

# Global organisations gather at The Hague to discuss solutions to bullying and sexual harassment

Wednesday 6 November 2019

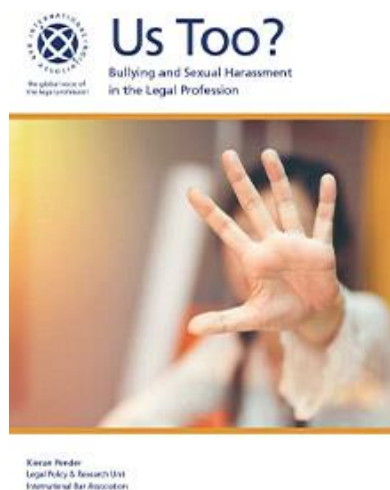


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The **International Bar Association** (IBA), the **International Criminal Court** (ICC) and the **International Labour Organization** (ILO) are gathering at the ICC in The Hague on **Wednesday 6 November 2019** for a high-level discussion on bullying and sexual harassment. The event, which is supported and co-sponsored by the **Municipality of The Hague**, aims to raise awareness among the ICC community, the legal community in The Hague and other stakeholders in international organisations regarding the challenges presented by these issues, and what can be done to eliminate such behaviour.

A landmark report published by the IBA in May 2019 was the catalyst for this joint conversation and will be presented by **Sara Carnegie, Director of Legal Projects, IBA Legal Policy & Research Unit (LPRU)**. Titled ***Us Too? Bullying and Sexual Harassment in the Legal Profession***, the 130-page document draws on data collected from the largest-ever global survey of some 7,000 legal professionals from workplaces across the legal spectrum, including law firms, in-house, barristers' chambers, government and the judiciary from 135 countries. The report revealed startling rates of bullying and sexual harassment in the profession and provided insight into the nature, prevalence and impact of this type of conduct across the sector.

**IBA President Horacio Bernardes Neto**, a partner at **Motta Fernandes Advogados** in São Paulo, Brazil, commented: *'The legal profession is predicated on the highest ethical standards. Bar associations, law societies and law firms must lead by example, making clear that bullying and harassment are unacceptable in the workplace. The IBA is working to ensure that eradicating bullying and sexual harassment is prioritised, and is delighted to convene this discussion with the ICC and ILO to support international organisations in addressing these issues.'*



The event, ***The legal framework of International Organisations to address Bullying and (Sexual) Harassment***, aims to raise awareness about ongoing activities at the ICC to address bullying and harassment, will discuss the IBA's report and its impact on the legal profession, and analyse the ILO's recent adoption of the ***Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190)*** and ***Recommendation (No. 206)***.

Speakers include (in order of participation):

- **Judge Robert Fremr** *First Vice-President, ICC*
- **Saskia Bruines** *Deputy Mayor, Municipality of The Hague*
- **James Stewart** *Deputy Prosecutor, ICC*
- **Sara Carnegie** *Director of Legal Projects, IBA LPRU*
- **Lieve Verboven** *Director, ILO Office for the European Union and the Benelux countries*
- **Daphne Vlachojannis** *Associate Legal Officer, Registry Legal Office, ICC*
- **Ruth Frolich** *President of the Staff Union Council, ICC*
- **Marie O'Leary** *Counsel/Legal Adviser, Office of Public Counsel for the Defence, ICC*
- **Peter Lewis** *Registrar, ICC*

**ICC First Vice-President Judge Robert Fremr** said: *'There is a strict prohibition on harassment of any kind within the International Criminal Court. Through its Court-wide Strategic Plan for 2019-2021, the Court set a goal that promises to ensure the wellbeing and continuous improvement of its staff by offering a safe and secure working environment. In order to achieve such a goal [...] it is a requirement that all levels within an organisation practice a culture of zero tolerance for bullying and harassment.'*

The Hague is the latest stop on an IBA global campaign that has crossed six continents since its launch in London in May 2019. To date, discussions have been held in Auckland, Brussels, Budapest, Buenos Aires, Canberra, Lagos, Melbourne, Mexico City, New York, Queenstown, Santiago, São Paulo, Seoul, Sydney, Washington DC and Wellington.

Findings from respondents to the survey, conducted by the LPRU in collaboration with consultancy firm **Acritas**, include:

- one in two women and one in three men have experienced bullying in the workplace;
- one in three women and one in 14 men have been sexually harassed;
- in 57 per cent of bullying cases, incidents were not reported, with the figure rising to 75 per cent for episodes of sexual harassment; and
- there is considerable adverse impact, with 65 per cent of bullied practitioners having left or considered leaving their workplace as a result.

Recommendations set out by the IBA to inform the development of solutions to urgently address workplace bullying and sexual harassment focus on:

- raising greater awareness of the issues;
- implementing and revising policies and standards;
- promoting the importance of improved training;
- increasing dialogue and accountability across the profession;

- increasing intra-profession dialogue and best practice sharing;
- developing flexible reporting models; and
- maintaining momentum to achieve genuine change.

**Baroness Helena Kennedy, QC, Director of the IBA's Human Rights Institute**, said in her closing remarks at the London launch: *'Lawyers and other legal professionals must be able to work in environments that are safe and supportive. Bullying and sexual harassment is never appropriate, and the profession must do all it can to stamp out such misconduct.'*

***The legal framework of International Organisations to address Bullying and (Sexual) Harassment*** is being held on Wednesday 6 November 2019 at the ICC, Oude Waalsdorperweg 10, 2597 AK, The Hague, The Netherlands from 1400–1730. The event is invitation only.

**ENDS**

#### **Notes to the Editor**

1. The full report ***Us Too? Bullying and Sexual Harassment in the Legal Profession*** is available to download free of charge from the IBA website at the below link.  
<https://www.ibanet.org/MediaHandler?id=B29F6FEA-889F-49CF-8217-F8F7D78C2479>
2. **Click here** to download the report summary
3. The launch event of ***Us Too? Bullying and Sexual Harassment in the Legal Profession*** was held at law firm **Herbert Smith Freehills LLP** in London on Wednesday 15 May 2019. **Dame Laura Cox DBE**, who led the Independent Inquiry on Bullying and Harassment of House of Commons Staff, provided the keynote address.
4. The project was developed in collaboration with an IBA working group, which consisted of 16 IBA members from across the globe representing all IBA Regional Fora and relevant committees. Emerita Professor Margaret Thornton, **Emerita Professor Patricia Easteal AM** and **Kate Eastman SC** acted as independent experts, reviewing a draft of the report. The project was also supported by many of the IBA's 190 bar associations and law societies and 200 group member law firms, from over 170 countries.
5. **Julia Gillard AC**, 27th Prime Minister of Australia, a former lawyer and now Chair of the Global Institute for Women's Leadership at King's College London, delivered the keynote address at the showcase session at the **2019 IBA Annual Conference in Seoul** in Seoul in September. **Click here** for videos and speeches.
6. The **International Bar Association (IBA)**, the global voice of the legal profession, is the foremost organisation for international legal practitioners, bar associations and law societies. Established in 1947, shortly after the creation of the **United Nations**, it was born out of the conviction that an organisation made up of the world's bar associations could contribute to global stability and peace through the administration of justice.

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