



IBA President Jaime Carey welcoming delegates to the opening ceremony

## IBA Toronto 2025 opens with fervent defence of the rule of law By Ben Edwards

IBA President Jaime Carey was among the speakers welcoming more than 5,000 delegates at the IBA 2025 Annual Conference in Toronto yesterday evening.

Carey reflected on the close ties between his home country Chile and Canada, as well as themes around the rule of law, diversity and inclusion, and artificial intelligence.

Carey's speech was followed by the presentation of the Benjamin Berell Ferencz Rule of Law Lifetime Achievement Award to Justice Rosalie Silberman Abella, a former judge at the Supreme Court of Canada (see story on page 2).

Abella then delivered the ceremony's keynote address, in which she delivered a powerful and at times emotional speech that was part tribute to the rule of law and part call to action against the dangers the rule of law is facing today around the world.

In receiving her Rule of Law award, she paid tribute to Nuremberg prosecutor Ferencz and how Nuremberg was the legal engine to protect the world from inhumanity.

Abella drew parallels between indifference to the rule of law today and how the world stood by and watched Hitler's treatment of Jewish people in the run up to World War II with indifference.

She said: "At the moment, the gap between the values the international community articulates and the values it enforces is so wide that almost any country that wants to, can push its abuses through it... In too many parts of the world, there are no regrets, no tolerance, no justice and no hope, and those parts of the world are putting the rest of the world in danger because intolerance, the world's fastest growth industry, seeks, in its hegemonic insularity, to impose its intolerant truth on others."

She said we need to replace "global hate with global hope, otherwise there is no hope".

Other speakers included former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Chief Perry Bellegarde, who was introduced by IBA Host Committee co-chairs Karen Sargeant and Shane Freitag. Bellegarde discussed the rights of indigenous people and the challenges they face when it comes to the rule of law.

He acknowledged that Canada is now starting to recognise indigenous peoples' rights and claims to justice, but he warned there was a danger that if those efforts were not sincere, then they would become hollow.

Bellegarde's speech was followed by a ceremonial welcome from Elder Kevin Myran and The All Nations Juniors, who performed a traditional drum dance.

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#### THE SPPI AWARDS

Find out who is being honoured at Thursday's ceremony

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Get to know the IBA's leadership team

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#### WELCOME TO TORONTO

The host committee co-chairs offer a warm Canadian welcome to their IBA colleagues

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# Former Supreme Court judge receives IBA Rule of Law Award at IBA 2025 opening ceremony

By Ben Edwards

Former Canadian Supreme Court Judge Rosalie Silberman Abella was presented with the IBA Benjamin Berell Ferencz Rule of Law Lifetime Achievement Award at the opening ceremony of the IBA 2025 Annual Conference in Toronto on Sunday night.

Abella was recognised for her dedication to upholding the rule of law throughout her career, which spanned five decades, including 17 years as a Supreme Court judge.

The Rule of Law Award, which is sponsored by LexisNexis, was established in 2022 to honour the life and legacy of Nuremberg prosecutor and international rule of law champion Benjamin (Ben) Ferencz, as well as to acknowledge other distinguished jurists and rule of law advocates.

IBA officers Federica D'Alessandra and Adam Goodman, who sat on the judging panel, said: "We are honoured to bestow the 2025 IBA Benjamin B Ferencz Rule of Law Lifetime Achievement Award upon Judge Rosalie Silberman Abella. Through her exemplary life, remarkable career, trailblazing achievements and dedication to the rule of law as the cornerstone of just societies, Rosalie Abella fully embodies its ethos.

"At a time when global peace, democracy and human rights are under enormous strain, Justice Abella stands as living testament to the power of their pursuit, and as a daily reminder of humanity's collective aspirations for peace, justice and equality under the law, much in the same way as Ben Ferencz stood."

Abella was called to the Ontario Bar in 1972 and practised civil and criminal litigation until 1976 when she was appointed to the Ontario Family Court at the age of 29. She was appointed to the Ontario Court



Former Canadian Supreme Court Judge Rosalie Silberman Abella

of Appeal in 1992 and became a Canadian Supreme Court Judge in 2004, the first Jewish woman to hold that position.

Upon her retirement, she became the Samuel and Judith Pisar Visiting Professor of Law at Harvard Law School. She is also a senior research scholar at Yale Law School.

Abella was born in a displaced persons' camp in Stuttgart, Germany in 1946, and her family came to Canada as refugees four years later. She was awarded the Knight Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit by the President of Germany in 2020.

## Jailed Egyptian human rights lawyer among winners at annual SPPI Awards

Lawyers from Nigeria, Singapore and Egypt will be recognised at the annual Section on Public and Professional Interest (SPPI) Awards breakfast on Thursday morning.

Among those due to receive an award is 66-year-old 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. She 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.



Hoda Abdel-Moneim



Oluwafunke Adeoye



Arfat Selvam

SESSION: Section on Public and Professional Interest Awards breakfast

TIME: Thursday 6 November (08:00-09:15)

LOCATION: Room 5, Level 500

# Lost in the jungle of French employment law?



Let's make it clear!



Scan the QR code to read an article by Itzik Amiel, founder and CEO of THE SWITCH, in The Global Legal Post on how to make the most of the networking opportunities by building meaningful, long-lasting relationships.

## PARTNER CONTENT

## Doing business in the UK

## A global disputes powerhouse

London remains one of the world's leading dispute resolution destinations for international businesses, says Jessica Lee of Brown Rudnick

#### How would you describe the current dispute resolution environment in the UK?

There was considerable uncertainty following Brexit as to what London and the UK would look like as a global dispute resolution centre and whether London is the right place to be. There have been a number of developments that have helped cement London's position and mitigate much of that uncertainty. English law remains a very attractive legal system for many international businesses; there are tools and remedies that are not necessarily available in other jurisdictions, and the perception that you will get a fair and just hearing in the UK very much remains. We also have proactive encouragement of ADR with courts now empowered to order parties to engage in alternative dispute resolution. So overall, it's very positive and the UK remains a very competitive jurisdiction for dispute resolution.

#### What impact will the reform to the Arbitration Act have on disputes activity in the UK?

It's very positive. It draws a lot from some of the measures that you have if you're pursuing civil litigation in the UK, which is often very attractive for parties looking to resolve their disputes. For example, it bolsters the orders of emergency arbitrators allowing them to respond swiftly to urgent matters. The interim relief that is available in England is very attractive for many parties, and so ensuring the enforceability of interim orders made by emergency arbitrators makes it very appealing to have a London seated arbitration. There is also a new power enabling summary dismissal of claims and defences with no real prospect of success, so that will also promote the quicker resolution of meritless claims and meritless defences, which is all aimed at streamlining the arbitration process. Arbitration was originally viewed as a faster, more cost-effective alternative to litigation, but that hasn't always been the reality – particularly in complex, high-value disputes. The Arbitration Act is trying to bring some of that efficiency back and streamline the process and prevent it from becoming overly drawn out and costly.



London is still favoured by many international businesses for resolving their disputes

#### What is the best approach to dispute resolution in the UK for international businesses?

It always surprises me at how many disputes I am involved in where there is a lack of documentation in place to determine how parties resolve their disputes. In circumstances where businesses are increasingly operating internationally with business relationships across the globe, this in itself often leads to a dispute about jurisdiction and/or applicable law before you even get into the meat of the actual dispute between the parties. I would therefore really encourage businesses to revisit the dispute resolution mechanisms in their contracts and consider whether they are fit for purpose and whether they are clear. Another thing to think about from the outset of a dispute arising is the financial aspects of running a litigation. There are so many products in the market now, from legal expense insurance to litigation funding. So having a clear understanding of what might be suitable to mitigate commercial risk when a dispute does arise is hugely beneficial.

#### What other legal considerations should international businesses take into account when filing or managing disputes in the UK?

One of the key issues that often comes up when advising international businesses looking to resolve a dispute in the UK is that we have quite a broad disclosure regime, relative to other jurisdictions. That is definitely a consideration for parties that are looking to come to the UK to file a dispute. In some cases, that may be an advantage but it can increase costs and so parties looking to limit disclosure might turn more toward arbitration.

#### What other reforms or changes are on the horizon that could impact the disputes landscape in the UK?

I work on a lot of digital asset disputes, and that is an area where there are lots of potential developments on the horizon. The UK is developing a regulatory regime concerning digital assets, and the Property (Digital Assets etc) Bill is currently going through the legislative process. The Law Commission has published a number of different consultations in this area, the most recent on conflict of laws and how complex issues of jurisdiction and applicable law should be determined in cases involving decentralised parties and cryptoassets. A lot of other jurisdictions have referenced the work of the Law Commission and English law cases concerning digital assets to inform guiding principles as to how digital asset disputes should be dealt with. So that's an area that we'll be watching.



Jessica Lee is a disputes partner at Brown Rudnick where her practice focuses on fraud and asset recovery and commercial litigation particularly in the digital asset

and technology space. Brown Rudnick specialises in crisis management, litigation, life sciences, technology and brand and reputation protection.

Contact Jessica on (+44) 207 851 6140 or email [jslee@brownrudnick.com](mailto:jslee@brownrudnick.com)

For more information about Brown Rudnick visit [www.brownrudnick.com](http://www.brownrudnick.com)

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INTERVIEW

# Protecting lawyers' independence and rejecting the LGBTQIA+ rights rollback

By Ben Rigby

The IBA Annual Conference brings together leading legal minds to address some of the most pressing issues facing the global legal community – and the IBA's Human Rights Institute (HRI) is prominent in the line-up.

It has been a busy year for the HRI, with Swedish lawyer Anne Ramberg stepping down as co-chair in December, after six years, being praised by fellow co-chair, Mark Stephens CBE, for her "invaluable leadership". Ramberg was succeeded by pioneering Pakistani lawyer Hina Jilani. The HRI's director, Baroness Helena Kennedy LT KC, said that the HRI "looked forward to working ever closer [with Jilani] over the next few years".

Stephens Kennedy, and Jilani are all attending IBA Toronto, where the programme features a diverse range of sessions that tackle critical challenges and highlight the work of distinguished participants from around the world. Several sessions, however, have caught the eye.

One topic close to the HRI's work is threats to the independence of the legal profession, which focuses on the increased harassment, surveillance and prosecution of lawyers in countries ranging from El Salvador and the US to Türkiye, Belarus, Zimbabwe, the Philippines and even EU member states such as Poland and Hungary.

Taking Türkiye as a case in point, the HRI has consistently raised concerns about ongoing legal action against the Istanbul Bar Association's officers by Turkish prosecutors for supporting "propaganda for a terrorist organisation" and "publishing misleading information" following the deaths of two Kurdish journalists, allegedly killed in a drone strike.

The IBAHRI, together with 11 other legal and human rights organisations, intervened in criminal proceedings in Istanbul in September 2025, saying the legal actions violated Türkiye's obligations under human rights law.

Kennedy noted that the Istanbul Bar Association had been acting "well within its statutory duties and its internationally protected role", calling the prosecutions "legally indefensible and politically alarming".

Thierry Wickers, president of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), added: "These actions are not just an attack on the Istanbul Bar Association, they are an attack on the very idea of an independent legal profession."

Wickers, together with Kennedy, fellow barrister Caoilfhionn Gallagher KC, of London's Doughty Street Chambers, Filipino lawyer Neri Colmenares and US criminal defence lawyer Nancy Hollander, will speak at today's mid-morning session Without fear or favour? Independent lawyering under assault.

The session will also highlight US President Donald Trump's executive orders targeting law firms as a stark example of a broader global pattern undermining the independence of the legal profession.

The panel will examine how the legal profession's independence is being systematically eroded as part of wider strategies of democratic backsliding, and discuss global trends in the intimidation of lawyers, best practices for resilience and tools for protection and advocacy, including the Council of Europe's Convention on the Protection of the Profession of Lawyers.

Another notable session is this afternoon's IBA Showcase, Rejecting the rights rollback: advancing LGBTQIA+ equality around the world, which Kennedy will chair alongside Steeves Bujold, of Canadian law firm McCarthy Tétrault, and Brazil's Robert Ellison, who represents the IBA's Diversity and Inclusion Council.

The session, which includes Freshfields' senior partner, Georgia Dawson, as a speaker, will address the erosion of LGBTQIA+ rights and equality in law and practice around the world, drawing on Asian, African Anglophone and Francophone perspectives, among others.

Speakers will explore the historical and political context of the increasing criminalisation, examine the rise of populist governments attacking LGBTQIA+ persons, and call on the international community to resist the attacks against recent advances in LGBTQIA+ equality worldwide.

SESSION: **Without fear or favour? Independent lawyering under assault**

TIME: **Monday 3 November (11:15-12:30)**

LOCATION: **Room 705, Level 700**

SESSION: **IBA HRI Showcase - Rejecting the rights rollback: advancing LGBTQIA+ equality around the world**

TIME: **Monday 3 November (14:30-17:30)**

LOCATION: **Room 716 A, Level 700**

## MEET US AT THE IBA 2025



**VISCHER**  
Zurich | Basel | Geneva



**Raphael Butz**  
Partner



**Moritz Jäggy**  
Partner



**Benedict F. Christ**  
Partner



**Christian Oetiker**  
Partner



**Thomas Weibel**  
Partner



**Roland M. Müller**  
Partner

PREVIEW

# Meet the IBA Officers



## Jaime Carey, IBA President

Jaime Carey is the President of the International Bar Association (IBA), beginning his term on 1 January 2025 and making history as the first Chilean to hold the position in the Association's nearly 80-year history. His presidency forms part of the IBA's first-ever joint leadership arrangement, under which he will serve for one year before being succeeded by Claudio Visco in 2026, a model designed to promote continuity and collaboration.

A member of the IBA for more than four decades, Jaime has held numerous senior positions across the organisation. These include serving as Co-Vice President; Co-Secretary-General; Chair of the Legal Practice Division (LPD) and member of its council; Officer of the Diversity & Inclusion Council; Chair of the Latin American Regional Forum; and Co-Chair of the Corporate & M&A Section.

In his presidency, Jaime emphasises strengthening the IBA's visibility in Africa and Asia, elevating Latin America's presence in the global legal community and leading with themes of unity, collaboration, diversity and integration amid a rapidly changing world. He also continues to focus on artificial intelligence as a key priority, recognising its profound implications for the legal profession and the global rule of law.

Jaime also serves as Senior Partner of Carey, the largest law firm in Chile, where he is co-head of the Tax Group. His practice spans personal and corporate tax planning, local and international tax consulting, project finance, mergers and acquisitions and foreign investment transactions.



## Claudio Visco, IBA President-Elect

Claudio Visco is President-Elect of the IBA for 2025 and will begin his tenure as President in 2026. He sits on the IBA Management Board and has served as Co-Vice-President, Co-Secretary-General, Chair of the Bar Issues Commission, Co-Chair of the Capital Markets Forum, and Chair of the Securities Law Committee. Claudio also serves on the IBA Diversity and Inclusion Council. He has contributed to key IBA guidelines and reports, including the IBA Practical Guide on Business and Human Rights for Business Lawyers, IBA Business and Human Rights Guidance for Bar Associations, and the joint IBA–OECD report on The Role of Lawyers and International Commercial Structures. He is Senior Partner at Italian law firm Lipani Legal & Tax, specialising in banking and finance, corporate and commercial law, energy, litigation and arbitration, and white-collar crime.



## Jörg K Menzer, IBA Vice President

Jörg K Menzer is Vice-President of the IBA. During his time with the IBA, he has held various positions including Secretary-General, Chair of the Section on Public and Professional Interest (SPPI), Deputy Secretary-General, Co-Chair of the European Regional Forum, and member of the Law Firm Management Committee Advisory Board. He also served as Chair of the Online Services Committee, SPPI Vice Chair/Treasurer, and has represented the SPPI on the IBA Management Board and Council. Jörg is a Partner at Noerr, a leading German and European law firm. He has been with Noerr for over two decades, currently specialising in M&A, corporate and state-aid law, focusing on structuring major investments and business expansion projects in Germany and Central and Eastern Europe.



## Deborah Enix-Ross, IBA Secretary-General

Deborah Enix-Ross is Secretary-General of the IBA, having served in many senior roles including as a member of the Management Board, Vice-Chair of the Bar Issues Commission, Chair of the BIC Policy Committee, Member of the Credentials Committee, and IBA Council Member. She is also Senior Advisor in Global Engagement for the International Dispute Resolution Group at Debevoise & Plimpton and a member of the firm's ESG Group. She previously served as Senior Legal Officer and Head of the External Relations and Information Section at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Arbitration and Mediation Center in Geneva. Before joining WIPO, Deborah was Director of International Litigation for the Dispute Analysis and Corporate Recovery Services Group of Price Waterhouse, and earlier served as the American representative to the International Chamber of Commerce International Court of Arbitration for seven years.



## Daniel Del Río, Chair, IBA Legal Practice Division

Daniel Del Río is Chair of the Legal Practice Division (LPD), becoming the first Mexican to hold the position in January 2025. He leads global LPD initiatives, including specialist conferences and sessions at the IBA Annual Conference, and fosters coordination among IBA Divisions to advance legal practice worldwide. He has held senior IBA roles including Vice-Chair, Treasurer, and Assistant-Treasurer of the LPD, and was Co-Chair of the Latin American Regional Forum. He currently sits on the IBA Management Board, contributing to the Association's strategic direction. Daniel is a Partner at SMPS Legal in Mexico City, specialising in corporate law, mergers and acquisitions, and transactional matters. With over 40 years' experience, he was Managing Partner and previously led the corporate and M&A practice at one of Mexico's major law firms, advising medium and large companies on M&A, compliance, international transactions, and business strategy.



## Mark Ellis, IBA Executive Director

Mark Ellis is the Executive Director of the IBA and a Fellow of King's College. He served as Legal Advisor to the Kosovo Commission and advised the OSCE on the creation of Serbia's War Crimes Tribunal. Dr Ellis worked alongside the ICTY, the Iraqi High Tribunal, the Cambodia Tribunal and presently with the ICC. He also initiated the creation of eyeWitness to Atrocities, a mobile phone application designed to capture pictorial evidence of alleged international crimes for use in court. Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Dr Ellis has led the IBA's support efforts, including advocacy for the establishment of a special tribunal for the crime of aggression. As a result, he has been sanctioned by the Russian government. He has published extensively on international humanitarian law, and the development of the rule of law. His latest book, Five Pillars for Humankind, is co-authored with Ambassador David J Scheffer.



## Mark Stephens CBE, Co-Chair IBA's Human Rights Institute Council

Mark Stephens CBE is a consultant at Howard Kennedy and a former President of the Commonwealth Lawyers Association. Mark also sits on the Council and Executive Committee of the CLA. Mark is regularly appointed as an election observer to oversee national elections. Throughout his career, Mark has undertaken some of the most important human rights cases in the United Kingdom and around the world. In addition to representing complex high-profile cases internationally, he has been retained by several governments, among them the Republic of Cyprus, Greece, Jamaica, Libya, Mauritius and Russia, and has litigated in countries as diverse as Antigua, Australia, France, India, Iraq, Iran, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Samoa, Singapore, Thailand and the United States.



## Hina Jilani, Co-Chair IBA's Human Rights Institute Council

Hina Jilani is a pioneering lawyer and pro-democracy campaigner. Born in Lahore, Hina has dedicated her career to the protection and promotion of human rights, particularly those of women, children, minorities and prisoners – including those jailed for political reasons. In 1980, she established Pakistan's first all-female law firm and co-founded the Women's Action Forum, which campaigns for women's rights. She was also a founder of Dastak, a shelter providing support to victims of gender-based violence. She has conducted many landmark cases setting new standards for human rights in Pakistan. Hina has been an advocate of the Supreme Court of Pakistan since 1992. She is also a member of the Elders and is the recipient of numerous awards in recognition of her life-long contributions to human rights, including the Millennium Peace Prize for Women in 2001.



## Baroness Helena Kennedy LT KC, Director, IBA Human Rights Institute

Helena is one of the United Kingdom's most distinguished lawyers having practised at the bar for more than 50 years. She was created a life peer in 1997, is a Founding Member of the Bonavero Institute of Human Rights at Oxford and chairs the High Level Panel of Legal Experts on Media Freedom. Helena was awarded the Order of the Thistle, the highest honour in Scotland. In 2021, when Afghanistan fell to the Taliban, Helena evacuated 102 women judges and prosecutors who were on death lists by raising the funds, securing safe houses, chartering planes and resettling the women around the world. The women were evacuated along with their families, bringing the total number of those moved to safety to 508. She currently works for the President of Ukraine addressing potential war crimes committed by Russia.



## Babatunde Ajibade, Chair, IBA Section on Public and Professional Interest

Dr Babatunde Ajibade is Chair of the IBA Section on Public and Professional Interest (SPPI). He is Managing Partner of SPA Ajibade & Co, a leading corporate and commercial law firm with offices in Lagos, Ibadan and Abuja, Nigeria. A dispute resolution specialist, he has substantial expertise in commercial litigation and arbitration. Before becoming SPPI Chair, Babatunde has held numerous IBA positions, including African Liaison Officer for the Law Firm Management Committee; Chair of the African Regional Forum; and Deputy Secretary General of the IBA Council. He was also Chairman of the Judiciary Committee of the Nigerian Bar Association, Vice-President of the ICC Arbitration Commission's Steering Committee until June 2024, and is a member of the ICC's Africa Commission, Director of ICC Nigeria, Director of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce International Arbitration Centre (LACIAC), and member of the Lagos Court of Arbitration (LCA).



## Steven Richman, Chair, Bar Issues Commission

Steven Richman is Chair of the Bar Issues Commission (BIC). He additionally sits on the IBA Management Board and is a Member of the Advisory Board of the IBA Professional Wellbeing Commission, among other roles. Steven is the IBA Council Member representative for the American Bar Association (ABA) and a Member of Clark Hill where he practises in the areas of domestic and international commercial law, including mediation, litigation and arbitration, and appellate work, and international law. He also chairs the ABA Centre for Human Rights and is the past Chair of the ABA International Law Section and past ABA representative to the United Nations. Book publications include the Photography Law Handbook, and he has written and spoken extensively in the areas of international law, business and human rights, contracts, litigation and arbitration, and professional responsibility.

# Delegate Views

What are you most looking forward to at the conference?

**Nolvia Serrano**  
CMO  
TR Capital  
El Salvador



In El Salvador, we have become a technology hub. That's why I'm interested in learning how the industry is approaching new technologies such as blockchain and cryptocurrency, among other areas. Our clients are looking for ways to make their processes more efficient and we are serving that need with our technology.

**Christian Omoru**  
Partner  
Orbis Chancery Solicitors  
Nigeria



I'm looking to learn about new developments in the legal world, particularly in the oil and gas industry. For 17 years, I worked as a director of services at an oil and gas production and exploration company and now I'm in private practice, serving clients in these areas. Law and regulations are always changing.

**Jie Lian**  
Senior Partner  
PC Woo & Zhonglun  
China



The highlight of the conference for me is the closing party. Why? Because you have spent the week making new friends. At the closing party, you can let down your guard and truly interact with your new friends. It sends your new business relationships to a new level. Don't miss it.

**Elias Tarbay Reveron**  
Partner  
Lega Abogados  
Venezuela



I'm hoping first to learn from the conference; to understand the trends and all the new things that are happening in the legal world. This is the best place to learn about these things because every legal expert from around the world is there. I'm also looking to connect with colleagues around the globe.

**Christina Lehm**  
Partner  
Nelson Mullins  
United States



It's all about the connections here. It's about meeting new and old friends. I'm also excited to attend the foreign direct investment session because that's my practice area. I want to see how European lawyers are viewing foreign direct investment in the United States. If I have time, I will explore all Toronto has to offer.

**Timur Bondaryev**  
Founding & Senior  
Partner  
Arzinger  
Ukraine



I'm looking forward to meeting new friends and identifying new opportunities. This is a unique and excellent platform to connect with global lawyers. Also to raise the flag of Ukraine to remind everyone that the war should be stopped as soon as possible.

**Rasem Kamal**  
Managing Partner, Kamal  
& Associates  
Palestine



I'm looking forward to broadening my mind and horizons by listening to new ideas and taking risks. For example, at one prior IBA meeting, I heard about the value of growth beyond local borders. This discussion motivated our firm to open a new office in Saudi Arabia. When we think only local, we think narrowly.

**Zenobia du Toit**  
Director  
Miller du Toit Cloete  
South Africa



There are at least 40 friends I want to meet and interact with this week. My last IBA conference was in Washington DC about 10 years ago and so I'm very excited to be back and catch up with people. I also look forward to the parties; I am invited to about 10 parties and will do my best to go to as many of these as I can.

**Claudia Mathiasen**  
Managing Partner  
Winslow Advokatfirma  
Denmark



I'm looking for something to surprise me with broader perspectives than I get from my colleagues at home such as new ways of approaching clients. I'm also looking for colleagues to share with me how they use AI in their work. Every network I am in, I ask about AI, and I learn new ways to leverage this technology.

**Miguel Gallardo Guerra**  
Partner  
BGBG Law  
Mexico



I'm looking forward to learning about new technologies, including AI. I'm also looking for new ways to manage law firms. Our firm is at the leading edge of the market, but we must be better in the ways that we become more dynamic for young lawyers. Hybrid work is here to stay.

**Nanette C. Heide**  
Partner  
Troutman Pepper Locke  
United States



I'm looking forward to reconnecting with my community of international lawyers in the global mergers and acquisition ecosystem. It's also exciting to make new connections and hear what's happening in jurisdictions around the world. My hope is that we work to understand how we can all collaborate.

**Edith Nordmann**  
Managing Partner  
ACG International  
Netherlands



What I'm looking for is the international exchange of ideas between lawyers and friends on how to handle the new generation of lawyers. How do we get them as interested and enthusiastic about being a lawyer as we are, while maintaining their work life balance? How do we create the spark for them.

PARTNER CONTENT

## Doing business in the UAE

# A world-class commercial hub

The UAE's strategic location and legal ecosystem provide a competitive platform for conducting business regionally and globally, says Sadiq Jafar of HadeF & Partners

**What are the opportunities for international businesses in the UAE?**

International businesses continue to set up, and expand, operations in the UAE. The UAE economy continues on an impressive upward trajectory, becoming ever more sophisticated and attractive to international businesses and investors. Abu Dhabi, with a significantly higher GDP than any of the six other Emirates due to its hydrocarbon wealth, is rapidly diversifying beyond oil and gas by way of substantial investments in renewable energy, technology, advanced manufacturing and financial services. Dubai remains a highly dynamic commercial, transportation, financial services and tourism hub, while Ras Al Khaimah is growing as an attractive destination for tourism, manufacturing, logistics and business services. The UAE provides simple, flexible frameworks for establishment and expansion: 100% foreign ownership in most sectors, competitive 9% corporate tax, and streamlined licensing remove historical barriers. Beyond the business advantages, residents enjoy exceptional quality of life with world-class infrastructure, political stability, safety and excellent international connectivity. These factors position the UAE as an ideal hub for conducting business across the Middle East, Africa and beyond.

**What is the impact of global trade tensions on the business environment?**

Global trade tensions have tended to bolster the UAE's position as an essential international business hub. While US tariffs are applicable (in common with other nations), the UAE has turned the challenges into opportunities. For example, tariff differentials between Chinese goods and UAE-origin products makes the UAE an increasingly attractive destination for companies reconfiguring supply chains. The UAE's world-class logistics infrastructure and strategic geographic position provides practical solutions for businesses navigating the complexities of the current global trade environment. There is unprecedented wealth migration to the UAE, as major corporations and high-net-worth investors expand their connectivity to the UAE based on a range of considerations, including stability and security, favourable business climate, and robust investment and business partnership opportunities.



Dubai remains a highly dynamic commercial, transportation, financial services and tourism hub

**How can international businesses best structure investment in the UAE?**

The UAE offers international businesses exceptional flexibility in structuring investments, and two primary pathways each present distinct advantages. Mainland company structures provide wide access to the entire UAE market. Companies can obtain the required ancillary licenses to enable their operations across all seven emirates and the ability to bid for government contracts. The UAE allows 100% foreign ownership of mainland entities in most sectors. Meanwhile, free zone company structures offer additional benefits for certain types of business operation. The benefits include 0% corporate tax on qualifying income, streamlined establishment procedures, and flexible real estate and logistical options. Many sophisticated investors elect for hybrid structures, establishing free zone entities for international operations and tax optimisation, while maintaining an appropriate mainland presence to meet their domestic market objectives. HadeF & Partners has long and deep experience of UAE corporate, commercial and regulatory law which enables us to guide international businesses in identifying the optimal structure to achieve their specific objectives.

**How would you characterise the dispute resolution environment?**

The UAE offers a sophisticated and business-friendly dispute resolution environment. International businesses have the benefit of choice and flexibility. The DIFC and ADGM Courts operate under common law principles in the English language, providing familiar procedures and robust enforcement mechanisms which inspire international confidence. For clients preferring arbitration, the UAE has expert institutions, including DIAC and ArbitrationAD, as well as international bodies such as the ICC. The environment is increasingly pro-arbitration and pro-enforcement. The UAE courts consistently uphold arbitration agreements, adopting a non-interventionist approach towards arbitral awards. The UAE's accession to the New York Convention in 2006 was an important milestone enabling the recognition and enforcement of foreign awards.

**What other imminent reforms should businesses be aware of?**

The UAE continues to implement significant reforms and enhancements aligned with its economic diversification and Vision 2031 objectives. For example, corporate tax regulations continue to evolve, with ongoing clarifications on exemptions, free zone qualifications, and compliance requirements. Businesses must monitor guidance from the Federal Tax Authority. Data protection and cybersecurity frameworks are strengthening. The UAE is moving closer to international benchmarks like GDPR, requiring efficient compliance systems. Emiratisation requirements continue to expand, with increasing quotas for UAE national employment across sectors and company types. Businesses must plan workforce strategies accordingly. Sustainability and ESG regulations are gaining prominence as the UAE pursues net-zero targets and green economy initiatives. Expect enhanced environmental compliance, reporting requirements, and incentives for sustainable practices. Commercial legislation continues to modernise, with potential reforms to insolvency frameworks, commercial agency law, and corporate governance.



Sadiq Jafar (s.jafar@hadepartners.com) is Managing Partner of HadeF & Partners and has extensive corporate and commercial law experience. Sadiq and his colleagues in Dubai and Abu Dhabi are well positioned to advise on the continually evolving UAE legal landscape. Friends from the IBA are invited to contact and/or visit HadeF & Partners whenever the UAE appears on their itineraries or client agendas.

HadeF & Partners

INTERVIEW

# ‘It’s a real thrill and we’re delighted to have colleagues join us here’

IBA Canada committee co-chairs Karen Sargeant, Ontario managing partner at Fasken Martineau DuMoulin, and Shane Freitag, senior counsel at Borden Ladner Gervais, preview IBA Canada 2025

## How does it feel to be the co-chairs of the Host Committee for the 2025 IBA Annual Conference in Toronto, Canada?

**Karen:** Proud. My first experience with the IBA Annual Conference was last year in Mexico City. I was blown away by the number of law firms and lawyers in attendance, and how eager everyone was to meet one another. To be bringing that number of lawyers from around the world to Toronto, a year later, is exciting. And even more exciting with the world watching the World Series at the same time.

**Shane:** I completely agree with that. It’s the first time that an Annual Conference is being held in Toronto. So it’s a real thrill and we’re delighted to have colleagues join us here – in what we consider our world-class city.

## What has it been like to organise the conference?

**Shane:** Strangely fulfilling. If you have thousands of lawyers showing up on your doorstep, you’re going to have a few issues to sort out, but all the law firms in Toronto have been incredibly supportive. Whenever we’ve had an issue, somebody has raised their hand up and found a way to help resolve that issue. Overall, it’s been a very gratifying process.

**Karen:** The firms have been great. One of the first big things that we needed to do was get all the big firms in Toronto on board with sponsoring and paying for the host city reception. And almost immediately, the vast majority of the firms said yes, with no questions asked. So as Shane said, it was gratifying to see all of the firms come together in that way really, really quickly. And with the exception of asking some logistical questions, most people have really just left it in our hands, and Shane’s firm has done a phenomenal job supporting that. We are all usually fierce competitors, because this is a small legal market when you compare it to the world stage, but we all worked together on this.



Karen Sargeant

**Shane:** There was a huge degree of collegiality, which is very typical with the IBA. We park our competition at the door, so it’s incredibly positive when we get an opportunity to cooperate with our colleagues in this way.

## So what sessions or speakers are you most looking forward to this week?

**Karen:** I was excited for the opening ceremony, as I was really looking forward to hear from former Supreme Court Justice Rosalie Abella. All of the firms here in Toronto have really cooperated in helping the IBA identify speakers for the various topics, so that has been really neat to see as well.

**Shane:** Any of the keynote speakers are going to be amazing, we have Jeff Skiles today (Monday morning) who was the co-pilot of US Airways Flight 1549 that landed on the Hudson River. We have John Manley speaking at the group members’ breakfast and Marco Mendicino, who is speaking at the Legal Practice Division lunch. From a substantive law perspective, some of the things that I’m really interested in will be the Legal Practice Division showcase on Tuesday (Killing the news: a global phenomenon) about how to ensure there is a free and uncensored press. One of the biggest issues facing the legal profession is artificial intelligence and during the week there are 20 sessions on different aspects of artificial intelligence, another 11 sessions on ESG, and at least eight sessions on climate change.

**Karen:** All of the speakers really do represent a nice cross section of the country and bring different political views as well, so there should be some good discourse that comes from that.

## What other highlights should attendees look forward to?

**Shane:** Many firms are having receptions around the city, including my



Shane Freitag



Toronto Canada

firm and Karen’s firm. We have the host committee reception, which is on the Tuesday night at Roy Thomson Hall, where we’ll be honouring Jaime Carey, the current president of the IBA, for his years of dedication to the IBA and the rule of law.

**Karen:** I certainly don’t have a handle on all of the events that are happening, but the ones I do know about, they’re all at very interesting locations. My firm’s big event, for example, is at the Hockey Hall of Fame. So that’ll be a great event. Shane’s firm’s big event is at Casa Loma, which is a historic castle about four kilometres north of downtown. We’re doing a small reception for managing partners at the Toronto Film Festival building. So there is a lot going on in a lot of different places.

**Shane:** There are events at the CN Tower, the Art Gallery of Ontario. People are definitely taking advantage of the different venues in the city, and the charm of this is, unlike lots of other cities, most of this is concentrated in downtown core, so people will be able to walk to the different venues. Nothing is more than 15 minutes away for the most part, unless we go a little further out. It’s really the first IBA annual conference we’ve had in a number of years where people will be able to just walk around from venue to venue.

## Given there is so much going on, what are your tips for delegates to get the most out of their time in Toronto?

**Karen:** Divide and conquer. If you’re coming with a number of colleagues, yes you want to spend some time with them, but if there are, say, three of you, take the opportunity to go to three receptions versus all of you just going to one. That way then as a group, you’ll be able to see more and meet more people.

## What do you hope people will take away from their time in Toronto?

**Shane:** I hope they leave with a small sense of the depth and breadth of Canada and a desire to return to Toronto and other parts of Canada. It’s an amazing country with a very safe environment. We’re proudly Canadian and we’re generally the friendliest people on Earth.

## What are your top recommendations for IBA attendees when visiting Toronto?

**Karen:** We have world class restaurants here. People don’t realise that. We’re not quite on par with Paris or New York, but we’re pretty darn close. I don’t have a particular recommendation, but there will be something that will align with your interest. There will be receptions at a lot of these nice restaurants. So when you’re choosing your reception, choose your restaurant. Niagara Falls is also about an hour and a half away from Toronto. It’s phenomenal and a wonder of the world, so it’s worth the drive down there and there are tours that can take you.

**Shane:** Given the diversity of the city – the last time I checked about half the population of Toronto was born outside of Canada – there’s every type of food you can think of. Having all of these communities together has brought about an amazing fusion between Canadian food and all these other international places. There are also amazing museums, like the Royal Ontario Museum and the Art Gallery of Ontario. A particular favourite of mine is going to the McMichael Museum just outside Toronto featuring the Group of Seven. There are amazing markets and neighbourhoods – St. Lawrence Market, Kensington Market, Chinatown, Greektown. So there are a lot of places to visit, so I would say take it in and get a feel for it.

**Karen:** We also have a lot of sports going on in the city. The Toronto Maple Leafs ice hockey team is in town this week and plays tonight, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday and the Toronto Raptors basketball team played last night and plays again on Tuesday.

# 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



## Monday

09:30 – 10:45

**Morning Keynote Address: Jeff Skiles – Miracle on the Hudson**

Room 701 A+B, Level 700

On 15 January 2009, US Airways Flight 1549 lost power in both engines after striking geese shortly after take-off from New York's LaGuardia Airport. With no safe route back, captain Chesley Sullenberger and first officer Jeff Skiles guided the plane to a controlled water landing on the Hudson River. Skiles, a veteran pilot with 25,000 flight hours, credits the successful ditching to teamwork, rigorous training and the collective professionalism of everyone across the US Airways organisation.



First officer Jeff Skiles

13:15-14:15

**A conversation with... Sir Bill Browder KCMG**

Room 718 A, Level 700

Sir William (Bill) Browder KCMG, who will be interviewed by the IBA's executive director, Mark Ellis, was once the largest foreign investor in Russia until being expelled in 2005 after exposing corruption in state-owned firms. In 2008, his lawyer, Sergei Magnitsky, uncovered a \$230m tax fraud by Russian officials, was arrested, tortured and died in prison in 2009. Since then, Browder has led the Global Magnitsky Campaign, urging governments worldwide to impose targeted sanctions – including visa bans and asset freezes – on human rights abusers and corrupt officials.

14:30-17:30

**IBA Human Rights Institute Showcase – Rejecting the rights rollback: advancing LGBTQIA+ equality around the world**

Room 716 A, Level 700

An array of experts from across the world will examine the growing erosion of LGBTQIA+ rights amid a surge in discriminatory laws and policies. This showcase session will trace the historical and political roots of this backlash, including the rise of populist movements which are promoting persecution and discrimination. It will also consider how the international legal community can respond collectively to defend and advance global LGBTQIA+ rights. Speakers include Georgia

Dawson, senior partner at Freshfields in London; Njeri Gateru, executive director of the National Gay & Lesbian Human Rights Commission in Nairobi; and Frank Mugisha, executive director of Sexual Minorities Uganda International in Kampala.

## Tuesday

13:15-14:15

**A conversation with... Bob Woodward**

Room 718 A, Level 700

Bob Woodward, associate editor of The Washington Post, is one of the most influential investigative journalists of the modern era. Famous for uncovering the Watergate scandal with Carl Bernstein, he has since written about ten US presidents, producing 23 bestselling books, 17 of them reaching the number one spot. Known for his meticulous reporting and unparalleled access to political insiders, Woodward, who has won the Pulitzer Prize twice, continues to reveal the inner workings of power. His 2022 audiobook, The Trump Tapes, features 20 unedited interviews with Donald Trump.

14:30 – 17:30

**Legal Practice Division showcase – killing the news: a global phenomenon**

Room 716 A, Level 700

Senior journalists, media lawyers and press freedom campaigners will gather to discuss the growing threats to press freedom and the rule of law worldwide. With more than 2,000 journalists killed in the past two decades and harassment – particularly of women – rising both online and in courtrooms, the session will explore how intimidation, judicial harassment and a culture of impunity are silencing the media and consider how journalism's essential role in sustaining democracy can be defended. Speakers will include Karen Kaiser, general counsel at the Associated Press in New York and chair of the IBA Media Law Committee; Paul Caruana Galizia, investigative reporter at the Financial Times in London; and Jason Rezaian, director of press freedom initiatives at The Washington Post in Washington DC.

PARTNER CONTENT

Doing business in Australia

## Navigating Australia's M&A landscape

Australia remains an attractive market for foreign investment, but international businesses must be aware of changing merger rules, says Adam Strauss of Strauss & Partners Law



Australia remains an attractive place for international businesses to invest

TARAS VYSHNYA / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

**What are the biggest opportunities for international investment in Australia right now?**

The biggest investment opportunities in Australia follow the big global investment themes such as energy transition, critical minerals, infrastructure – particularly digital infrastructure, such as data centres – and technology. The Australian government is also investing heavily in defence, and encouraging investment in local manufacturing, to boost Australia's sovereign industrial capacity. Australia has an investment shortfall in all of these areas and interest from international investors has been strong. However, investors have become more selective about which assets are worthy of investment, with some of the hype that was present in some sectors such as the renewable energy sector now dissipating.

**How would you describe the general business environment and culture in Australia?**

Australia is generally regarded as an attractive place for international business investment. While the government could be more ambitious in terms of economic and productivity reforms, Australia retains many features valued by international investors. We have a well-regulated and politically stable environment, a cohesive and multicultural society, an independent judiciary operating in a transparent and impartial legal system, and an economy with stable growth, relatively low inflation and high living standards.

**To what extent does Australia welcome foreign investment?**

Foreign investment is very welcome and underpins much of our economy. However, Australia is not immune from the broader geopolitical environment. Political and national security concerns now increasingly play a role in assessing foreign investment proposals. Most foreign business investment requires approval from the Foreign Investment Review Board (FIRB), if relevant financial thresholds are satisfied. Acquisitions made in critical infrastructure, defence and certain other sensitive sectors, and all investment by foreign

government investors – such as sovereign wealth funds – requires approval irrespective of value. FIRB approvals can also apply to internal reorganisations and international M&A transactions, such as where the target has downstream Australian businesses. So the FIRB rules operate very broadly and give the government the means to review many transactions. FIRB evaluates foreign investment proposals through a 'national interest' lens, where national security, tax and other economic considerations can be relevant. FIRB is now asking for more information from investors, such as data handling and tax matters, and will more frequently impose conditions on approvals. The added scrutiny makes approval timeframes unpredictable. While the government has said it will streamline the approval process, this remains a work in progress. Most M&A transactions are approved within six-to-eight weeks of notification and sensitive acquisitions can take much longer.

**What impact will the recent merger notification reforms have on the M&A landscape?**

Australia's voluntary merger control regime is moving to a mandatory notification regime from 1 January 2026. Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) notification and clearance will become mandatory for M&A transactions meeting applicable monetary and control thresholds. The ACCC process operates separately from FIRB, so some transactions may require filings for both regulators. The new rules will prohibit transactions from closing until ACCC approval is obtained. Transactions will be subject to a two phase review process. Transactions which do not raise competition concerns should be approved within the 30 business day first phase. While similar mandatory regimes operate internationally, these reforms will make a significant change to Australian M&A practice. Currently, we operate under a 'voluntary' regime where only those transactions raising potential competition issues are notified to the ACCC. The new rules will capture many transactions that would not typically be notified under the voluntary regime,

including international M&A transactions that have no anti-competitive effect in Australia. Merger parties will need to factor the new ACCC process and its associated cost and delay into their transaction planning, along with FIRB approvals, if required.

**What other key legal and regulatory reforms do international businesses in Australia face?**

While the government has indicated that it wishes to reduce the regulatory burden on business, I think that is unlikely in the near term. For example, we have already seen – or expect to see – a raft of new regulation to deal with the digital environment. Other critical sectors of the economy, such as energy and financial services, continue to be subject to extensive regulation. In addition to regulatory change, there are significant shifts in community expectations of business, which are now subject to greater accountability on ESG performance. Businesses which fall short of community expectations and their 'social licence' can face intense media and political scrutiny and suffer reputational damage.



Adam Strauss is principal at Strauss & Partners Law in Sydney, a boutique commercial law firm specialising in corporate transactions and foreign investment work.

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IBA Human Rights Institute Showcase will consider how the international legal community can advance global LGBTQIA+ rights.

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# 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



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## Wednesday

13:15-14:15

A conversation about the state of international law under the new Trump era

Room 718 A, Level 700

This panel, moderated by the IBA's executive director, Mark Ellis, features a top line-up of leading figures in international law. They include Arnold & Porter partner John B. Bellinger III, former legal adviser to the US Department of State under Secretary Condoleezza Rice; former Canadian minister of justice and attorney general Irwin Cotler; and Judge Kimberly Prost, who serves on the International Criminal Court and previously held senior roles at the UN and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. The line-up is completed by Alberto Mora, a senior fellow at Harvard Kennedy School's Carr Center for Human Rights Policy and former general counsel of the US Navy; Michael Scharf, associate dean for global affairs at Case Western Reserve University School of Law; and Beth Van Schaack, Stanford Law School professor and former US ambassador-at-large for global criminal justice.

14:30-17:30

Bar Issues Committee Showcase – Time to let go – defining legal services and the role of lawyers

Room 716 A, Level 700

Chaired by Bar Issues Committee (BIC) officer Claudia Amore, executive director of the Colombian firm Cámara de Servicios Legales – ANDI, this session will explore how the legal profession is evolving in light of the growing provision of traditional legal services by non-lawyers and other licensed professionals. Among the speakers are Christina Blacklaws, former president of the Law Society of England and Wales and founder of Blacklaws Consulting; Teresa Donnelly, president of the Federation of Law Societies of Canada; Vincent Maurel, a partner at KPMG Avocats in Paris and a member of the executive board of the Conseil National des Barreaux, the national representative body for French lawyers; and Tshepo Shabangu, vice chair of the IBA Bar Issues Commission and past president of the Law Society of South Africa.



US President Donald Trump's impact on international law will be assessed during Wednesday's lunchtime session.

BRIAN JASON / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

## Thursday

08:00-09:15

Section on Public and Professional Interest Awards breakfast

Room 5, Level 500

This breakfast hosted by the Section on Public and Professional Interest (SPPI) will feature the presentation of three awards: the IBA Award for Outstanding Contribution by a Legal Practitioner to Human Rights, the IBA Outstanding Young Lawyer Award, and the IBA Pro Bono Award.

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.

## Friday

0900 - 1500

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 covering: The future of multilateralism: international law and institutions in an era of impunity and great power competition; Civility and the legal profession; and Sanctions: economic warfare and the law. They 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](http://ibanet.org).



United Arab Emirates  
Abu Dhabi | Dubai | Sharjah

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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## Meet our IBA Team



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