



A good practice guide to universal jurisdiction for lawyers and policy makers was unveiled yesterday. Pictured (l-r) are its author Dr Ewelina Ochab, Dr Monica Castillejos-Aragon, Ambassador Beth Van Schaack, Baroness Helena Kennedy LT KC, Michiel Egeler. See full story on page 8

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MEET THE DELEGATES

Delegates share advice for young lawyers

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Global institutions push back on Trump's rule of law assault

By Ben Edwards

The Trump administration's attempts to upend the norms of international justice are finding resistance from global institutions, according to panellists at Wednesday's session. A conversation about the state of international law under the new Trump era.

Chaired by IBA executive director Mark Ellis, who posited that the Trump administration is leading the charge to dismantle the international rules-based legal order established in the aftermath of World War II, some panellists were optimistic that global institutions would hold up in the face of this threat.

"The international system, much like the US system, is resilient, and we're seeing that in a variety of ways," said Michael Scharf, co-dean of Case Western Reserve University School of Law in the US. "The Trump administration has basically defunded the United Nations unilaterally without Congress, but the UN has responded... and there is strong momentum toward reforms, which have been necessary for years."

Other institutions are also rising up in ways they haven't in the past, he said.

"NATO is now being funded more evenly," Scharf said. "And the Council of Europe has created a new tribunal to prosecute the Russian aggression against Ukraine in the absence of US leadership on that."

Past events have also shown that international institutions can survive and even thrive following attacks from the US.

Scharf referenced the US withdrawal from the compulsory jurisdiction of the World Court after its ruling on the Nicaragua case in 1986. The result of that wasn't to kill the World Court, he said, but to double the number of nations that recognised its jurisdiction.

"Sometimes there is an unintended consequence to US attacks against international institutions that end up being very resilient," he said.

While Trump's assault on the rule of law domestically has emboldened authoritarians around the world, it has also helped strengthen resolve among other nations, delegates heard.

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DEFENDING THE PRESS

Media freedoms are under attack

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CORRUPTION IN RUSSIA

Seized assets must aid Ukraine's war effort

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Delegate Views

What advice do you have for young lawyers starting their career?

Jane Hunter

**Head of Risk Management
Price Forbes
England**



Try to find your champion; someone who will support you and encourage you throughout your professional career. It will make a true difference for you as a lawyer. But here's the secret: You must seek them out. Keep going until you find the right champion for you. Along the way, be prepared to take a career risk.

Neri Colmenares

**Name Partner
Colmenares and
Associates
Philippines**



Have a clear vision of what you want to be and choose that direction. Have a firm commitment. Lawyering is not just about earning money but providing the best legal service to the people and community. Finally, be committed to service and be the best lawyer that money cannot buy.

Safiya Abubakar

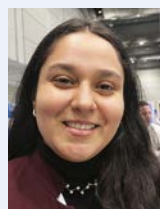
**Director, Legal
Industrial Training Fund
Nigeria**



Be steadfast, hardworking and preserve the integrity of the bar. Young lawyers today have a different mentality than we did years ago: they are very quick to take decisions and eager to finish assignments. Be patient. Follow the correct steps and processes and you will be successful.

Saranya Mishra

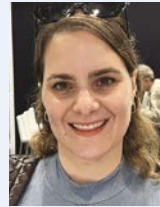
**Senior Associate
Khaitan & Co
India**



Make the most of what comes your way. Get out there. Sometimes the way to get started is just to be out there, ask questions, and don't be afraid of what the answer is. When you don't explore and ask questions, things will always be unknown. But when you go for it, surprises will come your way.

Valeria Angelucci

**Senior Attorney
Becker
United States**



Knowing the law is only the start of your career. Network with other professionals in your area of law as well as outside your area of law. Get involved in associations like the IBA because participation will help create a network for your future development. Seek a mentor if you can.

Wade Thomson

**Partner
Jenner & Block
United Kingdom/
United States**



Be open to trying new things, even if you don't initially fancy them. You never know until you try. This profession has twists and turns with industries, markets, personalities, and geopolitical realities that are difficult to plan around. Learning to be flexible and adaptable early will pay dividends.

Zeina Obeid

**Partner
Obeid & Partners
United Arab Emirates**



As the chair of the Young Lawyers Committee, please join us. We allow young lawyers to network, build relationships and grow their practices. I know it creates life-long relationships, both professional and personal. With like-minded individuals from around the world, young lawyers will grow in ways they can't imagine.

Dr. Marcin Chomiuk

**Partner
JDP Drapala & Partners
Poland**



Do not rely on what you think your career path will be. When I started, other lawyers told me my path. But today, our technology-driven world is different in so many ways. Your path may change so think twice about the advice you are given. Follow your passion, and that's where you will find success.

Helena Najjar Abdo

**Partner
Lobo de Rizzo and IBA
APDC Officer
Brazil**



Be a hybrid lawyer who combines curiosity with legal knowledge. Think beyond law and embrace business, languages, and technology. Relationships built on empathy and trust differentiate great professionals. Interdisciplinary thinking is no longer optional; it is the essence of the legal profession.

Linda Sheryl Greene

**1855 Professor and MSU
Foundation Professor
Michigan State University
College of Law
United States**



You have joined a profession as well as a beloved community entrusted with the rule of law. Please take advantage of every opportunity to learn from and contribute to the community that sustains us as well as the fundamental values we cherish.

George Havaris

**Partner
JDP
Canada and Poland**



Build your network because this will be the foundation of your career. Do so in a planned and authentic manner. By that, I mean you should connect with people you like and feel comfortable with. These people are the relationships to build and maintain. The rest is white noise.

Laura Ganoza

**Partner
Foley & Lardner
United States**



Work with as many different people as possible in your organization so you can learn diverse styles of practicing law. Seek out those you may want to emulate. Then, use what you've learned to develop your own unique style. You don't have to act like anyone else. Be your authentic self and you will be successful.

BIC Showcase – time to let go – defining legal services and the role of lawyers

All eyes were on the Bar Issues Commission's afternoon showcase session on Wednesday, chaired by Claudia Amore of the Colombian Chamber of Legal Services, who urged delegates to be both curious and expect change, not of the quiet kind, but the kind that "kicks down the door and announces its presence", both strategically and practically.

Her welcome was followed by Steven Richman, chair of the BIC, who set the scene, from a bar association perspective.

Richman explained that the definition of what legal services are is changing, with the idea emerging that legal services "doesn't mean you have to have a lawyer".

This session examined the trends and disruptions resulting from the increasing provision of traditional legal services by non-lawyers or other licensed categories, as well as the evolution of the profession.

First to speak was Christina Blacklaws, a former president of the Law Society of England and Wales, who sits on the IBA's Bar Issues Commission. She used Lawtech UK as an example of building a future-ready legal services ecosystem, which she called "a bold experiment."

Blacklaws explored the development of alternative business structures from 2012, and her own part in it. "Innovation," she said, "could be done responsibly." One in 10 firms were ABS-licensed by 2020, she explained, adding that LawtechUK's development following those initiatives included supporting and tracking 374+ start-ups.

There were, she noted, 11 million unmet legal needs annually, and 15.4 small business issues unresolved, which LawtechUK could address, saying: "Join with us in shaping a just, inclusive, tech-enabled future".

Alongside her was Juliana Warner, from the Law Council of Australia, Canberra, which represents Australia's law societies and bar associations.

Warner explained that Australia did not allow non-lawyers to give legal advice, as it was a criminal offence, but also for consumer protection.

There were exceptions: non-lawyers could manage firms, but it still required legal ownership and professional indemnity insurance. Law firms can be innovative, such as by offering virtual law services or providing a range of fee models.

Michael Fandel of the Seattle firm Miller Nash provided an American perspective from the Professional Ethics Committee.

He explained the ABA's perspective and influence on fee-sharing arrangements, which were prohibited across all states, until 2020, when Utah examined the opportunities for different innovative providers of legal services. Washington joined that trend in 2024, with a court-approved pilot for entity regulation being introduced. This allowed

The evidence, both from England and Wales and from Utah and Arizona, is that there really is no harm to consumers if you are thoughtful about how you expand these services.

— Michael Fandel

for issues related to access to justice to be addressed, "demonstrating rigorous consumer protection protocols".

He added: "The evidence, both from England and Wales and from Utah and Arizona, is that there really is no harm to consumers if you are thoughtful about how you expand these services."

Vincent Maurel shared his views from a Big Four perspective, representing KPMG Advocats in Paris and the French National Bar Association. His talk focused on multidisciplinary partnerships as a one-stop shop.

"The strengths... of joining a law firm within a multidisciplinary network means accessing a wealth of resources and opportunities that go beyond the traditional framework of the profession, the synergy between businesses makes it possible to practice with global innovative functions, adapted to the growing complexity of international operations," he said, adding "it's time to wake up".

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Press freedoms, journalists under attack globally amid rise in authoritarianism

By Ben Edwards

As democratic institutions face increased strain around the world from authoritarian leaders, media freedoms are coming under threat, with journalists facing harassment, imprisonment and even assassination, as autocrats and other powerful voices seek to silence the truth.

This was the topic at Tuesday's LPD Showcase – killing the news: a global phenomenon, introduced by media law committee advisory board member and MinterEllison partner Peter Bartlett, and moderated by Associated Press general counsel Karen Kaiser.

Kaiser noted that at least 360 journalists are currently imprisoned around the world, most of them held on fabricated charges without proper legal basis and denied fair trials, creating an environment where other journalists are afraid to report on the truth.

Among the panellists was Committee to Protect Journalists Americas regional director Jose Carlos Zamora, whose investigative journalist father Jose Ruben Zamora has been imprisoned in Guatemala since July 2022.

Zamora senior had a 30-year career as a journalist investigating corruption, organised crime and human rights abuses for Guatemalan newspaper elPeriodico. Zamora's reporting led to death threats and physical attacks, with the government also using the law as a weapon to persecute him.

When Zamora was first arrested, his family didn't even know on what charges. Later it was revealed he was being charged with money laundering.

"This really shows the two-prong approach of these people," said Zamora junior. "One of the things they know a journalist has is their credibility. So they know that when they attack with these charges of money laundering, it really attacks that credibility."

In addition, they also know it sends a message to all other journalists in the country who are seeking to hold the powerful to account, Zamora said.

Since Zamora senior's arrest, elPeriodico has been forced to shut down, with the government persecuting the paper's advertisers and other journalists, threatening them all with money laundering charges.

"It was to send a message to all journalists in



the country that we can go after anybody and doing journalism is a crime," said Zamora.

Also on the panel was the Washington Post's former Iranian bureau chief Jason Rezaian, who was arrested in July 2014 and held in Iran's Evin Prison for 544 days on four charges including espionage, with much of that time spent in solitary confinement.

"When we talk about the arrest and imprisonment of journalists, especially foreign correspondents, it has [a chilling effect] on other journalists," he said.

This approach worked. Since Rezaian's arrest, the Washington Post has not had anyone based in Tehran. The New York Times has also been without a Tehran-based correspondent since 2019, Rezaian said.

As well as a tool to silence reporting, authoritarian regimes often target journalists because they can be used as leverage to extract something from those journalists' home governments.

"It is a very clear attack on journalism, it's a clear attack on democracy, and for a long time, we dealt with these cases in very flat-footed ways," Rezaian said. "We don't want to undermine or question the judicial independence of a sovereign state. Well, they've weaponised that against us and are running circles around democratic societies, and that has to change."

Human rights lawyer and co-vice chair of the IBA's media law committee Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC also flagged three other current cases of persecution, including against Maria Ressa, founder of news site Rappler in the Philippines, Mzia Amaglobeli, founder of Georgia news outlets Batumelebi and Netgazeti, and independent Chinese language

newspaper Apple Daily-founder Jimmy Lai in Hong Kong.

"These examples... send a chilling message to absolutely anyone else in those countries who wants to be a journalist, who wants to speak truth to power," she said. "If they can imprison Jimmy Lai, if they can imprison Maria Ressa, if they can imprison Mzia Amaglobeli, if they can imprison Jose Ruben Zamora, they can imprison anyone."

Irwin Cotler, international chair of the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, said authoritarian countries view journalists as a threat because they are bastions of truth.

"They are seen as torchbearers of the struggle for justice, as torchbearers of human rights and as torchbearers for democracies," he said. "With an increasingly global resurgent authoritarianism... and intensifying assault on human rights, the role of journalists and media freedom becomes more important and compelling than ever, and that's why they become a target."

Another reason that journalists are targeted is because authoritarians are narcissists who can't bear any criticism or anyone who might undermine them in the eyes of their populace, said Baroness Helena Kennedy LT KC, director of the IBA's Human Rights Institute.

"Journalists expose corruption, they expose abuses of human rights, they expose the underbelly of authoritarianism," she said. "The fourth pillar is vital to the sustaining of democracy and the voice of the people."

The showcase also extended to a second session, chaired by IBA Human Rights Institute co-chair Mark Stephens, on journalists murdered in the line of duty. Panellists included Diane Foley, founder of the Foley Foundation and mother of murdered US freelance journalist James Foley, who discussed her efforts to improve the US government's hostage response capabilities and enhance protections for freelance journalists working overseas.

Also speaking was Financial Times journalist Paul Caruana Galizia, whose mother Daphne Caruana Galizia – an investigative journalist in Malta – was murdered in a car bombing, while Iran International reporter Negar Mojtahedi talked about her experiences and those of her colleagues of living under the constant threat of assassination from the Iranian state after it labelled her news network a terrorist entity.



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In-house lawyers must embrace AI

An attentive audience at a Corporate Counsel Forum-led session on Wednesday heard a clear warning: the AI wave is already reshaping legal work, governance and client expectations, and lawyers – whether in-house or in private practice – must adapt fast or risk irrelevance.

The session – Artificial Intelligence in the corporate environment – was chaired by Giovanni Lombardi, deputy CEO and general counsel of Italian bank illimity.

He invoked the “Jevons paradox” of efficiency creating new demand, warning that AI’s promise of speed will only intensify the need for secure and ethical practice. “Your clients are ahead of you in using AI for different solutions,” he said.

Michaël Hassan, general counsel and corporate secretary at Sagard, described boards still struggling to grasp AI’s basics while businesses experiment freely. His team, he said, had adopted an “open but safe” framework – testing tools, insisting on enterprise-grade security and banning personal data in prompts.

“We are not the department of ‘No’, we

are the department of ‘know-how,” he said. “If you’re not using AI as an in-house lawyer today, you will disappear.”

Every deliverable from his department now passes through an AI filter, improving quality and speed while reducing stress. Hassan urged colleagues to embrace automation responsibly by recording meetings and generating draft minutes through AI but to revise retention policies to delete transient records. “Be smart about process and policy,” he said. “You can close the gap between ‘good, fast and cheap’ in a way we’ve never seen.”

Matthew Canning, corporate counsel, North America, at LexisNexis outlined the regulatory tangle facing any global business, with divergent US state rules, Canada’s pending Bill C-27 and the EU’s AI Act. His company aligns to the highest common standard while keeping transparency at the centre: “People need to know what they’re using, where their data goes and how it’s treated.”

Canning said LexisNexis avoids training models on customer data and relies on human-led bias checks.

Cecilia Carrara at dispute resolution partner at Legance in Rome explained that Italian bar rules now require lawyers to seek explicit client consent before using AI. Some clients ban it outright, she said, while others quietly expect their lawyers to check advice against AI results as a matter of diligence.

She also previewed IBA arbitration committee work on traffic light guidance for AI use in arbitration, flagging public data as safe ground and non-public scraping as off-limits.

Lucinda Orr, a partner at London disputes boutique Enyo Law and digitalisation and AI officer for the IBA litigation committee, warned that AI is already generating disputes across industries. She listed emerging clusters: misrepresentation, discrimination, copyright, product liability and cybersecurity. “Class actions will follow because algorithmic problems scale fast,” she said.

The message from Lombardi, Hassan, Canning, Carrara and Orr was unequivocal. Responsible adoption is no longer optional. Lawyers must learn to use AI or be left explaining yesterday’s workflows (and bills) to tomorrow’s clients.

COVERAGE

‘Corruption is the basis for everything that happens in Russia’

By John Malpas

Corruption, not territorial ambition, is the main motivation for Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, meaning that the war will not end until one side is defeated.

This was the key message of anti-corruption campaigner Sir Bill Browder in an interview with the IBA’s executive director, Mark Ellis, on Monday.

Browder is the mastermind of the US Magnitsky Act, which was passed into US law in 2012 and allows for the targeting of corrupt Russian officials with travel bans and the freezing of their overseas assets.

“Corruption will always be the basis for everything that happens in Russia, and I think it’s really important to connect the corruption to the war, because it’s really the cause of the war,” Browder said.

He said that Russia’s president, Vladimir Putin, and about 1,000 oligarchs around him, had stolen \$100bn from the people of Russia, money that could have funded schools, hospitals and other public services.

While it was possible for Putin to eliminate the threat posed by prominent dissidents, such as Alexei Navalny, who died in jail last year, “he can’t kill a million people marching on Red Square, and that’s what he’s most afraid of”, Browder explained.

He added: “And so what does a little man who’s stolen too much money and is terrified of dying at the hands of his own people do? He pulls out Machiavelli 101 – he creates a foreign enemy and he starts a war.”

Browder saw little prospect of a negotiated end to the conflict because Putin “needs a war”; a fact that made the groundwork achieved by the Magnitsky Act, set up in memory of his lawyer, Sergei Magnitsky, who died in prison after uncovering \$230m in tax fraud, essential to the West’s response to the war.

The anti-corruption campaigner said years of work to persuade western



Sir Bill Browder

governments to confiscate the assets of corrupt officials paid off when \$300bn of Russian government assets were frozen within days after the invasion.

Initially, it was envisaged those funds would pay to rebuild Ukraine after the war, but Browder said European powers had come to realise there won’t be a country to rebuild “if you don’t have the money for defence”, an understanding helped by the Trump administration’s belief that it should take the lead in funding the war effort.

He said he was confident moves to release those assets to aid Ukraine’s war effort would come to fruition before the end of the first quarter of next year despite the legal complexities involved relating to sovereign immunity.

“Yes, Russia’s central bank reserves are protected by sovereign immunity, but so is Ukrainian territory,” he said. “So you can’t have it both ways,” adding that \$300bn pays for a lot of weapons.

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“If you notice what happened right after the Trump-Putin meeting, the European countries mobilised,” said Irwin Cotler, international chair of the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights. “Trump’s threats to annex Canada, either jocular or seriously but repeatedly, has also had an impact on the revitalisation of Canadian identity and purpose.”

Judge Kimberly Prost from the International Criminal Court in the Hague agrees that the Trump administration’s efforts to disrupt the international legal order has had a galvanising effect on other nations.

“From my perspective, living in the city of international peace and justice, I think that

there’s reason to be optimistic, and we have to focus on the resilience and not just on the negative effects of what’s happening,” she said.

However, some panellists also worry about the impact this will have elsewhere in the world as the US turns its back on upholding global legal norms.

“The attacks on our judiciary, the hollowing out of our institutions, it’s going to have an effect on the United States, and I frankly think it’s going to have an effect on other countries,” said John Bellinger, a partner at Arnold & Porter and a former US government lawyer.

“We all well know that when the US sneezes, the rest of the world catches a cold, and I worry we’ll start seeing attacks on judges around the world.”

Beth Van Schaak from Stanford’s Center for Human Rights and International Justice, said it will be incumbent on the rest of the international community to continue to find ways to fill the void left by the US, in areas such as the conflict in Ukraine.

“We are hopeful that the Europeans and the justice loving states of the entire globe will step in and find ways to support those efforts, not only because it’s Ukraine, but because it is endemic and systemic of the values of the UN Charter,” Van Schaak added.

“If Russia can do what it did in Ukraine, then any state can do that with respect to their own neighbours. And so we all should be supporting that effort with respect to potential scofflaws in different regions around the world.”

Talent attraction and retention still top concern for law firms

By Ben Edwards

While law firms are grappling with growing issues around AI and political risk, attracting and retaining talent remains one of the top three areas that are expected to impact law firms in the immediate future, according to the latest Heatmap report from the IBA's Future of Legal Services Commission.

Having been the number one concern in last year's Heatmap, this year's findings might suggest talent and retention has become a lower priority. But Carola Van den Bruinhorst, a consultant at Phyleon Leadership and Governance, and co-chair of Wednesday morning's session Mapping and exploring the future of legal services: challenges and opportunities, said it is merely a reflection that firms have even more issues to deal with today.

"It's still a very high rank," she said. "It doesn't mean that it's less important for the people completing the survey and for the legal industry. It just means that there is so much more to worry about, unfortunately."

Despite concerns that AI might displace human roles, session panellist Nankunda Katangaza, co-founder of research and advisory boutique Hook Tangaza and co-chair of the regional fora coordination committee, believes that it will redefine what lawyers will be expected to do in the future.

"When you have a machine that can do some of that traditional associate redrafting work,



Pictured (l-r): Adriana Castro, Nankunda Katangaza and Carola Van den Bruinhorst

people should actually be working at a much higher level," she said. "This means lawyers are definitely going to have to be trained differently."

Firms will also need to think about attracting different skill sets as non-lawyer roles shift.

"The days of having the number of paralegals that we currently have in the law firms is coming to an end sadly, but we're going to be

needing engineers, data analysts and other sets of expertise within law firms," said panellist Adriana Castro, a business law attorney at BLP Legal in Costa Rica.

In addition, generational expectations are shifting, which will impact how law firms can continue to attract talent in the future.

"Gen Z wants freedom, they want balance and they want impact," said Van den Bruinhorst.

IBA releases new study on universal jurisdiction

By Anne Gallagher

Findings from the new IBA study, Universal Jurisdiction: Good Practice Guide for Law and Policymakers, were unveiled on Wednesday at the session, No sanctuary for perpetrators of international crime: the use of universal jurisdiction in the pursuit of justice. The session was led by Dr Ewelina Ochab, senior programme lawyer with the IBA's Human Rights Institute.

"The fight against impunity cannot have any borders," Dr Ochab said. "The principle of universal jurisdiction must be used to the fullest to ensure the investigation and prosecution of serious violations of international law."

First explained in the Geneva Conventions of 1949, the principle of universal jurisdiction allows countries to prosecute individuals for serious crimes, such as genocide and war crimes, regardless of where the crime occurred or the nationality of the accused.

The guide helps law and policymakers engage on universal jurisdictional issues, identifies legislative and policy components, and provides best practices from several countries using the principal. It also includes seven recommendations on how states' practices of using universal jurisdiction could be amended to provide more effective responses to international crimes.

According to the guide, between 2000 and 2020, almost 20% of countries experienced mass atrocities or raised serious concern that they could take place. These international crimes are rarely investigated, let alone prosecuted, which empowers perpetrators and silences victims, survivors and witnesses.

In addition to Dr Ochab, panellists included Dr Monica Castillejos-Aragon of the University of California Berkeley School of Law; Ambassador Beth Van Schaak of Stanford's Center for Human Rights and International Justice; Baroness Helena Kennedy, LT KC of the IBA's Human Rights Institute; and Michiel Egeler of the Ministry of Justice and Security, Netherlands.

The only way is ethics

Distinguished panel emphasised the importance of upholding professional standards, independence and integrity, reports Ben Rigby

Chaired by Jose Antonio Maurellet SC of the Hong Kong Bar Association, the session featured contributions from Roddy Dunlop KC of the Faculty of Advocates in Scotland, who opened the event.

Next up was Barbara Mills KC, chair of the Bar Council of England and Wales. Mills, in her remarks, discussed how the Bar had addressed the issue of bullying in the legal profession, particularly affecting young women, minority ethnic barristers, and, in particular, junior members.

Mills said the Bar Council had commissioned a former Solicitor-General, Baroness Harriet Harman, to look into the issue, "shining a spotlight on ourselves".

Harman's review, the findings of which Mills outlined, was released in September, emphasising the need for clear, consistent standards, which Mills said were owed "not just to clients, to each other and to the court, but to our system of justice".

The Bar Council approved 36 recommendations, including that "the standards of behaviour related to bullying, harassment and sexual harassment must be clear and consistent across the profession"

Mills said: "There is no room for the innocent bystander" in managing such claims; to tolerate bullying would "distort truth-telling. It undermines respectful exchanges of argument. It can create an environment where the duty to act with candour and fairness is compromised".

She added: "The argument for a targeted anti-bullying code within the professional standard framework for us is not an add-on. It is the logical, necessary expansion of those standards. It acknowledges that conduct in all spheres of practice reflects on the profession as a whole."

Justice Ngozika Okaisabor spoke next; she a member of the Court of Appeal, Abuja, Nigeria, and a member of the Judges' Forum Advisory Board, briefing delegates on the importance of professional conduct rules.

These, in her fused profession, served as "a critical solution to many of the problems faced by the independent referral bar by reinforcing core principles such as independence, integrity and competence", citing matters like conflicts of interest, loss of public trust and the challenges posed by market prejudice.

Next up was Sarah Sackman KC, the Courts Minister at the UK Ministry of Justice, who discussed the impact of AI on ethics.

Ethics, Sackman said, were as "old as our profession itself; but the context in which we answer that question today is shaped by the world we live in, one that's shaped by artificial intelligence and digital transformation, presenting wholly new questions".

She said: "AI presents extraordinary opportunities, but also profound responsibilities. The challenge before us is to ensure that the principles that have guided justice and lawyers for centuries – fairness,

accountability, and integrity – survive and evolve in an age of automation".

In 10 years, she speculated, if AI-assisted decisions became the norm, frozen at a single point in time, "what happens to the evolution of law and legal ethics itself? What kinds of decisions should remain adjudicated by human beings?"

Outlining the work the UK government is doing in this field, she said: "AI presents huge opportunities for the citizen, provided we get the ethical guardrails right."

Jonathan Soeharno, of De Brauw Blackstone Westbroek, Amsterdam, and a member of the professional ethics committee, discussed the pressure on law firms to adopt a diversity policy and the challenges arising from those policies under the Trump administration. He outlined how the Dutch bar associations had responded to law firms changing their diversity policies, which had led to protests outside major law firms.

The Bar, he explained, reaffirmed the principle that lawyers should not be identified with their clients' causes and upheld the legal independence of lawyers, adding that law firms were not permitted to make promises, issue statements or enter into agreements that compromise or threaten to compromise the independence of lawyers.

That statement, he said, went further than the problem at hand and would pose future questions to be answered.

Let's rock, Toronto!

It wouldn't be an IBA annual meeting without Law Rocks! A staple of the IBA annual meeting since the Boston meeting, the popular battle of the bands event returns following a widely acclaimed outing in Mexico City, which was hotly contested.

This year is no different, with bands of musically gifted legal professionals battling it out to benefit the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute and Pro Bono Ontario at Toronto's historic Yonge Hall.

The charity was founded by Nick M. Child and Ted Scott, of Secretariat, and Damian Hickman, of the International Dispute Resolution Centre in London.

Hickman said: "Law Rocks! is a global charity that raises money

for worthy causes through a battle of the bands event made up of bands from the legal community."

Among the bands in this year's line-up is Seven Seas, an ad hoc rock band comprised of members of the IBA's maritime and transport law committee, which only plays once a year, this year without Julian Clark, one of the founding members, who sadly passed away in August.

Among the judges are the appropriately named John Judge, of Arbitra International, who once played that venue with his own band, and Peters & Peters' Keith Oliver.

"We look forward to an amazing night of music and fundraising!" said Child.

Law Rocks! Takes place at The Concert Hall, 888 Yonge St, Toronto, from 7:30pm. Tickets are available at lawrocks.org/iba-toronto

eyeWitness to Atrocities: 10 years of supporting human rights defenders to achieve justice

By Isabelle Bienfait

In October, eyeWitness to Atrocities (eyeWitness) and the International Committee on Nigeria (ICON) submitted a Joint Urgent Appeal to the UN Special Rapporteurs on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, on the right to adequate housing and on the right to food, expressing grave concerns about patterns of violence between certain herder and farming communities in Nigeria's Middle Belt region.

The submission outlines some of the most egregious incidents identified in footage captured with the eyeWitness App (photographs, videos and audio recordings). The eyeWitness team analysed selected footage, accompanying documenters' notes provided by ICON documenters and others, and open-source information, concluding that non-state actors operate with impunity in Nigeria's Middle Belt region, carrying out attacks that kill unarmed civilians and destroy property (including homes) and food reserves. The incidents described amount to clear violations of the right to life and right to an adequate standard of living, including the rights to housing and to food.

Among other crucial recommendations, the submitting organisations urge the Special Rapporteurs to seek information about the steps taken by the Nigerian government to hold perpetrators accountable, to provide redress and rehabilitation to victims, to address the root causes and consequences of the violence, and to address the compounding harms faced by women and children.

The submission also calls for the establishment of a UN inquiry or fact-finding mission and a special procedure country mandate for Nigeria. This submission builds on previous reports filed by eyeWitness, ICON and partners, including a submission in the context of Nigeria's Universal Periodic Review and a Joint Urgent Appeal focused on a series of extrajudicial executions in the Middle Belt of Nigeria.

Over the past 10 years, eyeWitness has supported documenters across the world to capture footage of serious human rights violations and international crimes. In this time, over 90,000 pieces of digital evidence have been captured with the app and uploaded to eyeWitness' secure, confidential server hosted by LexisNexis.

A lot of this information has been analysed by lawyers, ready to be used in courts across the globe. The eyeWitness app and server ensure no footage is captured in vain; every photo or piece of video or audio is



embedded with metadata of the date, time and location of capture and the chain of custody preserved, meaning every piece of footage is likely to be found admissible in court.

In September 2018, a military tribunal in the Democratic Republic of the Congo found two commanders of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda guilty of murder and torture, both constituting crimes against humanity. The verdict was given after the court received condemning photo and video evidence captured with the eyeWitness camera app, along with other evidence.

In addition, since 2022, footage captured in Ukraine using the eyeWitness app has been relied on in four cases in Ukrainian courts. Three cases adjudicated by the Commercial Court of Kharkiv in Ukraine relate to compensation claims for damage to non-residential property in Kharkiv. The fourth case, held in the Kharkiv District Administrative Court, relates to the challenge of a tax decision on the grounds that the bombing of the plaintiff's office delayed timely tax reporting.

This work was made possible with the support of partners such as the International Bar Association, LexisNexis and law firms providing pro bono legal backing.

eyeWitness to Atrocities is now more important than ever to ensure footage captured by courageous human rights defenders on the ground can be used in court for justice.

Isabelle Bienfait is programme co-ordinator for eyeWitness



IBA Toronto 2025's opening day revisited

To some delegates it will seem like an age, but it was only four days ago that IBA Toronto 2025 kicked off with the opening ceremony. Alongside the welcoming speeches, which featured a moving address by Justice Rosalie Silberman Abella, recipient of the Benjamin Berell Ferencz Rule of Law Lifetime Achievement Award, the occasion featured a ceremonial welcome from Elder Kevin Myran and the All Nations Juniors, who performed a traditional drum dance. The opening ceremony was followed by the customary welcome party.

Photos by John Anthony Visual Communications



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EVENT CALENDAR 2025/26



LUXURY LAW SUMMIT NEW YORK

12 November 2025
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 high-end legal marketplace.

luxurylawsummit.com/new-york

BEAUTY & WELLNESS Law Summit

5 March 2026
LONDON

The inaugural Beauty & Wellness Law Summit brings together business leaders, legal experts, regulators and innovators to address the unique complexities of the fast-growing beauty and wellness sector. This dedicated forum is designed to track industry trends, foster collaboration, and shape the future of the marketplace.

beautywellnesslawsummit.com



WOMEN & DIVERSITY IN LAW AWARDS

28 April 2026
LONDON

With 400 attendees in 2025, 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 D&I needle or using their positions of influence to help facilitate change.

womenanddiversityinlawawards.com

LUXURY LAW SUMMIT LONDON

9 June 2026
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



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ANTI-COUNTERFEITING WORLD LAW SUMMIT

29 September 2026
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



LAW FIRM MARKETING SUMMIT

13 October 2026
LONDON

Now in its eleventh 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



LUXURY LAW SUMMIT MILAN

October 2026
MILAN

The Luxury Law Summit Milan is an invitation-only gathering that explores the critical legal and business challenges shaping the luxury industry. Bringing together in-house counsel, brand executives, and legal experts from the world's leading luxury brands, the Summit offers a full day of thought leadership, lively debate, and unrivalled networking.

luxurylawsummit.com/milan



Making the SWITCH: training lawyers to harness the power of AI for growth

By Itzik Amiel

What if your law firm could lose clients, market share, and talent *not because of poor legal expertise*, but because you failed to adapt to one of the most disruptive forces in the legal profession: AI?

One of the biggest challenges I've observed in AI adoption is behavioural resistance. Without the right mindset, your firm won't just struggle with adoption – it will miss out on AI's transformative potential altogether. So, let me share with you practical tips to help you implement AI in your firm in the right way and with immediate effect.

TEN PRACTICAL TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTING AI

Start with a clear AI strategy

Define what success looks like for your firm whether, it's reducing costs, improving client satisfaction, or offering new services. Make sure that your AI adoption aligns with your business goals.

Focus on human-AI collaboration, not replacement

AI is not here to replace us as lawyers; it's here to augment our work. Use AI to enhance human creativity and decision-making, allowing you, as a lawyer, to focus on high-value tasks while automating routine work.

Invest in behavioural training, not just tools

AI tools alone won't bring success (and definitely will not differentiate your firm). Invest in training programmes that not only teach your team how to use the technology but also shift their mindset. Train them on how to leverage AI creatively to solve problems, enhance client relationships, and innovate within their practice areas.

Foster a growth mindset

Successful AI adoption starts with a growth mindset. Encourage your team to see AI as an opportunity for learning and growth, not as a threat to their jobs. A shift in thinking will unlock AI's full potential and help your firm thrive in the digital age.

Integrate AI into core workflows

Identify areas where AI can have the most impact, such as document review, legal research, or contract analysis. By automating these tasks, your lawyers can focus on delivering higher-value services to clients.

Maintain the human touch

While AI can handle repetitive tasks, human creativity and empathy remain the true differentiators in client service. Use AI to free up time for your lawyers to engage with clients more deeply, offering tailored, human-centred solutions.

Create a culture of reinvention

AI is more than just a tool – it's a mindset. Foster a culture of experimentation where your lawyers can think creatively about how to apply AI to deliver value to clients. Encourage collaboration between departments to explore new ways of working.

Address ethical and security concerns

AI adoption brings concerns around privacy, security, and transparency. Ensure your firm has a robust approach to these issues, prioritizing client confidentiality and data security as you integrate AI into your practice.

Measure success beyond efficiency

Don't just measure the success of AI through efficiency and cost savings. Look at how AI enhances client relationships, improves business



development, and opens up new revenue streams. The real value of AI is its ability to drive innovation and enhance client experience.

Be agile and adaptive

AI is constantly evolving. As such, your firm's AI strategy must remain agile. Continuously evaluate new AI tools and keep an open mind to changes in technology. Stay ahead of the curve by being flexible and ready to adjust your approach as AI continues to evolve.

ACTION PLAN FOR AI ADOPTION

So, if you are about to accelerate the implementation of AI in your practice, here is my suggested action plan for how to do it right:

- Assess your AI needs: conduct a firm-wide audit to identify where AI can provide the most value – whether it's in automating routine tasks, enhancing client service, or improving internal workflows.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy: align AI adoption with your firm's business goals. Set clear metrics for success and establish a phased implementation plan.
- Focus on training and behavioural change: invest in both technical and behavioural training for your lawyers. Empower them with the knowledge and mindset they need to succeed with AI.
- Pilot AI solutions: test AI tools in key practice areas. Gather feedback from your team and refine your approach before scaling up.
- Track results and adapt: continuously monitor the results of AI implementation. Track both quantitative (efficiency, cost savings) and qualitative (client satisfaction, innovation) metrics to measure success.

THE TIME IS NOW

The legal industry is on the verge of a revolution, and AI will be at the centre of it. But for your firm to truly benefit, you must go beyond just buying AI tools and commit to changing behaviours, training your team, and embracing a growth mindset. The firms that succeed will be the ones that use AI to enhance their human creativity and deliver innovative, client-focused solutions.

The time to act is now. Don't wait until your competitors leave you behind.

Itzik Amiel is founder & CEO, of THE SWITCH, immediate past chair of IBA LFM Business Development & Marketing Subcommittee, a commissioner of the IBA Future of Legal Services President's Commission and a member of the IBA Presidential Working Group on AI.

IBA 2025 Toronto



Key sessions to look out for during a week that will set the agenda for global law at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre

Thursday

08:00-09:15
Section on Public and Professional Interest Awards breakfast

Room 5, Level 500

This breakfast will feature the presentation of the Section on Public and Professional Interest (SPPI) Awards. Egyptian human rights lawyer Hoda Abdel-Moneim, who is currently imprisoned in Egypt amid a broader crackdown on human rights defenders and lawyers in the country is the winner of the IBA Award for Outstanding Contribution by a Legal Practitioner to Human Rights, selected for her record in defending freedoms, championing women's and children's rights and the fight against enforced disappearances. Also being recognised is Nigerian lawyer Oluwafunke Adeoye, who is collecting the IBA Outstanding Young Lawyer Award for her "legal brilliance" and her "passion for justice". Singapore corporate lawyer Arfat Selvam is due to pick up the IBA Pro Bono Award for her efforts to improve access to justice. The awards are supported by LexisNexis.

9:30-10:45 and 11:15-12:30
SPPI Showcase – Law not war: parts one and two

Room 716 A, Level 700

This SPPI showcase will explore how lawyers can use law and legal procedures to broker peace talks and bring war crimes to justice. Among an array of top speakers is Dr Olufemi Elias, judge ad hoc at the International Court of Justice, who will deliver a keynote speech. The distinguished international jurist currently serves as president of the Administrative Tribunal of the OPEC Fund in Vienna and chair of the Administrative Tribunal of the Islamic Development Bank in Jeddah. The proceedings will be chaired by the SPPI's co-chairs, Dr Babatunde Ajibade SAN, managing partner of S P A Ajibade & Co in Lagos, and Kirsty Sutherland, a barrister at 9 Bedford Row Chambers in London and co-chair of the IBA War Crimes Committee.



Hoda Abdel-Moneim



Oluwafunke Adeoye



Arfat Selvam

Friday

09:00-15:00
The Rule of Law Symposium

Room 716 A, Level 700

Organised by the Rule of Law Forum, this annual symposium underscores the IBA's commitment to promoting and defending the rule of law worldwide. This year's programme will feature three thought-provoking sessions that will bring together leading practitioners, policymakers and academics to debate the global challenges facing the rule of law and reaffirm the legal profession's vital role in upholding justice and accountability. The symposium, which includes lunch, is free to attend, including for those who are not registered to attend the conference although they must register by Wednesday 5 November. The online registration form can be found at ibanet.org.

09:00-10:45 Session One
The future of multilateralism: international law and institutions in an era of impunity and great power competition

An expert panel will discuss the implications of the rise of a multipolar world and intensifying geopolitical conflicts, which are undermining international law and multinational institutions. A 19th-century-style great power competition has made a comeback, with the United States retreating from historic commitments to alliances and multilateralism. The discussion will explore what the future might hold for international law, international institutions

and multilateral cooperation. It will be led by Federica D'Alessandra, deputy director of the University of Oxford's Institute for Ethics Law and Armed Conflict, director of the Oxford Programme on International Peace and Security and non-resident fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

11:00-12:30 Session Two
Civility and the legal profession

This panel will examine how smartphones, social media, political polarisation and social isolation have deepened societal divisions and impacted the legal profession, which faces accusations of "lawfare" from across the political spectrum. Panellists will explore how lawyers can both contribute to these divisions, on the one hand, and help heal them through dialogue, reconciliation and fair legal practice. This session will be moderated by New York-based Holland & Knight partner Robert Bernstein, co-chair of the IBA Project Establishment Subcommittee.

13:30-15:00 Session Three
Sanctions: economic warfare and the law

With international conflicts increasingly fought through economic as well as conventional means, sanctions have become a rapidly evolving area of legal practice. This panel will explore the role of sanctions as non-judicial tools of international law enforcement and examine key concerns, including their impact on access to justice, legal representation, and the role of lawyers, business, and the administration of justice during times of conflict. This session will be chaired by Michael Polak, secretary-treasurer of the Rule of Law Forum, of Church Court Chambers in London.

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

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