

# New IBA Award for Best Oralist in ICC Moot Competition given to Samantha Ann Tirthdas

Friday 2 June 2017



**Samantha Ann Tirthdas**, of the University of the Philippines, is the winner of the inaugural **International Bar Association (IBA)** Award for Best Oralist of the Preliminary Rounds in the ICC Moot Court Competition. **Aurélie Roche-Mair**, Director of the **IBA's International Criminal Court and International Criminal Law (ICC & ICL) Programme**, made the presentation during a ceremony in The Hague on Thursday 18 May 2017.



**Aurélie Roche-Mair (left) and Samantha Ann Tirthdas**

Ms Roche-Mair commented: *'The level of competitors was outstanding; however, Samantha stood out at every round with her natural advocacy talent and her innovative thinking. She presented the skills of an effective advocate: passionate, knowledgeable, convincing, while clear-headed and relaxed.'*

Held annually in The Hague, 2017 is the first year the IBA has partnered with **Leiden University's Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies** – overall winners of the Moot – to stage the week-long competition, which attracts law students from across the globe to test and sharpen their skills for careers as international lawyers. The Competition is designed with the aim of simulating ICC proceedings and introducing students to the procedure of, and some of the legal issues before, the Court. This year, 62 teams comprising 380 students from almost 45 countries argued an imaginary case that centred on allegations of genocide and crimes against humanity committed against a 'third gender' group. The defendant in this case was an 18-year-old former child soldier.

IBA Executive Director **Dr Mark Ellis** commented: *'The winner of the inaugural IBA Award for Best Oralist in an ICC moot, Samantha Ann Tirthdas, is symbolic of the great preparation students undertake to participate in moots, and I wholeheartedly congratulate her on the victory! Such commitment to the legal profession is deeply inspiring. The seriousness of approach makes me proud that the IBA supports a platform enabling young scholars to grasp, practically, the importance of international law and the need to fight impunity.'*

He added: *'Moot courts provide students with the apparatus to connect with international justice issues not simply at an intellectual level, but at a more profound level. Undoubtedly, I – together with the hundreds of supporting legal professionals who served as bench members, evaluators and Judges – applaud Samantha and all participants for their stamina and courage.'*

The ICC Moot Court took place at the new Leiden University campus and the ICC in The Hague from 14–19 May 2017, with the finals taking place in Courtroom I of the ICC. The opening ceremony included remarks from **Ben Ferencz**, the sole surviving Nuremberg prosecutor; **Professor Dr Carsten Stahn**, Leiden University; **Professor Michael P Scharf**, Case Western Reserve University and Ms Roche-Mair, whose speech of encouragement to participants can be read [here](#).

## ENDS

### Notes to the Editor

1. The finals can be viewed on [YouTube](#).
2. A collection of photos can be viewed on the Competition's Facebook page [here](#).
3. A list of the Competition's Judges is available [here](#).
4. The **International Bar Association** (IBA), established in 1947, is the world's leading organisation of international legal practitioners, bar associations and law societies. Through its global membership of individual lawyers, law firms, bar associations and law societies it influences the development of international law reform and shapes the future of the legal profession throughout the world.

The IBA's administrative office is in London, United Kingdom. Regional offices are located in: São Paulo, Brazil; Seoul, South Korea; and Washington DC, United States, while the International Bar Association's **International Criminal Court and International Criminal Law Programme** (ICC & ICL) is managed from an office in The Hague, the Netherlands.

The International Bar Association's **Human Rights Institute** (IBAHRI), an autonomous and financially independent entity, works to promote, protect and enforce human rights under a just rule of law, and to preserve the independence of the judiciary and the legal profession worldwide.

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