new publication or news you'd like to celebrate at the ABILA and Friends Reception? Please email Laurie Farid at media@ila-americanbranch.org with your details.





INTERNATIONAL
LAW ASSOCIATION
AMERICAN BRANCH ▸ EST. 1922



International Law Weekend 2026

*[R]evolution in the International
Legal Order*

CALL FOR PANEL PROPOSALS

DEADLINE: **APRIL 10, 2026**

See more at: www.ila-americanbranch.org/international-law-weekend/



ila-americanbranch.org



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ilw@ila-americanbranch.org



ABILAOfficial

International Law Weekend 2026 - October 22-24, 2026

[R]evolution in the International Legal Order

This conference will examine the re-ordering of the international legal order at a pivotal moment of transition. Shifts in global power, challenges to bedrock legal principles, including the prohibition on the use of force, and retreat from long-standing international commitments pose challenges to the status quo, creating both uncertainty and opportunities for renewal. As some traditionally dominant states scale back their engagement with international law and institutions, space opens to reconsider the global distribution and exercise of authority and responsibility.

This interdisciplinary conference will explore how states and regional groupings can step forward to uphold, reinterpret, and strengthen international law through cooperation, innovation, and leadership. It situates these developments within longer trajectories of change in geopolitics and international governance, including those driven by states that gained independence after the United Nations' founding. It will also highlight the constructive roles of international institutions, non-state actors, and civil society in sustaining, contesting, and advancing legal norms. Rather than signaling decline, these changes invite reflection on what international law might become: more inclusive, more resilient, and better equipped to address contemporary global challenges through diversified sources of legitimacy, power, and collective responsibility.

ILW 2026 Co-Chairs



Brady Mabe is a Legal Adviser with the International Committee of the Red Cross. He served on the ILW 2025 Organizing Committee and sat on ILW 2024's Pathways to Employment in International Law panel. He has previous experience working for the Permanent Mission of the Principality of Liechtenstein to the United Nations, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance, and Justice Base Myanmar.



Jess Peake is the Director of the International and Comparative Law Program at UCLA School of Law and has served on several ILW Organizing Committees, including as Co-Chair. Jess teaches courses on Human Rights and War Crimes, Digital Investigations and the Law of War, and the War on Terror. She launched UCLA Law's Digital Investigations Lab and co-founded the University of California Digital Investigations Network. Jess serves on the Board of Directors of the International Law Students Association.



Lisa Reinsberg is a Lecturer with the University of California, Berkeley School of Law and the Executive Director of the International Justice Resource Center. Lisa says: *"ILW fosters community, knowledge sharing, and considered engagement with the development of international law, both in the preparations and at the conference itself. I am particularly grateful to be involved this year, and envision an ILW that helps spur and strengthen collaborative efforts to shape international law as a tool for good."*

INTERNATIONAL LAW WEEKEND 2026

[R]evolution in the International Legal Order

Call for Student Ambassadors

Deadline: March 27, 2026 *(early nominations encouraged)*

The International Law Association (American Branch) is seeking nominations for its Student Ambassadors program. All ABILA members are invited to nominate students for this position. This program is a terrific way for law students to network with leading academics, practitioners, and other students.

Student Ambassadors help with the organization's work, especially in the preparation for ILW 2026. Members are invited to send their nominee's cover letter and CV to ABILA's COO, Freya Doughty-Wagner (media@ila-americanbranch.org), with the subject line "Student Ambassador Application." See further details on our website at: www.ila-americanbranch.org/2026-student-ambassadors/



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International Law Chats - an ABILA Podcast

International Law Chats is ABILA's audio and video podcast, hosted by **Professor Chiara Giorgetti**, **Alison Macdonald KC**, and **Professor Milena Sterio**. The podcast is edited and produced by **Freya Doughty-Wagner**. Episodes air on the first Monday of every month and feature prominent guests in the field of international law. Episodes are available on [Apple](#), [Spotify](#), [YouTube](#), and [our website](#). Read about our recent episodes below.



Episode 6: The Global Refugee Crisis with Rez Gardi MNZM

Rez Gardi MNZM spoke about the global refugee crisis and the importance of refugee-led representation in international affairs. She is the co-founder and co-director of R-SEAT (Refugees Seeking Equal Access at the Table), the only global refugee-led organisation working to embed refugee co-leadership in state delegations and policy processes at the United Nations. Rez also serves as co-director of the Centre for Asia Pacific Refugee Studies at the University of Auckland. She sits on UNHCR's Advisory Board and contributes as an expert to the Wilson Center's Refugee and Forced Displacement Initiative.



Episode 7: Peace Negotiations after the Dayton Accords with Dr. Paul R. Williams

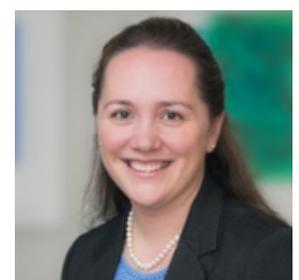
Paul R. Williams was interviewed about his experiences with the PILPG and his extensive background in international peace negotiations. Paul holds the Rebecca I. Grazier Professorship in Law and International Relations at American University, where he teaches in the School of International Service and at the Washington College of Law. Paul is also the co-founder of the Public International Law & Policy Group (PILPG), a pro bono law firm providing legal assistance to states and governments involved in peace negotiations, post-conflict constitution drafting, and the prosecution of war criminals.



Episode 8: Crisis as Catalyst in International Law with Just Security

In this special episode co-produced with the Just Security podcast, our hosts **Alison**, **Chiara**, and **Milena**, together with **Professor Rebecca Hamilton**, and **Megan Corrarino** — each of whom also participated in International Law Weekend — discuss the weekend's theme, "Crisis as Catalyst on International Law;" takeaways from panels on topics ranging from the proposed Crimes against Humanity Treaty to international environmental law and more; and how international lawyers and law students might think about their role in the present moment.

Professor Hamilton is a Professor of Law at American University, Washington College of Law, teaching international law, national security law, and criminal law, and an Executive Editor at Just Security. Megan Corrarino is the Managing Editor at Just Security.



International Law Chats - an ABILA Podcast (*cont'd*)

Episode 9: International Tribunals, War Crimes & The Grotian Moment with Michael P. Scharf

Our hosts interviewed ABILA President **Michael P. Scharf** about international criminal tribunals, war crimes, and his time as Dean of Case Western Reserve University School of Law. In 2024, Michael Scharf returned to serving as Associate Dean for Global Legal Studies after leading the law school as Co-Dean for over ten years. He is also the Joseph C. Hostetler—BakerHostetler Professor of Law and serves as Managing Director of the Public International Law & Policy Group, a Nobel Peace Prize-nominated NGO.



Episode 10: International Law in 2025, a Retrospective with Dapo Akande and Franz Perrez

The December 2025 episode featured **Professor Dapo Akande** and **Ambassador Franz Perrez** as they look back on international law in 2025 and anticipate what they expect for 2026.

Professor Akande is the Chichele Professor of Public International Law at the University of Oxford, a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford and co-director of the Oxford Institute for Ethics, Law and Armed Conflict. Ambassador Perrez is the head of the International Affairs Division of Switzerland's Federal Office for the Environment and a lecturer of international environmental law at the University of Bern School of Law. He is Switzerland's ambassador for the environment and chief negotiator for environmental issues and climate change.



Episode 11: The Future of the International Legal Order with Harold Hongju Koh

Chiara and Milena interviewed **Professor Harold Hongju Koh** about the future of the international legal order, his book *The National Security Constitution in the Twenty-First Century*, and unconstitutional actions under the Trump Administration.

Professor Koh is the Sterling Professor of International Law at Yale Law School. He returned to Yale Law School in January 2013 after serving for nearly four years as the 22nd Legal Adviser of the U.S. Department of State. He is one of the country's leading experts in public and private international law, national security law, and human rights.



Meet the Co-Hosts of International Law Chats

Professor Chiara Giorgetti is a Professor of Law at Richmond Law School and a Senior Fellow at the International Claims and Reparations Project at Columbia Law School. **Alison Macdonald KC** is a Barrister with Essex Court Chambers in London and a Fellow with All Souls College in Oxford. **Professor Milena Sterio** is the Charles R. Emrick Jr-Calfee, Halter & Griswold Endowed Professor of Law at Cleveland State University's Cleveland-Marshall College of Law, Managing Director of the Public International Law & Policy Group, and the Co-Director of Studies for ABILA.

International Law Association 82nd Biennial

Contours of International Law: Encounters and Evolutions

August 17-21, 2026 | University of Vienna, Austria



The 2026 biennial conference primarily intends to offer those taking part in the long-term work of the Association a forum for discussing and further developing the topics addressed in more than 20 committees and study groups, ranging from alternative dispute settlement, global health law, monetary, tax and securities law, artificial intelligence and technology, migration issues to sexual and reproductive violence in conflict and post-conflict scenarios. Therefore, substantial time is reserved for the ILA's crucial work in both closed and open meetings of committees and study groups throughout the conference.

In addition, plenary panel discussions will highlight evolutions and encounters in the fields of arbitration, Indigenous peoples/rights of nature, monetary law, human rights, international organizations, as well as investment law. The conference will conclude with a high-level ILA Headquarters plenary panel on current affairs and hear reports from committees and study groups which may include resolutions to be adopted by the Association.

Announced Plenary Panels:

- Indigenous Rights and the Rights of Nature
- Authoritative Interpretation vs Arbitral Discretion: States, Tribunals, and the Boundaries of Meaning in Investment Treaties
- International Human Rights Law in a Shifting World: Between Persistence and Renewal
- Regional Organizations in a Multipolar World: Shaping Global Governance
- From Disparity to Clarity: Redefining the Conflict-of-Laws Landscape in International Arbitration
- Sustaining Global Monetary Cooperation in an Age of Geopolitical Fracture

Social Events:

- Day trip to Melk Abbey & Dürnstein Castle including Lunch & wine pairing in the Old Monastery Cellar in Dürnstein
- American Branch Dinner Reception: more information to come. Closer to the date, email Freya Doughty-Wagner at freya@ila-americanbranch.org for details.

Registration:

All American Branch members have an ILA Membership and are entitled to the ILA registration discount.

Register here:

<https://ilavienna2026.univie.ac.at/>

Send questions about registration or hotel reservations to:
congress@univie.ac.at



The Crimes Against Humanity Treaty Advances with First Preparatory Committee

by Leila Nadya Sadat

From Jan. 19 – 30, 2026, the first Preparatory Committee for the Diplomatic Conference on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Humanity (the “PrepCom” or “PrepCom I”), the next step in the process toward a treaty to codify such crimes under international law.

Anticipation was high as delegates and members of civil society gathered in the Trusteeship Council at U.N. Headquarters in New York for the historic opening session, marking the formal start of the process to close this 80-year-old legal gap. The PrepCom was established by Resolution 79/122, adopted in December 2024 after fierce negotiations in the U.N. Sixth Committee, during which opponents of the crimes against humanity treaty, led by the Russian Federation, interposed both procedural and substantive objections to its negotiation.



With actual treaty negotiations still two years out, the PrepCom had several tasks before it, including electing officers, commenting on the International Law Commission’s (ILC) 2019 Draft Articles, and deciding on the participation of non-ECOSOC-accredited stakeholders. ABILA Chair Leila Sadat spoke during the open plenary session, and the ABILA Study Group on Crimes Against Humanity distributed 200 copies of its final Report to State delegates and members of civil society. The ABILA also contributed to a civil society reception at which the Report was launched, and is grateful to the law firm of Foley Hoag LLP for supporting the printing of the Study Group’s Report.

During the two long, cold weeks of meetings in New York, it was easy to get lost in procedural minutiae and lose sight of the historic importance of what was taking place. More than 80 years after the Nuremberg and Tokyo Charters established crimes against humanity, the international community was finally engaged in an inclusive, universal process to codify these crimes in a new treaty that would insist upon their prevention and punishment.

Now comes a long wait until the second PrepCom in 2027. States may submit proposals by April 30, 2026, for inclusion in the text that will be sent to the Diplomatic Conference. The ABILA Study Group on Crimes against Humanity has put forth 11 proposals, as well as three thematic papers on a range of topics, including starvation, modes of liability, dispute settlement, a human rights monitoring mechanism, an interpretation clause, and gender competence.

Read more on JustSecurity at: <https://www.justsecurity.org/133160/crimes-against-humanity-first-preparatory-committee/>

New ABILA Committees:

Gender Justice in International Law

Co-Chairs: **Jessica Corsi** and **Milena Sterio**

The Gender Justice in International Law Committee (GJILC) works toward developing actionable guidance for states and international bodies on integrating gender justice into treaty obligations, enforcement, and policy design. GJILC also monitors and reports on gaps between international norms and national practice, with a focus on violence against women, reproductive rights, equal protection, meaningful participation, and access to justice.

International Law, China, and the Reconfiguration of the Global Order

Chair: **Paolo Davide Farah**

This Committee supports member-driven projects that advance understanding of the rapidly evolving architecture of international law in an era of geopolitical transition. The Committee examines how China's expanding legal and institutional footprint, together with the responses of other major actors such as the United States, the European Union, Japan, India, Brazil, Russia, and regional organizations in the Global South, is reshaping the norms, institutions, and practices of global governance.

New ILA CEO: Nick May

The International Law Association is pleased to announce that Nick May has been appointed as the first Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Association. Nick takes over from the outgoing Chief Operating Officer (COO), Claire Martin.



Nick has had a keen interest in all aspects of international law since the early 1990s, when he established the publishing and conference company Cameron May. Over a 20-year period, he published more than 250 books and Journals on International Environmental Law, International Public Law, International Human Rights Law, and International Economic Law, and hosted conferences on these subjects in Europe, Asia, and the Americas. Most recently, he was the CEO of a financial software company that specialises in payment systems.

We welcome Nick to the ILA and look forward to working together to continue building the Association and to further understanding and respect for international law.



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Welcome to Our New Members for 2026:

- Calum Agnew
- Harry Aitken
- Daniel Appelman
- Luis Battista
- Ana Beysoylu
- Christopher Boehning
- Grace Cheng
- Adrienne Fricke
- Rebecca Hamilton
- Alexandra Huneus
- Nicholas Leddy
- Daniel Levine-Spound
- Nema Milaninia
- Steve Mankodi
- Calvin Mazlumyan
- Sang Min Kim
- Aican Nguyen
- Tschika Okosi
- Simon Olleson
- Mona Patel
- Olga Pototskaya
- Stephen Rapp
- Salvador G. Sarmiento
- Zaki Shubber
- Ui-young Suh
- Rita Tsorme
- Tatiana Varanko
- Kemesha Williams

To join the ABILA or find out more about membership, email our Membership Officer, **Julia Liston**, at membership@ila-americanbranch.org.

ABILA Member News

Yasmin Al Ameen was part of the [Foley Hoag legal team](#) representing The Gambia in the Genocide case against Myanmar at the International Court of Justice.

Catherine Amirfar and **Nawi Ukabiala**, ABILA Board Member, were [recognized](#) in the 2026 Edition of Lexology Index: Arbitration.

Chloe Baldwin spoke with **Frédéric Sourgens**, ABILA Board Member, about the Tulane Energy Law & Policy Center's [strategic vision for the future](#).

The Guardian [interviewed Warren Binford](#), International Human Rights Law Committee Co-Chair, for their piece 'Influencers made millions pushing 'wild' births – now the Free Birth Society is linked to baby deaths around the world.'



Chloe Baldwin

Edith Brown Weiss [spoke](#) at the La Laguna 25th Anniversary Conference, 'Diversity, Sustainability, and Intergenerational Justice.'

Irene Calboli, Chair of the International Commercial Law Committee, [spoke to The Pourover](#) for their piece 'Panama's Specialty Coffee Association Moves to Brand and Trademark 'Panama Geisha' as Auction Prices Soar.'



Harlan G. Cohen

Harlan G. Cohen delivered the [guest lecture](#) 'Outbound Investment Restrictions and International Law's Challenge' at Columbia University.

Sean Flynn, Co-Chair of the International Intellectual Property Committee, [opened the event](#) that launched the Geneva Graduate Institute's Centre on Knowledge Governance.

Rez Gardi [became](#) the Special Assistant to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Kiran N. Gore [spoke](#) at Foley Hoag's event 'Mega Arbitration Disputes in Central Asia – Where the West, Russia, China, and the Middle East Meet.'



Kiran N. Gore

Adil Haque [spoke to Al Jazeera](#) for their piece 'Israel demolishes more buildings in military-controlled Gaza: Analysis.'

Henry Hertzfeld, Space Law Committee Co-Chair, was [quoted](#) by TIME Magazine in 'The International Space Station is Turning 25. Was it Worth it?'

Christina Hioureas was [nominated](#) for 'Best Lecture or Speech,' and her Foley Hoag team was nominated for 'Most Important Decision' by the 2026 Global Arbitration Review Awards. She was also [recognized](#) in the Chambers Global 2026 Guide's Global Guide for arbitration (international), international arbitration: arbitrators (USA), international arbitration: counsel (USA), and public international law – global market lawyers.

M. Imad Khan, ABILA's Secretary, [won](#) the Houston Business Journal's Inaugural 2026 Inclusive Leadership Award.

James Kraska [spoke to NewsNation](#) for their piece, 'What happens to crew members aboard oil tankers with Venezuela ties?'

Floriane Lavaud, ABILA Board Member, was [part of the Withers team](#) that represented the Republic of Equatorial Guinea in a case brought by the Republic of the Marshall Islands under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.



M. Imad Khan

Rachel López, Marko Milanovic, and Former Ambassador **Beth Van Schaack** were [panelists](#) on the American Society of International Law's 'An International Criminal Law Year in Review.'

ABILA Member News (cont'd)

Asaf Lubin spoke to [Arab News](#) for their piece 'How Israel's use of AI in Gaza has transformed warfare and the automation of apartheid.' Additionally, Harvard Law School [hosted Lubin](#) for his book talk, 'The International Law of Intelligence.'



Julianne Marley

Julianne Marley was [nominated](#) to the American Society of International Law's Executive Council.

Mary Ellen O'Connell [spoke to The Conversation](#) for their piece '3 ways US actions in Venezuela violated international law.'

Jessica Peake [spoke to Al Jazeera](#) for their piece 'US senators introduce bill to stop Trump seizing Greenland.'

Naomi Roht-Arriaza [spoke](#) at UC Berkeley Law's Thelton E. Henderson Center for Social Justice for their event 'Tackling Corruption as a Human Rights Violation.' Further, Roht-Arriaza was [interviewed](#) for the Just Security Podcast episode, 'Is there a Fox in the Henhouse? A Comparative Perspective of State Capture in the U.S.'

Margaret Satterthwaite, UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, [spoke with Al Jazeera](#) for their piece 'Trump says he doesn't need international law amid aggressive US policies.' She also [issued a press release](#) with the OHCHR, calling on the United States to withdraw sanctions against International Criminal Court Judges and Prosecutors.



Margaret Satterthwaite

Michael P. Scharf traveled to Rzeszów, a Polish town along the Ukrainian border, where [he led a group of experts](#) assisting 35 Ukrainian prosecutors and four judges in preparing for upcoming cases charging Russian officials with the commission of environmental war crimes and the crime of ecocide.

Milena Sterio, ABILA Co-Director of Studies, [spoke to BBC News](#) for their piece 'Trump's seizure of Maduro raises thorny questions.' Sterio also [spoke to Reuters](#) for their piece, 'How Trump's Venezuela embargo could put Taiwan at risk.'



Charles Stotler

Eran Sthoeger was [part of the Blackstone Chambers team](#) representing the United Kingdom for the International Court of Justice's Advisory Opinion on the Obligations of Israel in relation to the presence and activities of the United Nations, other international organizations, and third States in and relation to the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Charles Stotler [spoke to Politico](#) for their piece 'EU slams Russia's effort to get back on UN aviation body.'



Rachel VanLandingham

Jennifer Trahan, ABILA Vice-President, [participated](#) in Amnesty International's screening and discussion of the documentary *The Veto*.

Rachel VanLandingham was [quoted by The Hill](#) in their piece 'Hegseth's fight against Kelly moves into untested legal waters.'



Timothy Waters

Klara Van der Ploeg [joined Stetson Law](#) as an Associate Professor, specializing in international law and international trade regulation.

Timothy Waters gave a [keynote lecture](#) at Indiana University's Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies to celebrate thirty years of the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords.

ABILA Member Publications

New Blogs, Books, Book Chapters, and More

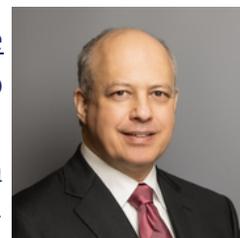
Catherine Amirfar and **Duncan Pickard** published ‘Sea Level Rise and the Law of Shared Responsibility’ for the SDG Knowledge Hub.

Barry Appleton published ‘New U.S. National Security Strategy should frighten Canadian policy-makers’ for the Canadian National Post.

David Attanasio, a Member of the American Branch Board of Directors and International Investment Law Committee Co-Chair, contributed the blog ‘Crises as Investor-State Dispute Catalysts – The Banking and Finance Sector’ to Opinio Juris’ Symposium on International Investment Law & Contemporary Crises.

Warren Binford, International Human Rights Law Committee Co-Chair, co-wrote the opinion piece ‘App Store Accountability Act leverages existing systems to protect kids,’ for Colorado Politics.

Ronald Brand, a Member of the American Board of Directors, published ‘America has a choice: the Founders’ rule of law or Trump’s chaos,’ for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette.



Ronald Brand

Christine C. Carpenter co-hosted and contributed to Opinio Juris’ ‘Symposium on Forensic and Counter-Forensic Approaches to International Law.’ She published the piece ‘Digital Evidence and The Gaze – A Conceptual Framework for Analyzing Digital Evidence Through a Foucauldian Lens.’

Chiara Giorgetti and Franz Perrez co-hosted the ‘Negotiating a Treaty on Crimes Against Humanity’ blogging symposium with EJIL:Talk! and Just Security.



Chiara Giorgetti

Adil Haque, **Oona Hathaway**, **Rebecca Ingber**, and **Priya Pillai** contributed to Just Security’s ‘Jus Ad Bellum: Syllabus Supplements.’

Coalter Lathrop, Law of the Sea Committee Chair, co-wrote the blog ‘Reclaiming Authority: Forcing Seabed Mining Contractors to Choose between the ISA and the USA’ for EJIL:Talk!



Preston Lim

Preston Lim published the blog ‘Responding to the Trump Administration’s Cut to International Judicial Work’ for Just Security.

Naomi Roht-Arriaza published the blog ‘Is the U.S. Becoming a Captured State? A Comparative Perspective’ for Just Security.

For Just Security, **Gabor Rona**, International Humanitarian Law Committee Chair, published ‘Does the United States Still Oppose Torture?’ Rona’s Letter to the Editor, ‘Hegseth Under Scrutiny in Lethal Boat Strikes,’ was published by The New York Times.



Leila Nadya Sadat

Leila Nadya Sadat, ABILA Chair, published the blog ‘Attacks on Nature, Atrocities Against People: The Case for Environmental Harm as a 12th Crime Against Humanity,’ for Just Security.

Milena Sterio, ABILA Co-Director of Studies, published the blog ‘The United States’ Attack Against Venezuela: Might Does Not Make Right,’ for Opinio Juris.

Eran Sthoeger and Claire Robertson published the blog ‘Four Key Takeaways for Deep Sea Mining from the ICJ Advisory Opinion’ for EJIL:Talk!

Joel P. Trachtman provided the blog ‘Hamis’ Peak Lawfare’ for Duke University’s Lawfire Blog.

Statement of the Board of Directors of the American Branch of the International Law Association Regarding the United States Intervention in Venezuela

Whereas, on January 3, 2026, President Donald Trump announced that, at his command, U.S. war planes attacked Venezuelan defenses and military forces entered the country and captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, who were transported to New York to stand trial on federal narcotics charges.

Whereas, President Trump has further announced that the United States will “run” Venezuela for a transitional period and seize some of its oil “in the form of reimbursement.”

Whereas, this followed four months of U.S. airstrikes against more than 35 Venezuelan and Colombian-flagged vessels, including follow-up attacks to kill survivors; the imposition of a blockade of oil tankers going into, and out of, Venezuela; the seizure of several of those tankers; and the deployment of a large military force in the Caribbean near Venezuela.

Whereas, this action by the United States has been met with condemnation by the American Society of International Law, the International Bar Association, the New York City Bar Association, and numerous leaders around the globe, including U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres, who said he was “deeply alarmed” about the “dangerous precedent” the United States was setting.

Whereas, the American Branch of the International Law Association (ABILA) is dedicated to the study, clarification, and development of International Law and the advancement of peace, human rights, and justice worldwide, and from time to time, the ABILA Board of Directors issues Statements on important matters of international concern that are related to the ABILA’s mandate.

Now be it therefore resolved by the ABILA Board of Directors:

1. The ABILA Board expresses grave concern that the actions described above constitute violations of customary international law as well as Article 2(4) of the U.N. Charter (which prohibits force against the territorial integrity of States except when authorized by the Security Council or in response to an armed attack), the 1958 Geneva Convention on the High Seas (which prohibits attacks on vessels outside of war), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (which prohibits the extrajudicial killing of suspected narcotics traffickers) — treaties that the United States has ratified and with respect to which it is obliged to comply.
2. The ABILA Board further expresses alarm that these actions endanger regional and international peace and set a destabilizing precedent for the world.
3. While not condoning the Maduro regime, the ABILA Board rejects the Administration’s justification for these actions, namely that they constituted a legitimate exercise of the right of self-defense in response to the threat posed by narco-terrorists and/or law enforcement action to arrest Maduro, as incompatible with international law.
4. The ABILA will do its utmost to educate Americans (including members of the Administration, Congress, and the Bar) about the responsibility of the United States to act consistent with, and to prevent further violations of, international law.

Adopted at its regular meeting on January 16, 2026, by a vote of 30 in favor, 0 opposed.

Statement of the President of the American Branch of the International Law Association Regarding the United States Attack on Iran (Mar. 6, 2026)

Founded more than one hundred years ago, the American Branch of the International Law Association (ABILA) is dedicated to the study, clarification, and development of International Law and the advancement of peace, human rights, and justice worldwide. At its last quarterly meeting, on January 16, 2026, by a vote of 30-0, the ABILA Board issued a statement condemning the U.S. intervention in Venezuela as unlawful and unjustifiable under international law. Between Board meetings, it sometimes falls to the ABILA President to issue Statements on important matters of international concern related to our mandate.

In the past week, the United States and Israel have unleashed massive aerial attacks against Iran and have targeted and killed the country's leader. Iran has responded with an explosion of violence across the Middle East. Having consulted with the ABILA Board, I issue this Statement to condemn the unlawful U.S. military intervention against Iran and to express grave concerns about the scope of Iran's retaliation.

The prohibition on the use of force became a universal norm with the adoption of the U.N. Charter after World War II, and with the imposition of accountability for violations at Nuremberg – accomplishments in which the United States played a leading role. That prohibition is the keystone of the modern international legal order. Not coincidentally, despite intermittent conflicts, the 80 years since the establishment of the United Nations have been the most peaceful in human history, enabling unprecedented advances in human rights, development, and equality. Those achievements are now at risk, with potentially devastating consequences.

The U.S. attacks against Iran cannot be justified as lawful self-defense. Iran has not attacked the United States, and even the Pentagon recognizes that there was no evidence of an imminent Iranian attack. Rather, a decision was made to “pre-empt” any possible Iranian attack on a theory of self-defense against speculative future threats, such as nuclear proliferation or terrorism. However, the notion of preemptive war, which is the same theory that the Russian Federation invoked for its illegal invasion of Ukraine, has never been accepted as legitimate. Acceptance of such a doctrine would not only destabilize the Middle East but also increase the risk of war everywhere.

Some have suggested a further rationale: ending the atrocities committed by the Iranian regime. Iran has unquestionably supported terrorism abroad and perpetrated widespread violence against peaceful protesters at home. But humanitarian intervention under the “responsibility to protect” (R2P) doctrine must be carried out pursuant to Chapters VI and VII of the U.N. Charter under the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, which would have required United Nations authorization in this case.

Much debate in the United States has focused on whether the decision to launch a war by the President complied with U.S. law since Congress is given the power to declare War under Article I § 8 of the U.S. Constitution and the War Powers Act in implementation thereof. This is indeed a weighty question, but it is not the only one. U.S. military action abroad is governed by both U.S. law and international law. Accordingly, U.S. military intervention in Iran would have violated international law even had Congress approved it.

Only by respecting the limits on the use of force can the United States credibly condemn unlawful aggression and war crimes by other States, such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine. If this most fundamental rule of international law is weakened through repeated violations, the world risks returning to a system in which power, rather than law, dictates outcomes—a world incompatible with peace, human rights, equality, and sustainable development.

While the ABILA is non-partisan in nature, it is committed to peace, justice, and the rule of law – values that are threatened by the U.S. attacks on Iran. The ABILA therefore urges the United States to end this unlawful military action without delay and to reclaim its rightful role as a defender of the international legal order it helped to build, and from which the American people have immeasurably benefited.

Michael P. Scharf, President of the American Branch of the International Law Association

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Leila Nadya Sadat

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Frédéric Sourgens

Milena Sterio

Louise Teitz

Nancy Thevenin

Nawi Ukabiala

Diora Ziyayeva

Treasurer:

Houston Putnam Lowry

Chief Operating Officer:

Freya Doughty-Wagner

Membership Officer:

Julia Liston

Pay Your Dues

The Branch's membership year begins in January. If you have not yet paid your 2026 membership dues, please do so now. 2026 membership fees were due on January 1, 2026.

To pay your dues, log on to your account at www.ila-americanbranch.org and select the "Orders" tab under your Account page, or contact our Membership Officer, Julia Liston, at membership@ila-americanbranch.org.

Recruit New Members

Every ABILA member is encouraged to recruit new members to the American Branch. The health and success of our Branch depends on a steady infusion of new talent, enthusiasm, and energy.

Please take time now to think about reaching out to several likely prospects, and encourage them to join and attend ILW 2026. To help you in this effort, the ABILA membership brochure can be downloaded from the Branch website under the Membership tab.



Calendar of Upcoming Events

April 9-10, 2026: Sustainable International Law - Reconciling Stability and Change, ESIL Research Forum, Kraków, Poland

April 15-17, 2026: IBA Annual Litigation Forum, Madrid, Spain

April 22-25, 2026: American Society of International Law Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C.

May 11-13, 2026: Evidence Matters Before Regional Human Rights Courts: The African Court in Comparative and Critical Perspective, Pretoria, South Africa

May 12-14, 2026: American Bar Association (ABA) International Law Section's 2026 Annual Conference, Washington, D.C.

May 19-20, 2026: 41st Annual IBA/IFA Joint Conference, Washington, D.C.

June 1, 2026: ABILA Webinar - Indigenous Legal Orders, Legal Pluralism, and the Coloniality of Method Across Comparative Law, International Law, IP, and Trade Governance

June 10, 2026: Lunch with Judge Jon O. Newman (New York City Bar Association), New York City, New York

June 19-20, 2026: International Conference on Law and Economics, Jeju Island, South Korea

July 9, 2026: 11th Annual Chatham House London Conference, London, England

August 17-21, 2026: 82nd International Law Association Biennial, Vienna, Austria

October 22-24, 2026: International Law Weekend 2026, New York City

American Branch of the International Law Association

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