



Ernesto Zedillo

## Zedillo calls judicial reform plans 'a historic felony'

By Ben Rigby

Plans to reform Mexico's professional judiciary are "a historic felony" and pave the way for tyranny, warned the country's former president Ernesto Zedillo during a keynote speech at the opening ceremony of the IBA Annual Conference on Sunday night.

Addressing a packed conference hall, Zedillo – Mexico's 61st president from 1994 to 2000 – spoke in Spanish to an audience of more than 4,000 lawyers to express deep concern about proposals by the outgoing Mexican president, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, to overhaul Mexico's judiciary.

Zedillo said the current president intended "to destroy the judiciary as an independent and professional entity". He said that a judiciary elected by popular vote, as approved by government officials, would put in place judges "obedient not to the law but to the dominant political power".

The reforms, he said, "will destroy the judicial branch and, with it, bury Mexican democracy and what remains of its fragile rule of law".

Zedillo added: "The president's frustration at not having a submissive court has evolved into brutal revenge: the destruction of the independence and integrity of the judiciary so that it is at the service of the political force in power."

López Obrador said earlier in a video address he was signing the decree "to improve the judiciary

because we need justice to reach everyone so that there is no corruption in the judiciary".

IBA president Almudena Arpón de Mendivil Aldama had earlier welcomed delegates to the conference, celebrating Mexico's rich culture and history, and highlighting its significant global contributions. Poignantly, Arpón de Mendivil detailed her profoundly personal family connections to the country through her grandfather, a Spanish lawyer who found refuge in Mexico during the Spanish Civil War, expressing her deep gratitude to the nation.

Noting that the conference coincided with the United Nations Day for Democracy, Arpón de Mendivil expressed concerns over the impacts of the proposed constitutional reforms, calling for judicial independence to be safeguarded, having previously called the moves "alarming".

She commended Mexico's legal profession for its vigilant defence of democracy, contrasting its progress with other Latin American states like Venezuela, but warned that Mexico "which for years has been the nation within the region to look at, is nowadays taking steps... that can risk the independence of the judiciary, the rule of law [and] democracy".

At the ceremony, she presented the IBA's inaugural Impact Award to Mexico's Supreme Court president Norma Piña Hernández for the court's work to maintain the rule of law.

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In conversation with Almudena Arpón de Mendivil.

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IBA executive director Mark Ellis on the ICC

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## A Colourful Music Extravaganza

The welcome parties at the IBA's annual conferences set out to reflect the culture of the host cities and IBA Mexico 2024 was no exception. Delegates were met with a blaze of colour in a show that featured lucha libra, a form of theatrical wrestling, and a mariachi band. There were also stalls displaying traditional Mexican clothing, furniture and crafts.



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# Former US ambassador to Russia says America is 'asleep at the wheel' with Russian Federation aggression

By Anne Gallagher

Over the past decade, the US-Russia relationship has deteriorated to its lowest point since the Cold War. Ambassador John Sullivan had a front-row seat to all of it and wrote about it in his new book *Midnight in Moscow: A Memoir from the Front Lines of Russia's War Against the West*.

In "A conversation with Ambassador John J. Sullivan" on Monday, facilitated by the IBA's executive director Mark Ellis, he spoke to a full room of IBA members about how the US is not taking the threat of Russian aggression seriously.

"No matter what happens in the Ukraine, win or lose, we will have an angry, heavily armed Russia, threatening NATO for a long time," he said. "Russian aggression is not going to stop at Ukraine," adding that he considers Beijing and Tehran to pose similar threats.

In his remarks, Sullivan drew parallels between the rise of fascism in Nazi Germany and the Russian Federation, noting that the US delayed entry into both World War I and II because it did not appreciate the magnitude of the conflicts. "If we (the US) make that mistake a third time in this century in this interconnected world, it will be a catastrophic mistake in the United States today," he said.

Despite his concerns about Russian escalation, Sullivan does not believe the federation would



John Sullivan (left) with Mark Ellis

deploy nuclear weapons in its conflict with Ukraine. "I see no way he [Putin] would use a tactical nuclear weapon to address battlefield setbacks in the Ukraine," he said.

Sullivan explained that "Putin is a proud, dare I say, haughty individual" who wants to be perceived as the president of a powerful country. But he cares about war crimes and the accusation of war crimes. Putin would not use nuclear weapons because "he's concerned about losing the confidence of Putin nationalists who don't want to see their Russian boys committing war crimes".

The International Criminal Court is considering prosecuting Putin for the crime of aggression,

a lesser-known international crime, that punishes the illegal invasion or use of force against another country. Only the leaders of the country that started a war can be held responsible for this crime. Legal experts have called a crime of aggression case against Putin a 'slam dunk' because there is no legal justification for Russia invading Ukraine.

Sullivan noted that multiple Nazi defendants charged with the crime of aggression at the Nuremberg trials were hanged.

Sullivan served as the US ambassador to Russia from 2020 to 2022 and previously served as the US deputy director of state from 2017 to 2019.

## Yes Minister? Panel discusses navigating ethics as a government lawyer

Government lawyers must be willing to put ethics at the heart of their advice even if it makes them unpopular, said panelists at the Forum for Government and Public Lawyers on Monday as they discussed the specialist skills they need to do their jobs effectively while navigating political pressure.

The panel, convened by Andrew Mackenzie of the Scottish Arbitration Centre and Federica D'Alessandra of Oxford University's Blavatnik School of Government, explored the risks of getting it wrong.

"The reality is that as a government lawyer you will come across conflicts between your personal beliefs and those of the government you represent, and you will just have to navigate it ethically and professionally," said Stephen Rotstein of Canada's Tribunals Ontario. "Ministers can change and will have different views, so you can be

told one thing one day and another the next. Sometimes you need to be the 'no' person, even if it doesn't make you popular."

Juan Pablo Hugues, a former Mexican government lawyer and now at Foley Hoag, pointed out the importance of US bar rules and organisations such as the IBA in having a positive effect on lawyers with experience in international firms working in countries with little ethical guidelines for lawyers. However, there is still much to be done to support government lawyers in such jurisdictions, who may have little defence against political pressures.

Panelists also identified the key differences in skillsets for government lawyers – collaborative working, communications and an ability to read the politics. "Good advice to a government trying to do something controversial six months after being elected may not be good advice six months before an election," noted Rotstein.

# ‘Diversity is an IBA strength’

*IBA President*

**Almudena Arpón de Mendivil reflects on the causes she has championed during her term  
Ben Rigby reports.**

Today, IBA president Almudena Arpón de Mendivil will lead an event that underpins her term of office on one of the critical legal issues facing the legal profession – speaking up on the social impact of law and lawyers.

During her first annual meeting in Paris, Arpón de Mendivil, a partner at law firm Gómez-Acebo & Pombo in Madrid, Spain, launched a project to highlight the legal profession’s contribution to society and emphasised its critical role in the functioning of societies.

In today’s session, *A world without lawyers?*, the findings of the recently published landmark IBA report on the social and economic impact of the legal profession will be discussed, featuring legal leaders including former IBA president David W Rivkin, Lord Peter Goldsmith KC, the former UK attorney

general, and Lady Helena Kennedy KC, director of the IBA’s Human Rights Institute, among others.

Delegates will hear evidence of the legal profession’s social impact, indirect economic impact through contributions to the Rule of Law, and direct economic impact (measured at \$1.6trn, or 1.7 per cent of the world’s GDP).

Launching the report, Arpón de Mendivil said: “Lawyers have a significant positive impact on society, and the work of the more than 12 million lawyers across the globe impacts, directly or indirectly, the lives, health and well-being of citizens worldwide”.

The scale of the task has not escaped her – she called it “the most ambitious and challenging project” she has undertaken during her presidency. She is clear about its

significance, telling IBA Daily News: “We are experiencing a decline in the rule of law around the world”. She noted that 80% of the population live in countries where there has been an erosion in the rule of law in 2023.

However, she said there is “no clear understanding of what the rule of law is” or its benefits and how lawyers contribute to it.

She added: “The IBA has been able to bring clarity to those issues, providing for the first time data explaining that, without lawyers’ work, societies cannot operate at their best, that lawyers’ contribution to the rule of law is their most important role, and that the rule of law is the environment where democracies can flourish, human rights can be protected and inclusive and sustainable economic growth may be promoted.”

The Showcase session will discuss the report’s findings and what needs to be done moving forward, addressing how to secure the advantages of maintaining the rule of law for society and the economy.

It will draw on the perspectives of an array of leading lawyers from different parts of the world [see box].

“Diversity is an IBA strength,” she says. “Finding solutions to common problems



*Almudena Arpón de Mendivil*

## **IBA Annual Conference Mexico City 2024**

**PALACIO DE VALPARAISO 1,  
LEVEL E1**

Morning Keynote Address: A world without lawyers? The IBA report on the social and economic impact of the legal profession

**Tuesday 17 September**  
(0915 - 1045)

**PALACIO DE VALPARAISO 1,  
LEVEL E1**

Morning Keynote Address: The Future is Now: Artificial Intelligence, the Law, and Society with keynote speaker, **Marc Rotenberg**

**Thursday 19 September**  
(0915 - 1045)

around the globe requires lawyers from different regions, cultures, areas of practice and backgrounds. Having the vision of the brightest lawyers from one jurisdiction would hardly bring the same reflections and, thus, the best outcome. The IBA is uniquely positioned to bring together that richness of ideas.”

One topic that affects law, society and the economy is artificial intelligence, or AI. Having previously said the debate on AI “was a priority not only for my term of office but for the entire world” the Mexico City conference will see the IBA present the conclusions of a year-long research project.

A highlight this Thursday will be the presentation of the IBA’s report: *The Future is Now: Artificial Intelligence, the Legal Profession, and Society*. The morning session, will feature a keynote from Marc Rotenberg, founder and executive director of the Centre for AI and Digital Policy.

Rotenberg will provide an overview of how AI is transforming the legal profession, the emerging norms for the governance of AI, and the next steps for the IBA as the global voice of the legal profession in a session chaired by Arpón de Mendivil.

Artificial Intelligence is already a revolution for all sectors of activity; legal services are no different, notes the IBA president. Lawyers and law firms need to understand AI’s current implications for their work and establish internal policies regarding its use, pricing models, and hiring strategies, she says.

Likewise, “Bars and law societies have to ensure that rules related to the legal profession consider AI developments, for example, in terms of confidentiality, legal privilege, technical awareness, transparency, and accountability”.

This conference marks one of Arpón de Mendivil’s last flagship events before she hands over to next year’s leadership. As one of only two women to have led the IBA, she has been a champion of women lawyers.

She highlighted initiatives such as the second IBA Women’s Day and ongoing work on the IBA 50/50 by 2030 project, a longitudinal study aiming to determine the representation of female lawyers in senior positions across different jurisdictions.

“Gender equality, especially in the legal profession, is one of the five presidential priorities of my mandate,” she said. “It will continue being so until I pass on the baton to my successor on 31 December 2024. Even after the end of my term, I will continue to carry the flag of gender equality proudly. On the other hand, I am sure my successors will keep gender equality as an IBA priority because equality is a matter of law and justice.”



## Quantifying the value of the legal profession

Dubbed the first global study to comprehensively quantify the business of law’s socio-economic influence, the IBA’s Impact Report highlights the significant positive impact of the legal profession.

The IBA report highlighted that legal services globally employ approximately 20 million professionals and created an additional 14 million jobs related to legal work. The legal profession represents 0.25% of the world’s population and generates approximately 1.7% of the world’s GDP, or \$1.6tr.

Correlations between legal activity and indicators of progress under the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals were carried out.

The report found that countries with better access to justice experienced 25% fewer instances of governmental overreach, with lawyers playing a crucial role in holding governments to account.

Not only does improved access to justice lead to economic benefits, but it also fosters societal progress. It attracts more investment, enhances healthcare and promotes gender equity, all of which are crucial for a thriving society.

The report made the case for increased support for the legal profession. It suggests that raising legal aid to the same standard as the top quartile of nations could reduce inequality by 5%. Similarly, supporting the rule of law to the same level as the top quartile of nations could lead to increased life expectancy, reduced informal employment and increased innovation, potentially generating an additional \$83bn in research and development investment.

Diversity and ESG benefits of a strong rules-based economy include a 30% increase in girls completing secondary education; 53% less pollution; 34 million fewer youths who did not engage in education, employment or training; and the greater protection of minorities including LGBTQI+ communities.

Public recognition of the benefits lawyers bring was low: 54% of the general public believed that lawyers have a positive economic and social impact, compared with a 78% positive perception among legal professionals themselves.

The \$1.6tr contribution to global annual GDP comprised \$787bn in legal service revenues, \$191bn in tax contributions and \$637bn in ‘ecosystem effects’.

Corporate law and litigation are the largest contributors, at \$222bn and \$193bn, respectively. North American and European law firms dominated the sector, accounting for 80% of the global law firm market.

The survey also identified areas of improvement for the IBA to preserve and strengthen such ambitions, alongside ongoing IBA initiatives to promote equality, diversity and well-being, including policymaking, educational and social initiatives, and maintaining a leadership role in the ethical stewardship of the wider legal profession.

The methodology of the report, which was compiled with the help of management consultants McKinsey, was drawn from four major sources of insight: research, two quantitative surveys of lawyers and the public with more than 8,000 collective responses, a big data analysis, and qualitative interviews with more than 50 legal experts and practitioners.

# The miracle of the Andes

Nando Parrado recounts the epic story of how he survived a plane crash and two months stranded on the side of a mountain in freezing conditions

Panic kills you, fear saves you. That was the realisation that helped Nando Parrado and 15 others survive for 72 days in the Andes after Uruguayan Air Force Flight 571 crashed into the mountainside and were presumed dead.

In a keynote speech at the IBA conference yesterday, Parrado recounted his inspirational story – one of the most epic survival stories in human history – and what it takes for the human spirit to keep going when you stare death in the face every day.

“How did this group of Uruguayans who had never seen snow or ice in their lives survive for two and a half months in those conditions? Decades later I realised we survived because we were one, a fantastic group,” said Parrado. “We did not have a leader, we had many leaders, and each one led what they had to do.”

He continued: “We achieved excellence in so many things you learn in university and seminars – innovation, strategy, leadership, decision making, research and development. We linked all those things together and the result was life. But there is one important thing we had to link to this equation: luck.”

*“At the top of the mountain there was a huge door there: it was the door of death,” Parrado said. “Once you cross it, nothing matters, you’re dead anyway. I said I won’t stop until my face hits the ice, I won’t stop until I die.”*

For Parrado, this was choosing to sit in row nine. Everyone sat behind row nine perished in the first impact when the plane hit the mountainside and broke into two pieces.

“I shouldn’t be here on this stage, not because I should be at another place; I shouldn’t be here because I shouldn’t be alive,” he said. “There should be no way a human being can go through what we went through 52 years ago and be alive. I survived the only plane crash in history when a plane crashes at cruising speed and at cruising attitude. It’s a miracle. And only a long chain of small miracles allows me to be here today with you.”

The second miracle occurred when the broken fuselage landed on the mountain side at the



Nando Parrado

right angle and without hitting any rocks, sliding down the snow at more than 200mph for a quarter of a mile until it slammed into a glacier. “It was like a Formula 1 car hitting a wall head on,” he said.

Out of 45 passengers, 29 survived the initial crash and 24 didn’t have a single scratch, he said.

Parrado blacked out after the first impact and fell into a coma. With no signs of life, he was left for dead with a pile of other bodies, until he awoke four days later – kept alive, he said, because of the cold.

The search for the plane was called off after 10 days, with all passengers presumed dead. The survivors heard this on a salvaged short-wave radio and knew then that their survival relied entirely on themselves. In the middle of the Andes, not knowing where they were and knowing that help was not coming, they made a pact: for food, they would eat the dead bodies of their friends.

Their resolve was tested again a few days later when an avalanche hit in the middle of the night and buried the inside of the fuselage with a metre of snow. Of the 29 survivors, 27 were buried inside the fuselage – only the quick thinking of the other two, digging in the snow to find the faces of their compatriots, managed to save 19 from certain death. They then spent four days inside the buried fuselage, digging a tunnel from the cockpit back to the surface.

After another two months on the mountainside, Parrado and two other

survivors – Antonio Vizintín and Roberto Canessa – set out to cross the mountain and find help. Using a navigational map, they calculated there was a small town eight kilometres away. They departed without boots, gloves or climbing equipment – and entirely unaware their calculation was out by more than 90 kilometres. After taking three days to climb the side of the mountain, they sent back Vizintín, knowing they would be faster as two.

“At the top of the mountain there was a huge door there: it was the door of death,” Parrado said. “Once you cross it, nothing matters, you’re dead anyway. I said I won’t stop until my face hits the ice, I won’t stop until I die.”

Some 10 days after leaving the crash site and trekking around 60 kilometres across the Andes, Parrado and Canessa came across a Chilean muleteer on horseback, who went to raise the alarm and bring about their rescue.

“I realised years later, in a tragedy your brain reacts and takes your emotions away,” he said. “If you panic, you die. Fear saves you.”

Of the 16 that survived the plane crash and the two months stranded on the mountainside, today there are 145 descendants who exist only because of Parrado and his fellow survivors’ intense determination to keep on going in the face of death.

“They are alive because of what we suffered and endured over there – this is our legacy, my family, our great family, and it was worth it,” Parrado concluded.

**PARTNER CONTENT** Doing business globally

# Meritas' Sona Pancholy: 'There is no better way for a mid-market client to navigate the world than through a legal network like Meritas'

With thousands of lawyers in hundreds of global markets, Meritas is focused on helping like-minded mid-size law firms create value for their clients

**Sona, Meritas has been in operation since 1990. Can you tell us what the organization looks like today?**

From a numbers standpoint, Meritas has 8,760 lawyers across 171 law firms in 91 countries and 243 markets worldwide. But what's most important about our organization is that our member law firms are aligned with a certain set of core values that include high standards and a commitment to quality service, growth, and innovation.

When we started in 1990 and still today, our focus is on our organization as a global association of like-minded law firms that are committed to learning and collaborating to help clients access growth through new and often international markets.

**How would you describe Meritas' primary focus as an organization today?**

Our members and their clients face enormous competition to succeed in today's marketplace. Meritas has experienced 34 years of success and that's why today we've chosen to focus on three objectives to continue that growth.

The first is fostering our brand and the market's understanding of it. Second, we are working to add additional value for members of our network. For example, last year, we added a program to help our members innovate on legal technology. Wherever a member firm is on their legal technology journey, we've added resources to help them stay ahead of the curve.

Third, we have several focus areas to address client problems and needs. For example, our firms have strong M&A capabilities and Meritas helps them collaboratively service clients in this area. And manufacturing and sports, among other industries, are two examples that our members have exceptional expertise in and thus have formed practice groups to serve clients in these businesses.



*Meritas' global network includes 171 law firms across 91 countries.*

**What are some other ways in which Meritas is continuing to be relevant in today's marketplace?**

Diversity and Inclusion is one of the areas that not only is growing in importance but is a game-changer for those who do it well. We've spent the last several years building out a strong D&I program that addresses the nuances that play out across the globe, allows firms to learn from each other and provide successful programs that address issues like implicit bias.

**Legal networks have been around for a very long time. What are the best ways clients can work with them?**

There is no better way for a mid-market client to navigate the world than through a legal network like Meritas. A client can turn to a local Meritas law firm and ask for guidance in multiple jurisdictions. Because we rigorously qualify each member firm, a client can trust that they are receiving expert assistance, tailored to their specific needs. For clients who want to grow, access to a collaborative, international legal community becomes an amazing experience. It allows a local law firm to compete on par with the 50 top law firms in the world.

**Many of the lawyers at your member firms are IBA members. What is important about their involvement in this organization?**

As a truly international organization, Meritas member law firms are globally focused. There is no better place to be than the IBA conference, where communities

come together to share information, create introductions, and develop meaningful strategies to help clients grow. We have about 50 Meritas members at the IBA conference which is, in essence, an existing high-quality community within the larger IBA community.

**What is it like to be the president of a global network like Meritas?**

I can say with certainty that my career has come full circle with the position I now hold. My experience as a lawyer in legal associations, law firms, and at Bloomberg Law provided the foundation for where I am now. Every day I am challenged and a little bit awed to see how the different parts of the legal world can come together to create great things for clients. It's a dream job.



Sona Pancholy is president of Meritas, the global alliance of independent law firms. With more than 25 years of experience in global legal associations, law firms, and the legal news industry, Sona provides Meritas with strategic leadership and works collaboratively with key stakeholders to establish and implement the organization's vision and strategy with member firms and clients around the world.

# The ICC's journey to becoming a 'truly universal' institution

Mark Ellis is optimistic the International Criminal Court will continue to evolve despite significant hurdles and outlines how the IBA is supporting the war in Ukraine

**Last month you were admitted as a Fellow to King's College London. You have joined a distinguished group of fellows, including the Nobel Prize-winners Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Professor Peter Higgs. What were your thoughts on receiving this honour?**

I was stunned when informed of the Fellowship. King's is one of the most prestigious universities in the world, and its commitment to equality and justice makes this acknowledgement even more special. I'm extremely honoured to be associated with the university and the other recipients. Even my sixteen-year-old son was impressed, and that's saying something! The Fellowship inspires me to actively commit to speaking out against injustices.

**The citation pointed to your "outstanding professional achievements and contribution to international criminal law". Can you point to some of the key personal highlights in this field during your career?**

Well, none of these achievements have occurred without the support and involvement of very talented people who joined me in these efforts. Each achievement is directly connected to those people around me.

As for personal highlights, I've been fortunate to be given many opportunities. One of the most meaningful was when I was awarded a Fulbright scholarship to study in the former Yugoslavia. That experience gave me a remarkable insight into the fragility of multiethnic countries and the severe consequences when they break apart through policies of intolerance, which then morph into an even more venomous policy of ethnic cleansing and other atrocity crimes.

Watching Yugoslavia descend into chaos also reinforced my belief that there should be no impunity for international crimes and that perpetrators, regardless of their positions, should be brought to justice. This principle pertains to today. I've watched in horror and dismay the unconscionable crimes being committed in the Middle East conflict and Russia's brutal war against Ukraine.

I also remember being in East Berlin the week the Berlin Wall fell. This historic event signalled the resurrection of the Nuremberg Principles and the focus on accountability, leading to a renewed covenant among nations to uphold universal standards of justice. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, we witnessed, in the words of Anthony Loyd, the start of "a golden age of international justice."

**How has the field of international criminal law developed during your career, and why is it so important?**

It has been a remarkable "arch of justice." The evolution of international criminal law during my professional life has been transformed from a relatively obscure and underdeveloped area of law to a cornerstone of the international legal system. Key legal institutions have been created. The establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in 1993, the International Criminal

Tribunal for Rwanda in 1994, and the International Criminal Court in 2002 marked significant milestones in the evolution of international criminal law. These tribunals are the after-effect of the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials, all of which share the purpose of holding individuals accountable for atrocity crimes.

A massive domain of legal jurisprudence has also emerged, which will guide generations to come in extending this arch of justice. International criminal law works to nullify impunity and ensure accountability for the most egregious violations of human rights law. Holding individuals accountable, including state leaders, for atrocity crimes also provides a sense of justice for victims and their communities.

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**Last December, the IBA marked the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Rome Statute by calling for greater support by states for the International Criminal Court (ICC). How successful has the ICC been to date, and how do you see it faring over the next 25 years?**

I believe the ICC continues to play a crucial role in advancing, developing and clarifying international criminal law. Through its jurisprudence, the Court has helped to define and expand legal principles concerning the most egregious international crimes.

As mentioned, the ICC has also advanced the focus on victims' rights by including provisions for victims to participate in trials and to receive reparations. This has been a significant step in recognising the suffering of those affected by atrocity crimes. A victim-centered approach to international criminal justice has certainly influenced other international and domestic jurisdictions around the globe.

Most importantly, the ICC represents a significant symbolic presence on the international stage by reinforcing the notion that certain crimes are unacceptable to the international community and that all states have a duty to ensure perpetrators of these crimes are brought to justice.

In the future, the ICC will continue to face challenges from powerful non-member states (for example, China, India, Israel, Russia and the United



States) and will likely encounter increased political resistance, particularly in cases involving high-profile leaders or in geopolitically sensitive regions. These are significant hurdles. The Court cannot effectively function without the political willingness of states. It becomes impotent when states fail to comply with warrants and requests for assistance and generally refuse to submit themselves to the court's jurisdiction.

As conflicts increasingly involve cyber operations, the ICC will also need to adapt to address crimes that do not neatly fit into the traditional categories of atrocity crimes as currently defined. The legal and practical challenges of prosecuting such crimes will be significant. So will the growing recognition of environmental destruction as a crime under international law. This will expand the Court's role and place it at the center of contentious global debates.

However, I'm confident that the ICC will continue evolving into a truly universal and effective institution, widely recognized as the ultimate authority on international criminal justice, that leads to an increase in the number of states supporting its mission.

*Most importantly, the ICC represents a significant symbolic presence on the international stage by reinforcing the notion that certain crimes are unacceptable to the international community and that all states have a duty to ensure perpetrators of these crimes are brought to justice.*

**At last year's IBA conference in Paris, you interviewed ICC prosecutor Karim AA Khan. He hit the headlines in May when he sought arrest warrants for senior Hamas and Israeli officials for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, and his defence minister, Yoav Gallant. How significant was this move?**

The ICC was founded on the fundamental principle that those who have committed the most serious international crimes must be held accountable. This principle is embedded in the lessons of Nuremberg and the legal order emerging in the post-war period.

The issuing of the warrants demonstrates the Court's willingness to investigate and potentially prosecute high-ranking officials from both sides of a deeply complex and politically sensitive conflict. By targeting such senior figures, the ICC sends a message that it holds individuals accountable for actions that may constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity, regardless of their political status or power.

Along with a demonstration of impartiality, seeking arrest warrants for figures like Netanyahu and Gallant underscores the Court's willingness to scrutinize the Israeli government. This move has already caused significant diplomatic tensions and could lead to serious political fallout both within Israel and on the global stage. However, I believe the Prosecutor's decision was a necessary step towards justice and accountability, even though others criticize it as biased or politically motivated.

**You continue to stay actively engaged with the war in Ukraine. Could you describe some of those efforts?**

The IBA has initiated an extensive technical assistance program to aid the country in countering Russia's war of aggression. To date, the Association has launched over 245 initiatives, press releases, and international assistance projects since Russia invaded on February 24, 2022. Projects



aimed at domestic war crimes trials, arbitration and contractual disputes, child abductions, and environmental law, to name just a few, have involved many IBA committees and members.

Furthermore, our eyeWitness to Atrocities app, with the support of LexisNexis, continues to bridge the image authenticity gap. The way the photographs and videos are securely stored ensures that all the embedded metadata can be used in court proceedings. The possibility of manipulating images is eliminated. More than 50,000 images and videos have been uploaded in the Ukraine conflict alone. Investigative bodies have already received 50 case files, and many more will follow. Knowing that the eyeWitness app has been recommended at Ukraine's highest levels fills me with pride.

*Mark Ellis is executive director of the IBA.*

# Delegate Views

Why is the IBA important for your practice?

## Andy Lio

Partner, Han Kun Law, China



This is my first IBA conference and I'm here because we are looking to expand our business. We are a full-service law firm based in Shanghai and our clients are looking for both inbound and outbound investment opportunities.

## Justin Amenuvor

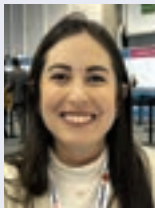
Managing Partner, Amenuvor & Associates, Ghana



My first conference was in Dubai in 2011 and I've been to every conference since. I keep coming back because you always learn something new here and I've had referrals from IBA members who need lawyers in my jurisdiction.

## Mariana Gomez-Vallin

Associate, Von Wobeser & Sierra, Mexico



This conference is in my home country and I'm excited to be a speaker at the arbitration committee lawyers under 40 programme. My topic is international arbitration and the use of tribunal-appointed experts.

## Tshepo Shabangu

Officer, Law Society of South Africa, South Africa



Going to the IBA means that we get to be on the forefront of change in the legal profession. Not only that, but we have the opportunity to truly align with our motto, which is to be the global voice of the legal profession.

## Christina Lyhm

Litigation Lawyer, Nelson Mullins, United States



I was born and raised in Denmark but now represent international clients from my Miami office. In 2022, the IBA conference was held in Miami. I heard so many good things about it that I joined the IBA and am now attending my first conference and looking forward to meeting lots of international lawyers.

## Lusanda Vuyelwa Raphulu

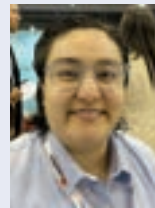
Head of Dispute Resolution, Bowmans, South Africa



This is my second IBA conference. I attended last year's conference in Paris and thought it would be worthwhile to come back this year. There are very few conferences that cover the IBA's sheer number of jurisdictions plus the content is great.

## Montserrat Abogado

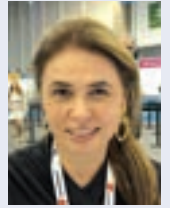
Associate, Sanchez-Devanny Eserverri, Mexico



As a lawyer just starting out at my firm, I am taking advantage of the conference being in my home country. My practice is in litigation and arbitration and I am hoping to grow my community and do business with referrals from new law firms.

## Claudia Amore

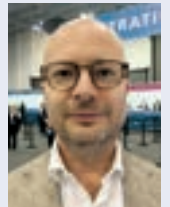
Officer, Camara de Servicious Legales, Columbia



I've attended IBA annual meetings since Sydney – seven in total. We need to be part of the meeting to support the future of the legal profession, learn best practices, to defend the rule of law and to construct strong relations with other jurisdictions and with bar associations.

## Manual Tomas

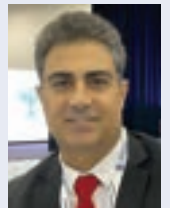
Partner, Head of Litigation, Fidal Avocats, France



My firm is one of France's largest independent law firms, but we operate only in France, Morocco and Belgium so it's important to meet other lawyers in the world. The IBA provides one of the best ways to make contacts with peers and potential clients.

## Dr. Sirous Shahyari

President, Boushehr Bar Association, Iran



In the past I couldn't attend the IBA, so I am excited to attend my first conference. This is the best place for our bar association to create international connections and learn information about the rule of law in society, access to justice and human rights.

*“Going to the IBA means that we get to be on the forefront of change in the legal profession.”*

PARTNER CONTENT

## Doing business in the UK

## ‘One mishap can go viral’: brand protection in a fast-paced, unpredictable world

There are multiple ways for businesses to build their reputations, so long as they manage the pitfalls, explains Charlotte Harris of Brown Rudnick



*If something isn't true and it has spread, it can be very difficult to remove it from every jurisdiction*

#### How would you describe the current brand reputation and management landscape?

The environment in which people and businesses operate has become increasingly fast-paced and unpredictable. A good example is how influencers who have been carefully chosen to endorse a brand can be cancelled because of a single like or retweet. They may not have even realised what they were supporting.

Information sources have also diversified. Gone are the days when it was all about the newspapers, and we used to talk about a good day to announce bad news because the press was occupied by another story. I was struck by the fact that it was only when a drama about the Post Office scandal in the UK caught the public imagination that a public inquiry was called. The springboard for stories has changed drastically.

#### Have these changes had an impact on your client base?

One interesting trend I've noticed is that I have a far more varied client base. The demographic of what makes a successful business owner now starts earlier and ends later, which means you get very different perspectives. An entrepreneur in their early twenties may totally understand social media but be less bothered about the traditional press, which remains important, though with a less dominant influence. The balance has changed.

#### Has it become harder for individuals and businesses to grow and protect their brands?

On the plus side, there are many more avenues available to build your reputation. You are no longer in a position where you need newspaper articles supporting you or some kind of celebrity endorsement. Adept use of social media can be very effective, for example. Word-of-mouth endorsement is also much more powerful, and a reputation for quality can quickly spread. In that respect, there's a meritocracy in terms of the way good experiences with brands can snowball.

On the flip side, bad news can spread equally quickly. You can also be vulnerable to malicious social media activity that your competitors can take advantage of by helping it spread.

#### Have the consequences of a mishap become greater?

Again, it can go either way. One mishap can go viral, spread globally, and cause a lot of damage, or it can simply disappear into the mass of information out there. It's about tracking, mapping and adapting.

#### What is the secret to successfully navigating this environment?

If something isn't true and it has spread, it can be very difficult to remove it from every jurisdiction in one go. Lawyers need to be agile with a global mindset. You do have the ability to correct it yourself, but then you have to make this quite difficult decision about how much attention you want to draw to something and whether that can be counterproductive.

Agility and resilience are key. It is a bit like dealing with the economy. There are always going to be ebbs and flows, and you need to ride with them and expect the unexpected. Have a consistent message that you believe in—say, 'this is who we are' and 'these are our core values'—and have confidence in them. Crisis management must work hand in hand with a consistent approach.

#### Is there a particularly difficult challenge that affects your clients?

Deepfakes are a big problem. It has mainly affected individuals up until now, especially women, but brands are also being caught up in this, for example, due to fake stories about faulty products. It is very hard to deal with this. Often you don't know who they are, but even if you do, you can't necessarily find them. It's like playing whack-a-mole. Part of the solution is making sure you have a tightly

defined brand, whether as an individual or business. You need a hallmark that identifies you so people know it isn't you.

#### Your decision to join US-based Brown Rudnick last year from the UK firm Kingsley Napley was big news in the field of media law. What prompted this decision?

One of the features of practising media law now is that it doesn't just stay in the UK. Joining Brown Rudnick has allowed me to take on cases I would never have worked on. You can get too comfortable in your practice area, and it has been refreshing to open a new book and work with people on a daily basis who can say what's going on in New York, Boston, LA and Dallas.

Brand and reputation management is a pillar of the firm, and I like to say that pillars are both vertical and horizontal. There is no area of the firm it doesn't touch. For example, a client involved in litigation might be worried about the impact of information getting into the public domain. And it could be their Achilles' heel, affecting how they approach the dispute. But you can reassure the client that you are equipped and always ready to deal with that situation, allowing them to focus on the objective of the litigation.



Charlotte Harris is co-chair of Brown Rudnick's brand and reputation management team. She has 25 years of experience representing individuals and businesses to navigate crisis situations both behind the scenes and in the public eye.

**brownrudnick**

# EVENT CALENDAR 2024/25

## THE LUXURY BOUTIQUE MILAN MASTERCLASS

**30 September 2024 MILAN**

Bringing the essence of the Summits to the city of Milan, the invitation only afternoon will feature a host of luxury brands who will share their experiences with a select group of legal counsel. The group will have the opportunity to experience half a day of interactive discussions, sharing thoughts on challenges, opportunities and predictions for the future.

[luxurylawsummit.com/milan/en/page/home](https://luxurylawsummit.com/milan/en/page/home)

## LAW FIRM MARKETING SUMMIT

**15 October 2024 LONDON**

Now in its ninth year, the Law Firm Marketing Summit has established itself as the leading forum in Europe that addresses the challenges that those responsible for law firm marketing strategy are facing.

[lawfirmmarketingsummit.com](https://lawfirmmarketingsummit.com)

## ANTI-COUNTERFEITING WORLD LAW SUMMIT

**7 November 2024 LONDON**

The Anti-Counterfeiting World Law Summit convenes the globe's most well-known counsel in a one-day programme with policymakers, government agencies, law enforcement and technology innovators to address the industry's most pressing issues and emerging trends.

[anticounterfeitingworldlawsummit.com](https://anticounterfeitingworldlawsummit.com)

## LUXURY LAW SUMMIT NEW YORK

**19 November 2024 NEW YORK**

The Luxury Law Summit New York is a unique opportunity for general counsel and in house legal teams to discuss experiences and share insights on these latest trends and challenges. Bringing together the leading luxury brands, leaders and thinkers in luxury enjoy unrivalled access to this highend legal marketplace.

[luxurylawsummit.com/new-york](https://luxurylawsummit.com/new-york)



**WOMEN &  
DIVERSITY  
IN LAW AWARDS**

**March 2025 LONDON**

With 400 attendees in 2024, the Women and Diversity in Law Awards set out to say a big, collective 'thank you' to those who are dedicating their professional careers to moving the DE&I needle or using their positions of influence to help facilitate change.

[womenanddiversityinlawawards.com](https://womenanddiversityinlawawards.com)

## LUXURY LAW SUMMIT LONDON

**10 June 2025 LONDON**

The summit provides general counsel and their teams with a unique opportunity to discuss the challenges facing the sector, sharing insights on the latest trends and challenges while also hearing from leading figures within the world of luxury.

[luxurylawsummit.com/london](https://luxurylawsummit.com/london)

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THE  
**GLOBAL LEGAL POST**

# IBA 2024 Mexico City



## Key sessions to look out for during a week that will set the agenda for global law

### Tuesday

09:15 – 10:45

**Morning Keynote Address: A World Without Lawyers? The IBA Report on the Social and Economic Impact of the Legal Profession**

Palacio de Valparaiso 1, Level E1

This presidential session will explore the critical role lawyers play in upholding the rule of law and democracy. It will feature a presentation by McKinsey on the findings of the IBA's landmark report, which measures the positive social and economic impact of the legal profession. Chaired by IBA president Almudena Arpón de Mendivil and David W Rivkin, former IBA president and leading international arbitrator, this session will include an open debate with audience participation. Speakers include former UK attorney general Lord Goldsmith KC.

13:15 – 14:15

**A Conversation with... Prosecutor General of Ukraine, Andriy Kostin and Liev Schreiber**

Palacio de Valparaiso 1, Level E1

Prosecutor General of Ukraine Andriy Kostin, known for his focus on investigating Russia's war crimes and combating corruption, joins actor and BlueCheck co-founder Liev Schreiber, whose initiative supports vetted NGOs in Ukraine. In a conversation with IBA executive director Mark Ellis, they will discuss Ukraine's legal and humanitarian challenges, blending perspectives from law, cinema, and activism.

14:30 – 17:30

**LPD Showcase: Digital Assets and the Future of Financial Services**

Palacio de Inturbide 1, Level E1

This session explores how digital assets and innovative technologies like blockchain are transforming global financial markets. Panels will address opportunities, risks, and key

developments in digital finance, decentralisation, regulatory responses, and the role of legal professionals. Chaired by IBA committee and forum members Giorgio Bovenzi, Theodor Härtsch, Benjamin Leisinger, and Klaus Löber, the showcase features a keynote intervention by Jon Frost, senior economist at the Bank for International Settlements, focusing on the future of digital finance, centralisation vs decentralisation, and the macroeconomic impact on the real economy.

The session will explore her life's work, the impact of her Nobel Prize, and her vision for future generations. Chaired by IBA president Almudena Arpón de Mendivil and Berit Reiss-Andersen, vice chair of the Bar Issues Commission, this interactive conversation will invite questions from the audience.

14:30 – 17:30

**Bar Issues Commission Showcase: Beneficial Ownership**

Palacio de Inturbide 1, Level E1

This session will explore the complex legal landscape surrounding beneficial ownership laws, focusing on anti-corruption measures and privacy concerns. The panel will discuss the implications of recent regulations, including the EU's privacy ruling on beneficial ownership and the Corporate Transparency Act in the United States. Chaired by Sara Louise Carnegie, member of the IBA Diversity & Inclusion Council, and Steven Richman, chair of the Bar Issues Commission policy committee, the session will address how these laws impact lawyers, law firms, and their obligations to clients.

### Wednesday

09:15 – 10:45

**Morning Keynote Address: The Power of Cultural Diversity - A Conversation with Dr Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Nobel Peace Prize Winner 1992**

Palacio de Valparaiso 1, Level E1

Join Nobel Peace Prize laureate Rigoberta Menchú as she reflects on equality, inclusion, diversity, and the rights of Indigenous people. Menchú will share her journey from her Maya upbringing in Guatemala to becoming a global advocate for indigenous rights.



El Ángel de la Independencia, Mexico City

## Thursday

09:15 – 10:45

**Morning Keynote Address: The Future is Now: Artificial intelligence, the Law, and Society with Keynote Speaker Marc Rotenberg**

Palacio de Valparaiso 1, Level E1

Artificial Intelligence is identified as the top challenge facing the legal profession. This session will present the findings of the IBA's 2023 presidential project report, *The Future is Now: AI, the Legal Profession and Society*, developed with the Center for AI and Digital Policy. Keynote speaker Marc Rotenberg, executive director and founder of the think tank, will explore AI's impact on legal practice and governance. Chaired by IBA president Almudena Arpón de Mendivil and IBA vice president Claudio Visco, this session will feature insights from the AI Task Force and engage the audience in discussion.

09:30 – 12:30

**SPPI Showcase: Creating Great Pro Bono Programmes**

Palacio de Inturbide 1, Level E1

Pro bono work plays a critical role in providing access to justice and protecting human rights, offering legal assistance to those in need and mobilising lawyers in impactful cases. This session will explore the intersection of pro bono efforts, access to justice, and human rights, highlighting best practices for creating successful programmes. Chaired by Babatunde Ajibade SAN, SPPI vice chair and treasurer, Myra Garrett, SPPI chair, and Flavia Regina de Souza Oliveira, co-chair of the IBA Pro Bono Committee, the session will feature insights from legal professionals on enhancing pro bono initiatives.

## Friday

09:30 – 16:00

**Rule of Law Forum**

Palacio de Inturbide 1, Level E1

IBA president Almudena Arpón de Mendivil will set the stage for the Rule of Law Forum, which is co-chaired by Federica D'Alessandra, senior vice-chair of the IBA Rule of Law Forum, and Adam Goodman, co-chair of the IBA Rule of Law Forum. The day will include a posthumous presentation of the 2024 Benjamin B Ferencz Rule of Law Lifetime Achievement Award to Stephen Denyer, accepted by his family.

**The symposium will feature three key sessions:**

- **09:30 – 11:00:** Defending and restoring the global rule of law
- **11:30 – 13:00:** The rule of law in the Americas
- **14:00 – 16:00:** When the rule of law and democracy clash, which prevails?

**Registration and Access**

The symposium is open for free registration, even if you are not attending the main conference. Registration must be completed by 18 September.

# THE GLOBAL LEGAL POST

## Law Over Borders Comparative Guides



The Law Over Borders comparative guides provide essential information on law and legal practice across the world. They are available in print, pdfs, and online in an easy-to-use digital format that allows readers to quickly compare the legal frameworks of different jurisdictions.

If you are a leading expert in your jurisdiction and would like to discuss either editing or contributing to a guide **please contact [claudiatan@globalcitymedia.com](mailto:claudiatan@globalcitymedia.com)**

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50

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وانجل

years  
& flourishing



**Our IBA team:** Back row (l to r): Danielle Lobo, Mevan Bandara, Shahram Safai, Charles Laubach.  
Front row (l to r): Bashir Ahmed, Saurbh Kothari, Chatura Randeniya.

[afridi-angell.com](http://afridi-angell.com)

## Meet our IBA Team



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