



FOREWORD AND SEASON'S GREETINGS OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JUDGES

Dear Colleagues,

a new year is about to start and I hope 2025 will be an year of peace, serenity and constructive work for all of you.

The IAJ 66th annual meeting in Cape Town was a perfect occasion for strengthening the bonds among judicial associations throughout the world and for planning future common initiatives. The alterations of our Statutes which were adopted by the Central Council will help to ensure a more efficient management of our time and work. At the same time, updating the amounts of our annual fees will certainly allow us to continue and to strengthen our many activities in defence of judicial independence worldwide.

Beside this, I think we can be particularly satisfied with the ongoing co-operation with Prof. Margaret Satterthwaite, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers. As you surely recall, she honoured us with her presence at our last annual meeting. The presentation she gave in Cape Town and the subsequent debate with the Assembly and the representatives of our four Regional Groups, allowed us to increase our level of knowledge about the attempts that in many legal systems the executive powers are making to limit judicial independence. Furthermore, we managed to obtain the UN Special Rapporteur's full endorsement of our initiative to name January 11th as the UN Day of Judicial Independence.

An impressive number of international events concerning the judiciary have taken place during these last months and saw the IAJ and its Regional Groups as protagonists of high-level debates on the most delicate topics in current times. Let's think, for instance, about the issue of the impact of the use of AI on judicial activities, which was debated during the international conference held in Cape Town, as well as during the meetings of the 1st and the 4th Study Commissions (see, respectively, [International Conference – Cape Town 2024](#), [Conclusion 1st SC](#), [Conclusion 4th SC](#)).

The legal protection of the environment was studied during an important international conference held on 6th September in Baku (Azerbaijan) on "Law and Climate," under the organisation of the Union of the Judges of Azerbaijan and the IAJ (see <https://www.iaj-uim.org/iuw/international-conference-in-baku-on-law-climate/>), and on 20th September, in Perugia (Italy), an International Forum on "High Culture of Jurisdiction" was organised by the "Luigi Severini" International Centre, in partnership with the International Association of Judges (IAJ) and the Society of Comparative Legislation (see <https://www.iaj-uim.org/iuw/international-forum-high-culture-of-jurisdiction-perugia-italy-20th-september-2024/>). Furthermore, the IAJ co-hosted an international conference of judges from Central America and Europe, which took place in Berlin (Germany),

from September 9th to 10th (see <https://www.iaj-uim.org/iuw/international-conference-of-judges-from-central-america-and-europe-in-berlin-9-10-september-2024/>).

Concerns about questions related to judicial independence are currently raised by the judiciaries of a number of member associations, such as Argentina, Armenia, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Kiribati, Mexico, Peru, Tunisia, Poland, etc. Some of the declarations and resolutions relating to such topics are available in this newsletter; in any case, all of the relevant documents are published in our website (see <https://www.iaj-uim.org/iuw/statements-declarations-and-resolutions/>).

At the Secretariat-General we are currently working on the organisation of next year's meetings in Casablanca (21st-25th April), Yerevan (8th-10th May), Toronto (15th-16th May), Quito (25th-28th May) and Baku (12th-16th October). Many thanks to the wonderful colleagues from Morocco, Armenia, Canada, Ecuador and Azerbaijan: it is a pleasure and honour to work with people who are so committed to make possible for judges of the whole world to meet and to exchange views and ideas on our mission and values.

On behalf of the IAJ Presidency Committee and of the Secretariat-General I wish to you and your families a very happy new year!



Giacomo Oberto
Secretary-General of the IAJ

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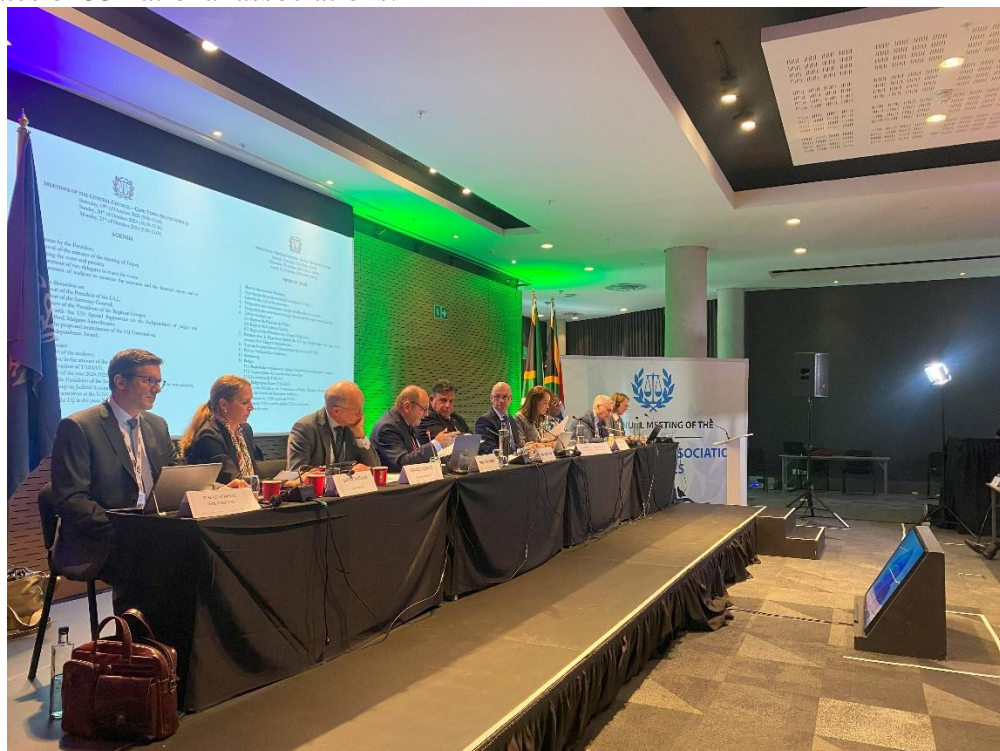
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66TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JUDGES (October 2024)



From **October 17th to the 23rd** the South African Association of Judges (JOASA) hosted the 66th IAJ annual meeting. In attendance:

- the President, Mr. Đuro Sessa;
- the First Vice-President, Mr. Walter Barone;
- the Vice-Presidents Mr. Mikael Sjoberg, Ms. Allyson Duncan, Ms. Marcelle Kouassi, Ms. Sabine Matejka and Mr. Roland Kempfle;
- the Honorary Presidents Mr. José Igreja Matos, Mr. Christophe Régnard, Mrs. Maja Tratnik, Mr. Gerhard Reissner;
- the Secretary-General, Mr. Giacomo Oberto and the Deputy Secretaries-General, Mr. Lucio Aschettino, Mr. Galileo D'Agostino and Mr. Raffaele Gargiulo;
- the delegates of 53 national associations.



President Sessa opened the meeting of the Central Council at 9.15, by thanking the South African Association, welcoming all delegates present and especially welcoming the guests and observers: Ms.

Margaret Satterthwaite, UN Special rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, Mr. Marc Schmitz, President of the International Union of Judicial Officers ([click here for the article on UIHJ website](#)), Ms. Ngozika Okaisabor, Member of the IBA Judges' Forum Advisory Board, Mr. Olukayode Ariwoola, President of the Nigerian association of judges and former Chief Justice, Ms. Monica Bolnaan Dongban-Mensem, President of the Court of Appeal of Nigeria.

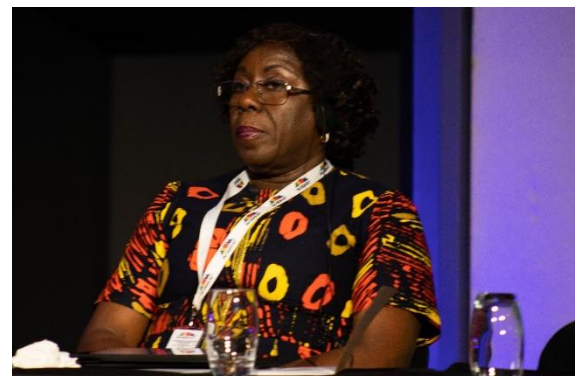
President Sessa stressed that during this last year he had the privilege to cooperate with the Venice Commission, with the ODIHR in Warsaw and with the Council of Europe on issues linked to the independence of the judiciary, such as the evaluation of judges in Poland and the vetting procedure in Moldova, having thus the opportunity to advocate the stances of the IAJ and the EAJ on the topic.

Ms. Duncan, President of the ANAO Group, reported that Judge Saram, who last year received the Judicial Independence Award, was now resident in the USA. Therefore, it had been possible to consign her the plaque that last year was accepted on her behalf by Ms. Mona Lynch. Ms. Duncan showed the Central Council a picture of that moment and conveyed the assembly the gratitude of Judge Sarem.



Mr. Barone, President of the Ibero-American Group mentioned the presentation on security and environment of the judiciary that he gave upon invitation of the judges of Argentina, the 3rd summit of judges in Ecuador that he attended invited by the local association and the seminar on the fight against corruption organized by the Portuguese association. He also thanked the German Association for the organization of a conference of judges of Central America, where he delivered a speech.

Ms. Kouassi, President of the African Group, reported on the case of the Tunisian Association, whose delegates were impeded by their Government to attend the Group's meeting in Liberia. The Group approved a resolution on this case, to which the Tunisian Government replied stating that the prohibition was due to the workload of the concerned judges.



Mr. Sjoberg, President of the European Association of Judges, highlighted that the EAJ was a very committed Group that in Warsaw, this year, adopted 4 resolution (on Slovenia, Spain, Hungary and Italy) and in Cape Town, in its meeting the day before, 3 (on Sweden, Bulgaria and Armenia).

Meeting with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, Prof. Margaret Satterthwaite

Professor Satterthwaite took the floor and thanked the Presidency Committee, the Central Council and the General Secretariat for the invitation. She then recalled the mandate of her office and the procedures (communications, country visits, thematic reports...) and announced that her next report to the Human Rights Council would focus on indigenous justice while the report for the General Assembly will deal with the impact of artificial intelligence on the administration of justice (full speech available on the IAJ website: <https://www.iaj-uim.org/iuw/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/241019-Satterthwaite-IAJ.pdf>). She encouraged the delegations to let her know the best approach to help them minimizing the risk of retaliation or backlashes.

Ms. Dorota Zabłudowska recalled the origins of the initiative to designate January 11 as International Judicial Independence Day and pointed out that the establishment of international days requires a vote of governments and therefore makes it necessary for national associations, where possible, to solicit the support of their respective governments. Ideally, a lead State should be found on each continent, and then Poland could coordinate the initiative.



Mr. Sjoberg took the floor and explained to the UN Special Rapporteur that the EAJ is the biggest Regional Group within the IAJ and the largest judges' association in the European continent. It is very active and this year approved several resolutions dealing with the issue of salaries or the composition of judicial councils. In many countries, legislative and executive powers join forces to constrain judicial independence. Mr. Sjoberg mentioned also the case of Turkey where, after the 2016 attempted coup, hundreds of judges were arrested and the national association, Yarsav, was dissolved. President Sessa added that on the IAJ website a special section was devoted to initiatives in favor of Murat Arslan, the last President of Yarsav sentenced to a 10-year jail term due to his commitment to an independent judiciary and human rights. Mr. Sessa underlined also that in several criminal proceedings against Turkish judges, the EAJ was qualified as a terrorist organization and for this reason the EAJ's Board members abstain from travelling to that country.

Mr. Barone thanked Professor Satterthwaite for attending the conference on Central and Latino-America in Berlin. The most serious situation to illustrate her now was that of Mexico, where a judicial reform passed according to which judges will be elected by popular vote, in contradiction with the principle that only a judicial career can guarantee independence. The reform will affect all levels of the judiciary and the judges currently in office will also have to participate to the elections: should they lose, they will not receive any compensation or retirement contribution. Mr. Barone noted that it was essential to monitor the risk of contagion, since the President of Colombia announced the evaluation of an identical reform. The second serious case was that of Guatemala, with the systematic persecution of judges and prosecutors, who are criminally charged for the decisions they take. As a consequence, many of them are fleeing the country and asking asylum abroad. The third case was that of the international arrest order signed by the General Prosecutor of Venezuela against some Argentinean judges. This sets a dangerous precedent because it is unacceptable to be threatened with arrest for deciding in a case. Lastly, Mr. Barone listed some common difficulties: the threats to safety; the legislative initiatives that affect the retirement systems, the excessive workload and the risk of

burnout; the salaries that are not adjusted with inflation.

Ms. Duncan noted that challenges to independence could take a number of forms, from the direct threat to life, as in Afghanistan, to the reforms imposed by Governments, but some of them are insidious and daily, such as the workload or the reluctance to address salary stagnation. She then referred to two cases, both related to the USA. The first was a legislative issue: on August 1st, 2024, the Senate established 66 new federal judgeships: the problem with the bill stemmed from the nature of US system where federal judges are appointed by the President. To avoid the risk that all the vacancies be filled by one President, the bill has been modified establishing that the new judicial seats will be created incrementally over 10 years starting in January 2025, after the November 2024 presidential election. The second case was the lack of adequate physical protection for judges and Ms. Duncan mentioned the case of a judge whose husband and son were killed by a party in a proceeding.

Ms. Kouassi mentioned first of all the case of Tunisia, where the situation did not change notwithstanding the efforts of the IAJ and its African Group. The President of the local association is subject to criminal and disciplinary investigations and all sorts of intimidation and he was able to come to Cape Town only thanks to the protests of the IAJ against the denial of authorization to participate in the African Group meeting held in Liberia in May. Salaries of judges were not paid and the judges who were revoked and should have been reinstated after an administrative judge ruling were still out of work and also prevented from practicing as lawyers, so they had no income at all. In Burkina Faso there is a transitional military regime, people are arrested without criteria and the government supporters are protected from any risk of being put on trial or having their sentence carried out. Judges who objected are notified of the call to arms and sent to the front lines.



Judicial Independence Award

President Sessa announced that the Presidency Committee decided to award the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative because of its engagement for the establishment of the rule of law in the countries of new democracy.

The plaque was collected by Ms. Margaret McKeown, Vice-Chair of the ABA ROLI board of directors, who thanked the IAJ and conveyed the assembly the greetings of Mr. Stephen Breyer, Chair of the ABA ROLI board of directors.

President Sessa then gave the floor The delegate of the Azerbaijani association, Mr. Jafarov, who illustrated the preparation for the **2025 IAJ annual meeting** that will take place in Baku.

The Vice-president of the Portuguese Association, Mr. Maximiano do Vale, took the floor and informed the Central Council that in 2026 the Association will celebrate its 50th anniversary, as well as 50 years of democracy in the country. He therefore invited the Central Council to join the celebrations by holding its **2026 annual meeting** in Portugal. The Central Council unanimously approved the proposal.

At the end of the meeting President Sessa gave the floor to Mr. Hmedi, President of the Tunisian Association, who informed the assembly about the situation in his country. The High Council for the judiciary was dissolved in 2022 and 57 judges were dismissed without any disciplinary or judicial procedure. At present there is still no High Council and the careers of judges are decided by the Ministry of justice, while judges were deprived of the freedom of expression.

In these two years, the Minister of Justice ordered the appointment, transfer and suspension of hundreds of judges and prosecutors and suspended from their duties a number of them, again without any disciplinary

procedure. The judiciary, defined as an “independent power” in the 2014 Constitution, is now a “function”. President Hmedi was prevented from leaving for Liberia for the meeting of the African Group in May and on this occasion, he was held at the airport for over an hour before being given the go-ahead to board. He is subject to various criminal and disciplinary proceedings as a result of his activities within the association. He asked the Central Council to approve the resolution that was being circulated in the meanwhile asking to restore the institutional guarantees of the independence of the judiciary in Tunisia.

The assembly unanimously adopted the following statement on **Tunisia**:

[English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#).

MEETINGS OF THE FOUR REGIONAL GROUPS OF THE IAJ

On the occasion of the 66th Annual meeting of the IAJ, the meetings of the four regional group of the IAJ took place on 18 October 2024.

ASIAN, NORTH AMERICAN AND OCEANIAN GROUP

During the meeting of the ANAO group in Cape town, the mid-year ANAO meeting was discussed, with the possibility of hosting it in Canada, in 2025. While it’s not confirmed yet, a decision is expected in the coming days. Regardless of the location, the meeting will be hybrid to accommodate delegates facing challenges with travel.

The assembly discussed about the amendments to the IAJ Constitution and Regulations. These include allowing membership termination upon written request, addressing the premature end of officers' terms, improving monitoring practices, and expanding the IAJ assistance fund.

Other topics were explored, such as:

- The "1000 Robes March" in Poland, sparking a proposal for a UN Day of Judicial Independence on January 11.
- The plight of male judges in Afghanistan who may require assistance. Additionally, President Duncan and Vice President Clayton will draft a response to a member’s concerns regarding the Lebanon-Israel situation.

Then each association presented his report:

Australia: Justice Steven Moore was elected President of the Australian Association of Judges. Topics discussed included judicial pensions, new legislation on judicial immunity, and the formation of a Pacific Islands Judicial Officers Association.

Bermuda: The first female Chief Magistrate was appointed, and discussions focused on expanding the jury pool and judicial independence. Issues raised included proposals for judge-alone trials, decriminalization of marijuana, and mentorship initiatives.

Canada: The Quadrennial Commission reviewed judicial remuneration, emphasizing cost-of-living adjustments. Security for judges, both physical and digital, was highlighted, with advice for judges to avoid social media.

Taiwan: Health and wellness concerns are urgent, especially after a young judge tragically died by suicide due to overwhelming workloads. Discussions also covered the introduction of citizen judges.

USA: Budget constraints remain significant, and addressing judicial harassment following the "Me Too" movement is a priority. The Federal Judges Association is actively involved in civics education, including classroom visits and mock trials.

AFRICAN GROUP

The meeting of the African Group was held in Cape Town, South Africa, on 18 October 2024, in the presence of the President of the Group and Vice-President of the IAJ, Ms. Marcelle Kouassi, Mr. Sessa Duro, President of the IAJ and Mr. Raffaele Gargiulo, Deputy Secretary General of the IAJ.

Delegates from the following IAJ member associations were also present: Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, South Africa and Tunisia.

Representatives of the Nigerian legal system were present as observers. Following the report by Ms. Kouassi on her activities as President of the Group, the national associations presented a report on the state of

justice in their countries. The most difficult situation remains that of Tunisia. The Group unanimously mandated the delegates of the Tunisian association to prepare a draft resolution to be submitted to the IAJ Central Council.

The President of the Group agreed with the delegates how she should present the situation to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, Prof. Margaret Satterthwaite. The situation of the judiciary in their respective regions. The Deputy Secretary General briefed the African Group on the vote on the proposed amendments to the IAJ Statutes. The African Group approved the budget and the IAJ Presidency Committee's proposal for an increase in the amount of annual contributions. The Group also approved Morocco's proposal to host the next meeting of the Group.

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF JUDGES

President Sjoberg greeted all delegates as well as the guest, **Ms. Leonie Reynolds, President of the CCJE.**

Situation of the judiciary in countries of member associations

Ms. Carin Westerlund, Secretary of the **Swedish Association**, took the floor and illustrated the wage system, unchanged since 2005: each judge has an individual set salary decided by a chief judge or the president of the court in which the judge sits. This system is a threat to judicial independence because judges are reluctant freely to express views which may not accord with those of the chief judge or president in question, or to raise issues of court management, fearing that doing so could adversely impact decisions about their salaries. Mr. Gass illustrated the content of the resolution on the salary system in Sweden and the Assembly unanimously approved it.

Mr. Emil Dechev, **Bulgaria**, took the floor and informed the assembly about the fact that the serious issues concerning the security and integrity of the electronic voting system for the Supreme Judicial Council already examine in Athens in 2023 had not been solved yet. Mr. Gass illustrated the content of the resolution on the voting system for the Bulgarian Supreme Judicial Council and the Assembly unanimously approved it.

Mr. Davit Harutyunyan, **Armenia**, took the floor and informed the Assembly about the continuous misuse of disciplinary procedures against judges and about the draft amendments to the Judicial Code of Armenia regarding the evaluation of judges, that were criticized also by the Venice Commission. Mr. Gass illustrated the content of the resolution on evaluation of judges and disciplinary procedures in Armenia and the Assembly unanimously approved it.

Ms. Monica Mastrandrea, **Italy**, took the floor and informed the Assembly about the latest developments of the constitutional reform affecting the judiciary, aimed, inter alia, at separating the careers of judges and public prosecutors, establishing two different self-governing bodies, whose members would not be elected by their peers but be selected by lot, and creating a High Disciplinary Court to fulfill the functions now performed by the High Judicial Council. President Sjoberg proposed that the EAJ sends a letter to the Italian authorities and the Assembly unanimously approved the proposal.

Ms. Roblek (**Slovenia**) took the floor and informed the assembly about the follow-up to the resolution adopted in Warsaw. The Government insisted on dealing with judges' salaries not independently but in the context of the reform of the entire public sector and at the beginning of October presented to Parliament the law on the common foundations of the salary system in the public sector, in which judges' salaries were increased up to almost 50 %.

IBEROAMERICAN GROUP

During the meeting of the Ibero-American group, each association presented the main issues plaguing the judicial system in their respective countries.

In **Argentina**, constitutional reforms are being discussed in several provinces to revise the composition of the Councils of the Judiciary. Among the most controversial issues is the draft reform of the pension system, which, although already modified in 2020, is now in danger of becoming worse. Often considered a privilege for magistrates, it is actually a special scheme. Judges and prosecutors involved in cases against members of the Venezuelan political power have been the target of attacks, with the Venezuelan authorities issuing arrest warrants. Despite this, the dialogue with the new government seems to be positive. There is also support from the association for a trial reform project, with the introduction of the oral trial.

In **Brazil**, the political power has launched a media campaign to discredit magistrates, described as inefficient. The association is working on an appropriate response. The pension system is also very critical,

while on the gender issue, progress is being made with the approval of a measure reserving 50% of the places on the list for women for merit-based promotions.

Chile continues to suffer from the influence of the Supreme Court, whose members are appointed by the political power, in the management of judges' careers. This situation has already been the subject of a complaint to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The country is also experiencing a phase of increasing insecurity, while in terms of gender representation, it is reported that women have overtaken men in the composition of the Supreme Court.

In **Colombia**, as reported by Adriana Orocu from Costa Rica, the political power seems to be moving towards a judicial reform similar to that in Mexico, causing great concern.

Also in **Costa Rica**, the pension system is inadequate to guarantee decent treatment, while the executive power continues to launch attacks against the judiciary.

In **Ecuador**, there is a serious shortage of judges and a low regard for the role of the judiciary, with dismissals based on false reports and corruption cases used to discredit the entire judicial system. The climate of insecurity in the country is becoming increasingly evident.

The situation in **Guatemala**, as reported again by Adriana Orocu, remains critical: judges forced to leave the country have not yet returned due to a lack of suitable conditions, while widespread insecurity continues to be a major problem.

In **Mexico**, the reform of the judiciary provides for judges to be elected directly by the people. This change will require current magistrates to leave office in two stages: half by 2025 and the remaining 50% in 2026.

Paraguay suffers from a strong economic dependence on political power, with magistrates facing personal security problems and receiving salaries that are too low for their responsibilities.

In **Peru**, the legislative and executive powers have ganged up against the judges, monopolising the appointments of constitutional magistrates and members of the Council of the Judiciary, jeopardising the survival of the rule of law.

Finally, in **Portugal**, there are attacks on the judiciary aimed at destabilising the system. The sector suffers from a significant funding deficit, and careers in the judiciary no longer attract young people, a sign of a worrying decline.

COUNCIL OF HONORARY PRESIDENTS OF THE IAJ



On 20 of October, 2024, on the occasion of the **IAJ annual meeting in Cape Town** (South Africa), the Central Council of the IAJ added the following two Paragraphs to **Article 8** of the **IAJ Constitution**:

“8. At the end of his/her mandate, the President may be appointed by the Central Council Honorary President of the IAJ. The same applies to the Secretary-General.

9. The Council of Honorary Presidents of the International Association of Judges is formed, ex officio, by all the Honorary Presidents elected in accordance with section 8 of this Article. It meets during the IAJ general annual meetings. The Council may be requested to give opinions about statutory reforms and may be consulted by the IAJ Presidency Committee, about problems concerning the life of the organisation. The Council designates one of its members as their representative.”

On October 21th, 2024, the Council of Honorary Presidents of the IAJ designated **Honorary President Maja Tratnik** as the representative and the chairperson of the Council, establishing as well that, should Honorary President Maja Tratnik not be able to fulfil her tasks, **Honorary President Christophe Régnard** would replace her.

[Statute of the Council of Honorary Presidents of the IAJ](#)

[Minutes of the meetings of the HP \(private\)](#)

RECENT ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES OF THE IAJ AND REGIONAL GROUPS



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF JUDGES

EAJ Letter to the Hungarian Minister of Justice

On 20th December 2024, **Mr. Mikael Sjöberg, President of the European Association of Judges**, sent a letter to the **Hungarian Minister of Justice, Mr. Bence Tuzson**.

The EAJ is concerned about an agreement signed on 22 November 2024, between the Minister of Justice, the President of the Curia (Supreme Court), the President of the National Judicial Council and the President of the National Office of the Judiciary, which led to an ongoing (and growing) protest within the judiciary against the signing of an ‘agreement’ between the Ministry of Justice and the three top executives of the judicial administration bodies in Hungary, which, in exchange for increasing the salaries of judges and judicial staff, provided blanket approval for indefinite structural reforms that would undermine the independence of the judiciary.

[Letter](#).

EAJ President letter to the new EU Commissioner of Justice

On December 3rd, 2024, the **EAJ President, Mr. Mikael Sjöberg**, sent a letter to the new **EU Commissioner of Justice, Mr. Michael McGrath**, to renew the relationship and dialogue between the European Association of Judges and the Commission.

[Letter](#).

EAJ resolutions adopted in Cape Town – 2024

On the occasion of the **66th IAJ annual meeting in Cape Town**, on the 18th October.-The assembly of the **European Association of Judges** adopted the following three resolutions:

[Armenia](#); [Bulgaria](#); [Sweden](#).

Joint press release of EAJ, Medel, AEAJ and Judges for Judges on Poland

The four **European associations and organisations of Judges** (EAJ, Medel, AEAJ, Judges for Judges) published a press release on Poland.

The organisations made an appeal to the **European Court of Justice** against the first instance order refusing them standing to challenge the Council’s approval of the **Polish Recovery and Resilience Plan**.

[Press release](#).

Statement on Turkey

On 15th July 2024, the 4 main **European Associations of Judges** (Association of European Administrative Judges, **AEAJ**; the European Association of Judges, **EAJ**; **Judges for Judges** and Magistrates Européens pour la Démocratie et les Libertés, **MEDEL**), drafted and signed a Statement on Turkey.

[Statement](#).



Mexico's constitutional reform and independence of the judiciary

The **Brazilian Magistrate Association** – AMB, an entity that represents the interests of Brazilian judges at the national level and member of the IAJ, sent a **Technical Note**, prepared at the request of the Association of Magistrates of the Military Justice of the Union – Amajum, an AMB affiliate, through which it expressed concern about the aspects involving **Mexico's constitutional reform**, which changed the way of entering the judiciary, establishing that the country's judges, at all levels, will enter their careers through popular election.

In this Technical Note, AMB expressed its understanding of this reform and rejects any similar intention in Brazil, since it is a measure that undermines the independence of the Judiciary, undermining its capacity to be an effective institution for protecting fundamental rights and guarantees and for safeguarding the democratic order.

Document in [English](#), [Spanish](#) and [Portuguese](#).

Statement of the IBA group on judicial independence in Costa Rica

On December 4th, 2024, the **Ibero American Group** (IBA), Regional Group of the IAJ, issued a **Statement** on the judicial independence in **Costa Rica**. The statement concerns the attacks by the President of the Republic and the Minister of Justice of Costa Rica on the Judge of Criminal Execution of the Province of Limón, because of a decision taken in the exercise of his judicial function.

Statement in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

Statement on judicial elections in Bolivia

On November 27th, 2024, the **Ibero American Group**, Regional group of the IAJ, issued a **statement** on the expiry of the term of office of the judges of the Supreme Court and Constitutional Court of **Bolivia** and the delay in holding judicial elections to appoint new members.

[Statement](#) (in Spanish).

Threats to the Judiciary in Latin America and Brazil

On November 23rd 2024, the **Brazilian Magistrates Association** (AMB), member of the **International Association of Judges** (IAJ), published an article on the **threats to the Judiciary in Latin America and Brazil**.

[Here the full article](#).

The Ethical Use of AI Tools in the Judiciary

On November 19th 2024, the **Brazilian Magistrates Association** (AMB), member of the **International Association of Judges** (IAJ), published an article on the **Ethical Use of AI Tools in the Judiciary**. [Here the full article](#).

IBA resolution on Peru – Cape Town 2024

On the occasion of the **66th IAJ annual meeting in Cape Town**, on the 18th October 2024. The assembly of the **Ibero American group** adopted a resolution on Peru:

[Resolution](#).

IBA declaration on Argentinian Judges and Prosecutors

On 11th October 2024, the **Ibero American Group**, regional group of the **IAJ**, issued a **declaration** regarding the arrest order issued by the Venezuelan General Prosecutor's Office against **Argentinean judges and prosecutors on the basis of judicial decisions and actions in cases handled in Argentina**, pointing out that the criminalisation of the judicial function due to the content of the decisions and actions of judges and prosecutors may reflect the intention to intimidate and persecute them.

[Statement in Spanish.](#)

IAJ Presidency Committee statement on Mexico

On 23 August 2024 the **Presidency Committee** of the **International Association of Judges (IAJ)** was informed of the recent developments in the **Republic of Mexico** concerning the status of judges.

On **27 August 2024**, the IAJ Presidency Committee issued a **statement** on the current situation in the country:

[Statement.](#)



AFRICAN GROUP

IAJ Statement on Tunisia – Cape Town 2024

The **Central Council** of the **International Association of Judges (IAJ)**, during the 66th annual meeting in Cape Town (South Africa), unanimously adopted the following statement on **Tunisia**:

[English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#).

IAJ Statement on South Africa

The **Presidency Committee** of the **International Association of Judges (IAJ)** was informed, on 29th August 2024, that an ongoing delay in addressing the salaries of **South Africa's Magistrates** (the Judges of the Lower Courts) had become a matter of significant concern. The remuneration of such judges remains unresolved and is at a critical juncture.

On **September 4th 2024**, the IAJ Presidency Committee issued a **statement** on the current situation in the country:

[Statement.](#)



ASIAN, NORTH AMERICAN AND OCEANIAN GROUP

Appeal for Afghan judges

At the last **IAJ Meeting in Cape Town**, the President of the IAJ, Mr. Duro Sessa gave the assembly an overview of the situation of judges in Afghanistan stressing that this issue was far from solved and that male colleagues in **Afghanistan** were endangered as female colleagues.

On demand of President Sessa, an **appeal** was addressed to all the IAJ members inviting them and those who have means, to contact national and international humanitarian organizations and to find ways to obtain first of all **visas** for the Afghan colleagues.

RECENT ACTIVITIES AND CO-OPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL BODIES

IAJ's Secretary-General Report before the 43rd Plenary Assembly of the CEPEJ in Strasbourg (3 and 4 December, 2024)

On 3rd and 4th December, 2024, **IAJ Secretary-General Giacomo Oberto** submitted to the 43rd Plenary Assembly of the **CEPEJ** a report on the activities of the **CEPEJ-SATURN WG** on the subjects of judicial time management.



An outline of this report is available here:

- [Judicial time management Giacomo Oberto Report](#)
- [CEPEJ-SATURN-presentation-plenary-3-4-December-2024](#)

At the end of the meeting, in the part of it dedicated to observers, Mr. Oberto informed the Assembly about the recent activities of the **IAJ** and of the **EAJ** (preparation of the mid-year 2025 Regional Groups meetings and results of the Cape Town meeting in October 2024).

Speech of Prof. Margaret Satterthwaite, UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers at the 66th Annual Meeting of the IAJ (19 October 2024 – First Session of the Central Council)

Prof. Margaret Satterthwaite, UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, made a presentation during the first session of the **IAJ Central Council**, on 19th October, 2024, in **Cape Town**, presenting the activities of her office and addressing the challenges that currently threaten judicial independence in all the parts of the world. During her intervention **the Presidents of the four IAJ Regional Groups** submitted brief reports on the most delicate situations affecting the judiciaries in their respective continents. [The text of Prof. Satterthwaite’s presentation.](#)



Side Event “Enhancing implementation of UPR recommendations through judicial engagement”

On the occasion of the **57th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC)**, on 27th September 2024, at 2:00pm a side event on “*Enhancing implementation of UPR recommendations through judicial engagement*”, took place.

In attendance, representing the IAJ, was **Mr. Roland Kempfle, Vice-President of the IAJ.**

[Concept note; flyer.](#)

International Forum “High Culture of Jurisdiction” – Perugia (Italy), 20th September, 2024

On **20th September, 2024** the **International Forum “High Culture of Jurisdiction”** took place in Perugia (Italy), organised by the “*Luigi Severini*” *International Centre*, in partnership with the **International Association of Judges (IAJ)** and with the **Society of Comparative Legislation**. The event took place at the Perugia University for Foreigners.

Theme of the Forum was: “*IMPARTIALITY AND QUALITY OF THE JUDGE. ORDINARY AND PROFESSIONAL PROFILES IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE.*”

In attendance were, on behalf of the IAJ, the First Vice President and President of the IBA Regional Group **Mr. Walter Barone**, the President of the IAJ First Study Commission, **Ms. Marilyn Huff** and the IAJ Secretary-General **Mr. Giacomo Oberto**.

- [Programme of the Forum](#)
- [President of the 1st IAJ Study Commission Marilyn Huff's presentation](#)
- [Secretary-General Giacomo Oberto's presentation](#)
- [Link to the recording of the event: https://youtube.com/live/CPOVocr1Q9E?feature=share](https://youtube.com/live/CPOVocr1Q9E?feature=share)



International Conference of Judges from Central America and Europe in Berlin, 9-10 September 2024



The International Association of Judges (IAJ-UIM) co-hosted an international conference of judges from **Central America and Europe** which took place in Berlin, Germany, from September 9th to 10th, 2024.

The conference brought together **18 judges and representatives of judicial associations** of renowned trajectory in Central America and Europe, as well as **members of international organisations** that advocate for the defence of judicial independence.

The dialogues responded to the need to sustain collaborations between different social sectors to defend the attacks on justice systems in different regions of the world.

The IAJ was represented by **Vice President Roland Kempfle**, who co-hosted the event also on behalf of the German Association of Judges (Deutscher Richterbund, DRB), and **First Vice President Walter Barone**, President of the Ibero-American Group of the IAJ.

First Vice President Walter Barone also spoke on the concluding Panel Forum “*Towards Achieving Global Justice: Latin American and European Perspectives*”. Keynote speakers of the high-level event

were **Margaret Satterthwaite**, **Special Rapporteur** on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers of the United Nations, and **Tim Eicke**, Justice of the European Court of Human Rights.

Program of the Round Table Event: [English](#), [Spanish](#).

International Conference in Baku on “Law & Climate”



On **September 6th, 2024**, an **International Conference** on the subject “**Law & Climate**” took place in **Baku (Azerbaijan)**. The event was organised by the Azerbaijan Union of Judges. **IAJ President Duro Sessa** and **Secretary-General Giacomo Oberto** took part as guests of honour on behalf of the IAJ.

[Programme](#).

Their Presentations are available here:

- President Duro Sessa’s Presentation: [Speech](#)
- Secretary-General Giacomo Oberto’s Presentation: [The International Association of Judges and its Commitment in the Field of Environmental Law](#)