



## FOREWORD AND SEASON'S GREETINGS OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JUDGES

Dear Colleagues,

I would like to begin by once again expressing my sincere gratitude to our Honorary President, José Igreja Matos, who stepped down from the Presidency Committee in 2025, for the outstanding work carried out in support of our Association and its institutional objectives over the last two years.

In the same spirit, I would like to warmly congratulate President Duro Sessa on his highly successful leadership during the 2023–2025 term. It gives us great confidence and genuine joy to know that we will continue to benefit from his wisdom and experience over the next two years, as he has assumed the role of Honorary President and will continue to work alongside the Presidency Committee.

I would also like to congratulate the newly elected members of the Presidency Committee: Adriana Orocú, from Costa Rica, who — much to my satisfaction — has succeeded me as President of the Ibero-American Group; Clayton Conlan, from Canada; Dorota Zabłudowska, from Poland; and Mohamed Redouane, from Morocco. I wish them every success in their roles as Vice-Presidents of the IAJ, and, in the cases of Adriana Orocú, Clayton Conlan, and Mohamed Redouane, also as Presidents of their respective Regional Groups.

At the same time, it is a source of personal joy to know that we will continue to benefit from the experience, ongoing dedication, and friendship of Sabine Matejka, from Austria, and Roland Kempfle, from Germany, who were re-elected as Vice-Presidents of the IAJ. I also take this opportunity to congratulate our colleague Sabine Matejka on her election as President of the European Group and, in particular, as First Vice-President of the IAJ. I wish her every success in these new responsibilities, as my own work as President will certainly be lighter and more rewarding with a colleague of Sabine's competence and professionalism serving alongside me.

I would also like to extend my warm congratulations to Giacomo Oberto, from Italy, on his re-election as Secretary-General of the IAJ. I am truly pleased to be able to count on his advice and support throughout my term, as he represents a point of reference for all those who work within the IAJ by virtue of his dedication, experience, and deep institutional knowledge.

Furthermore, I would like to warmly congratulate our colleagues Lucio Aschettino, Galileo D'Agostino, and Raffaele Gargiulo, from Italy, on their re-election as Deputy Secretaries-General, wishing them every success as they continue to place their experience and dedication at the service of our Association.

I also express my sincere appreciation to the members of the IAJ Secretariat — Daniela de Vincentiis, Barbara Scolart, and Alessandra Decina — for their professionalism, commitment, and constant support of our activities.

Last but not least, I extend my sincere thanks to Mikael Sjöberg, Marcelle Kouassi, and Allyson Duncan for their valuable contributions to the work of the IAJ during their respective terms as Presidents of the European, African, and ANAO Regional Groups. Their dedication and commitment will always remain part of the collective memory of our Association.

My gratitude and applause also go to our colleagues from Azerbaijan, who masterfully organized a remarkable Annual Meeting with impeccable structure and organization. The meeting enabled us to discuss the major issues currently affecting the judiciary worldwide, while also offering cultural activities that allowed us to better appreciate a fascinating country, rich in history and distinguished by the warmth and kindness of its people.

The Annual Meeting in Baku also featured a highly valuable international conference on the theme “Relations Between the Judiciary and the Other Two Powers of the State”, during which we discussed the necessary balance and harmony among the three branches of government, as well as the challenges posed by attempts to interfere with judicial independence in different parts of the world.

It is equally important to highlight that, at the Baku meeting, the IAJ had the pleasure of welcoming the National Association of Judges of Nigeria as a new member. We sincerely hope that our newest member association will actively participate in our activities, thereby contributing to the fulfillment of our institutional objectives, particularly the defense of judicial independence and the safety and personal integrity of judges worldwide.

In this regard, we will continue the efforts undertaken in recent years to encourage additional countries to join the IAJ, bringing their experiences and concerns into our Association and enabling us to develop an ever broader and more comprehensive understanding of the realities faced by judiciaries around the world. Finally, I reaffirm my commitment to making our meetings increasingly dynamic and participatory, providing more space for discussion and for the exchange of information among us.

We look forward to our next Annual Meeting in Lisbon, Portugal, where I am confident we will once again be received with great warmth and enjoy the renowned Portuguese hospitality.

I also take this opportunity to invite our member associations to submit their applications to host the 2027 Annual Meeting. I can assure you that hosting an IAJ Annual Meeting is a truly rewarding and unforgettable experience.

I wish you all Happy Holidays, and may the New Year bring us good health, joy, peace, harmony, and an ever-stronger sense of unity in our shared commitment to the defense of judicial independence.

See you all in Lisbon!



*Walter Barone  
President of the IAJ*

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Chers Collègues,

Je voudrais commencer par exprimer, une fois de plus, ma sincère gratitude à notre Président d'Honneur, José Igreja Matos, qui a quitté le Comité de Présidence en 2025, pour l'excellent travail accompli au service de notre Association et de ses objectifs institutionnels au cours des deux dernières années.

Dans le même esprit, je tiens à féliciter chaleureusement le Président Duro Sessa pour son leadership exemplaire durant le mandat 2023-2025. C'est avec une grande confiance et une joie sincère que nous savons que nous continuerons à bénéficier de sa sagesse et de son expérience au cours des deux prochaines années, puisqu'il a assumé le rôle de Président d'Honneur au sein du Comité de Présidence.

Je tiens également à féliciter les nouveaux membres élus du Comité de Présidence : Adriana Orocú, du Costa Rica, qui — à ma grande satisfaction — m'a succédé à la présidence du Groupe Ibéro-américain ; Clayton Conlan, du Canada ; Dorota Zabłudowska, de Pologne ; et Mohamed Redouane, du Maroc. Je leur

souhaite plein succès dans leurs fonctions de Vice-présidents de l'UIM et, pour Adriana Orocú, Clayton Conlan et Mohamed Redouane, également en tant que Présidents de leurs Groupes Régionaux respectifs.

Parallèlement, c'est une joie personnelle de savoir que nous continuerons à bénéficier de l'expérience, du dévouement constant et de l'amitié de Sabine Matejka, d'Autriche, et de Roland Kempfle, d'Allemagne, qui ont été réélus Vice-présidents de l'UIM. Je saisis également cette occasion pour féliciter notre collègue Sabine Matejka pour son élection à la présidence du Groupe Européen et, en particulier, en tant que Première Vice-présidente de l'UIM. Mon propre travail en tant que Président sera certainement plus léger et plus gratifiant avec une collègue de la compétence et du professionnalisme de Sabine à mes côtés.

Je tiens aussi à exprimer mes chaleureuses félicitations à Giacomo Oberto, d'Italie, pour sa réélection au poste de Secrétaire Général de l'UIM. Je suis véritablement heureux de pouvoir compter sur ses conseils et son soutien, car il représente une référence pour nous tous, grâce à son dévouement et sa profonde connaissance institutionnelle.

Je félicite également nos collègues Lucio Aschettino, Galileo D'Agostino et Raffaele Gargiulo, d'Italie, pour leur réélection en tant que Secrétaires Généraux Adjointes.

J'exprime aussi ma sincère reconnaissance aux membres du Secrétariat de l'UIM — Daniela de Vicentiis, Barbara Scolart et Alessandra Decina — pour leur professionnalisme et leur soutien constant.

Enfin, je remercie Mikael Sjöberg, Marcelle Kouassi et Allyson Duncan pour leurs précieuses contributions en tant que Présidents du Groupe Européen, du Groupe Africain et de l'ANAO. Leur engagement restera gravé dans la mémoire collective de notre Association.

Ma gratitude va également à nos collègues d'Azerbaïdjan, qui ont organisé de main de maître une réunion annuelle remarquable à Bakou. Cette rencontre nous a permis d'aborder les enjeux majeurs de la justice mondiale, tout en découvrant un pays fascinant, riche d'histoire et d'hospitalité.

Enfin, je réaffirme mon engagement à rendre nos réunions de plus en plus dynamiques et participatives. Nous attendons avec impatience notre prochaine réunion annuelle à Lisbonne, au Portugal, où je suis certain que nous serons reçus avec la célèbre hospitalité portugaise.

Je saisis également cette occasion pour inviter nos associations membres à soumettre leur candidature pour l'organisation de l'Assemblée Annuelle de 2027. Je peux vous assurer que l'accueil d'une Assemblée Annuelle de l'UIM est une expérience véritablement enrichissante et inoubliable.

Je vous souhaite à toutes et à tous de Bonnes Fêtes, et que la Nouvelle Année nous apporte santé, paix et une unité renforcée dans notre engagement commun pour la défense de l'indépendance judiciaire.

Au plaisir de vous voir tous à Lisbonne !



*Walter Barone*  
*Président de l'UIM*

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Estimadas y estimados colegas,

Quisiera comenzar expresando, una vez más, mi sincera gratitud a nuestro Presidente Honorario, José Igreja Matos, quien dejó el Comité de Presidencia en 2025, por la excelente labor realizada en apoyo de nuestra Asociación y de sus objetivos institucionales durante los últimos dos años.

En este mismo espíritu, deseo felicitar calurosamente al Presidente Duro Sessa por su exitoso liderazgo durante el período 2023–2025. Nos genera una gran confianza y una alegría genuina saber que seguiremos contando con su sabiduría y experiencia durante los próximos dos años, ya que ha asumido el cargo de Presidente Honorario y continuará trabajando junto al Comité de Presidencia.

Asimismo, quisiera felicitar a los nuevos miembros electos del Comité de Presidencia: Adriana Orocú, de Costa Rica, quien —para mi gran satisfacción— me ha sucedido como Presidenta del Grupo Iberoamericano; Clayton Conlan, de Canadá; Dorota Zabłudowska, de Polonia; y Mohamed Redouane, de Marruecos. Les deseo el mayor de los éxitos en sus funciones como Vicepresidentes de la UIM e, igualmente,

en los casos de Adriana Orocú, Clayton Conlan y Mohamed Redouane, como Presidentes de sus respectivos Grupos Regionales.

Al mismo tiempo, es motivo de alegría personal saber que, durante los próximos dos años, seguiremos contando con la experiencia, la dedicación constante y la amistad de Sabine Matejka, de Austria, y Roland Kempfle, de Alemania, quienes fueron reelectos como Vicepresidentes de la UIM. Aprovecho también esta oportunidad para felicitar a nuestra colega Sabine Matejka por su elección como Presidenta del Grupo Europeo y, en particular, como Vicepresidenta Primera de la UIM. Le deseo todo lo mejor en estas nuevas responsabilidades; mi propio trabajo como Presidente será, sin duda, más liviano y gratificante al contar con una colega de la competencia y profesionalismo de Sabine a mi lado.

También quisiera extender mis calurosas felicitaciones a Giacomo Oberto, de Italia, por su reelección como Secretario General de la UIM. Es un verdadero placer poder contar con su asesoría y apoyo durante mi mandato, ya que él representa un punto de referencia para todos los que trabajamos en la UIM, gracias a su dedicación, experiencia y profundo conocimiento institucional.

Del mismo modo, felicito cordialmente a nuestros colegas Lucio Aschettino, Galileo D'Agostino y Raffaele Gargiulo, de Italia, por su reelección como Secretarios Generales Adjuntos, deseándoles mucho éxito en la continuación de su servicio a nuestra Asociación.

Expreso también mi sincero agradecimiento a las integrantes de la Secretaría de la UIM —Daniela de Vicentiis, Barbara Scolart y Alessandra Decina— por su profesionalismo y apoyo constante.

Por último, pero no por ello menos importante, extiendo mi sincera gratitud a Mikael Sjöberg, Marcelle Kouassi y Allyson Duncan por sus valiosas contribuciones durante sus mandatos como Presidentes de los Grupos Regionales de Europa, África y ANAO. Su compromiso con la UIM siempre formará parte de la memoria colectiva de nuestra Asociación.

Mi gratitud y aplauso se dirigen también a nuestros colegas de Azerbaiyán, quienes organizaron magistralmente una Asamblea Anual extraordinaria, con una estructura excelente y organización impecable. La reunión nos permitió debatir los grandes temas que afectan actualmente a la judicatura en todo el mundo, brindándonos a la vez actividades culturales que nos permitieron apreciar un país fascinante, rico en historia y distinguido por la calidez de su gente.

Finalmente, reafirmo mi compromiso de hacer que nuestras reuniones sean cada vez más dinámicas y participativas.

Esperamos con entusiasmo nuestra próxima Asamblea Anual en Lisboa, Portugal, donde estoy seguro de que seremos recibidos con la reconocida hospitalidad portuguesa.

También aprovecho esta oportunidad para invitar a nuestras asociaciones miembros a presentar sus candidaturas para organizar la Asamblea Anual de 2027. Les puedo asegurar que ser anfitrión de una Reunión Anual de la UIM es una experiencia verdaderamente gratificante e inolvidable.

Les deseo a todas y todos Felices Fiestas, y que el Año Nuevo nos traiga salud, paz y una unidad cada vez más fuerte en nuestro compromiso compartido con la defensa de la independencia judicial.

¡Nos vemos en Lisboa!



*Walter Barone*  
*Presidente de la UIM*

## **INDEX**

- **67<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JUDGES (October 2025)**
- **MEETINGS OF THE FOUR REGIONAL GROUPS OF THE IAJ**
- **RECENT ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES OF THE IAJ AND REGIONAL GROUPS**
- **RECENT CO-OPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL BODIES**

## 67TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JUDGES (October 2025)



From October 12<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> the Azerbaijani Association of Judges hosted the 67<sup>th</sup> IAJ annual meeting. In attendance:

- the President, Mr. Đuro Sessa;
- the First Vice-President, Mr. Walter Barone;
- the Vice-Presidents, Ms. Marcelle Kouassi, Ms. Sabine Matejka, Mr. Roland Kempfle, Mr. Mikael Sjoberg and the acting President of the ANAO Group, Mr. Clayton Conlan;
- the Honorary Presidents Mr. Sidnei Beneti, Mrs. Maja Tratnik, Mr. Gerhard Reissner, Mr. Christophe Régnard, and Mr. José Manuel Igreja Matos.
- 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 58 national associations.

President Sessa opened the meeting of the Central Council by thanking the Association of Azerbaijan, welcoming all delegates present, the delegates of the Iraqi Kurdistan Association and of the Nigerian Association as well as the guests: Senator Pierre Moreau from Canada; Mr. Claudio Visco, President of the International Bar Association; Mr. Marc Schmitz, President of the International Union of Judicial Officers; IAJ Honorary President Mr. José Manuel Igreja Matos, on behalf of the President of the Consultative Council of European Judges (CCJE).

Mr. Sessa also expressed the Presidency Committee's regret at the Taiwanese delegation's failure to attend due to visa problem. He finally highlighted that Regional Groups had revealed how fragile the independence of the judiciary is, even in countries with established democracies.

### ***Greetings of the guests***

Senator Moreau took the floor to present the bill he had submitted to the Canadian Senate, which seeks to proclaim January 11th as Judicial Independence Day. The bill is currently in its third and final reading. Should it pass, Canada will become the first country in the world to dedicate a specific day to the independence of the judiciary. This proposed legislation is intended to attest to the commitment of the Canadian people to the Rule of Law and will affirm that the independence of the judiciary is not a privilege of judges, but a fundamental right of citizens.

Mr. Schmitz pointed out the importance of the collaboration between legal professionals and highlighted the importance to reinforce it in order to cope with the challenges posed by the technological progresses. In particular, he proposed to establish a joint working group on the use of artificial intelligence in justice, including judges, lawyers, notaries, court administrators and judicial officers. This WG could draft guidelines to ensure that justice remains humane, fair and worthy of citizens' trust.

Mr. Visco explained that the International Bar Association, to reinforce its presence in the core values of legal professions, established the Human Rights Institute as a separate legal entity to respond rapidly to violations of the independence of lawyers and of the freedom of speech. Among the priorities related to the rule of law, Mr. Visco mentioned the issue of the Trump Administration's sanctions against judges of the International Criminal Court and asked the IAJ to join IBA in its efforts.

Mr. Igreja Matos explained the functioning of the CCJE and the importance of its 28 opinions as instruments of soft law, often quoted by the European Court of human rights and the EU Court of Justice.

### ***Vote on the candidature of Nigeria***

President Sessa invited the Nigerian delegation to quit the hall during the discussion and the vote on the application for membership.

Ms. Nancy Sammy (Liberia), first rapporteur, illustrated the findings of her mission to the country. Ms. Childs (U.S.A.), on behalf of the second rapporteur, Ms. Duncan, who did not attend the meeting, summarised the results of documentary researches.

President Sessa called for an open vote and the Central Council approved unanimously the admission of the Nigerian Association as IAJ member.

The Chief Justice of Nigeria, Ms. Kudirat Motonmori Olatokunbo Kekere-Ekun, thanked the rapporteurs and the Central Council and stated the commitment and responsibility with which the Nigerian Association joined the IAJ, determined to contribute effectively to its works.



### ***Discussion with RG Presidents and the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers, Prof. Margaret Satterthwaite***

President Sessa informed the Central Council that the UN Special Rapporteur could not attend the meeting due to serious family issues. The IAJ will therefore send her a report summarizing the principal threats to judicial independence at regional level.

**Vice President Sjöberg, President of the European Association of Judges**, European Regional Group of the IAJ, said that, on the previous day, the EAJ had approved several resolutions addressing specific country situations. Nonetheless, a broader European trend requires the attention of both the assembly and the Rapporteur. This trend is characterized by three primary concerns. First, judicial independence is increasingly imperilled by attempts to influence the selection and appointment of judges. Second, matters concerning salaries and pensions are becoming more contentious, as judges experience discrimination relative to other public servants. Third, there is a proliferation of unsubstantiated statements by political figures and opinion leaders. The ensuing public debate often centres on unfounded criticism of individual judicial decisions and is exacerbated by unregulated social media. The common pattern across Europe involves the dismantling of judicial independence. This process typically begins with the discrediting of the judges' role and activities, which is then followed by organizational reforms. While the EAJ has successfully confronted such threats in

certain instances, its efforts have been unavailing in others, necessitating a request for intervention from the IAJ (as in the case of Italy).

**First Vice President Barone, President of the Ibero American Group**, reported that several members of the Group have recently experienced threats, which demonstrates a persistent pattern of political attempts to influence the judiciary. In Mexico the recently approved reform established the popular election of judges. This measure threatens judicial independence by subjecting judges to electoral mechanisms and eroding the requirement for professional expertise. In Peru, the Congress modified the career structure for judges and prosecutors and introduced rules that effectively criminalise the legitimate exercise of their functions. Consequently, the IBA Group issued statements in defence of prosecutors' activities and the judges' freedom of thought and speech. In Ecuador, the attack on a judge's life highlights the increasing risks to judicial safety. In Costa Rica, the Government and the President have targeted judges directly because of their decisions. Collectively, these situations illustrate a concerning regional trend towards the mitigation of the separation of power.

**The President of the ANAO Group, Mr. Conlan**, said that, on the previous day, the ANAO Group addressed several country reports, observing persistent threats to judicial independence and serious encroachments upon the respect for the Rule of Law. These issues are occurring even within sophisticated, modern, and respected judicial systems globally. Examples of unfair political attacks against judges were noted in Mexico, the United States, and Canada. Specifically, in the Canadian province of Ontario, the leader of the provincial government criticized a judicial decision not on its legal merits but by personally attacking the presiding judge. Furthermore, the leader proposed the election of judges, a concept wholly unprecedented in Canada. In response to this, three Chief Justices delivered a public address to formally rebuke the leader's statement.

The Group intends to continue this critical discussion. During its next meeting in Portugal, the focus will shift to public education regarding the Rule of Law and the role of the judiciary. This emphasis is necessitated by the general decline in public respect for the judicial function, a phenomenon often attributable to the misrepresentation of judges in the media.

**Vice President Kouassi, President of the African Group**, specifically underscored the situation in Niger, which has deteriorated following the meeting in Cape Town. She reported that she had been informed of the dissolution of the local association and the expulsion from the judiciary of both its Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General. She subsequently informed the IAJ Presidency Committee, which issued a declaration of support to the Nigerien colleagues. This declaration, addressed to local authorities, criticized the complete lack of information provided to the affected individuals regarding the reasons for this measure. As local authorities have failed to respond, the colleagues who were removed from office are now unemployed and unsalaried, and the association's funds have been frozen. Ms. Kouassi therefore requested that the assembly maintain a high level of focus on this critical issue.

### ***Presentation and election of the President***

President Sessa announced the candidature of First Vice-President Walter Barone to the post of President of the IAJ. Mr. Barone was elected President of the IAJ by acclamation. He delivered a speech, expressing his gratitude and highlighting the huge responsibility coming with the charge.

President Sessa delivered a speech for his leave, thanking the Presidency Committee and the General Secretariat for their constant support and collaboration. He mentioned, in particular, Ms. Allyson Duncan, former President of the ANAO Group, who has always been ready to take her role in the IAJ's initiatives.

President Barone asked the assembly to designate the former President, Mr. Sessa, as Honorary President of the IAJ. The assembly approved by acclamation.

Vice-President Sjoberg took the floor to bid farewell to the assembly having reached the maximum number of possible mandates.

Honorary President Igreja Matos greeted the assembly as he leaved the Presidency Committee to join the Council of Honorary Presidents.



### ***Elections of the 6 Vice Presidents***

The elected persons were Mr. Clayton Conlan, Ms. Adriana Orocu Chavarria, Mr. Roland Kempfle, Ms. Sabine Matejka, Mr. Mohamed Redouane, Ms. Dorota Zabłudowska.

President Barone invited the elected to join him at the presidency desk.

### ***Elections of First Vice-President;***

The Secretary-General illustrated art. 8, paragraph 2, of the Constitution and asked whether there were proposals for the designation of the First Vice-President. President Barone noted that there were no other candidates and Ms. Matejka was elected by acclamation First Vice-President of the IAJ.

### ***Elections of the Secretary-General and the Deputy Secretaries-General***

President Barone called for an open vote on the candidatures for the posts of Secretary-General and Deputy Secretaries-General. Mr. Giacomo Oberto was re-elected by acclamation Secretary-General of the IAJ. Mr. Galileo D'Agostino, Mr. Raffaele Gargiulo and Mr. Lucio Aschettino were unanimously re-elected Deputy Secretaries-General.

### ***Resolutions***

The Central Council examined some proposal of resolutions.

Ms. Aicha BenBelhassen (Tunisia) took the floor to illustrate the draft resolution concerning the dissolution of the *Syndicat des magistrats du Niger*.

The Central Council approved unanimously the resolution, enclosed to these minutes and published on the website: [English](#), [French](#).

Ms. Monica Mastrandrea (Italy) illustrated the content of the constitutional reform that, in Italy, would affect the status of the judiciary and the composition of the High Council of the Judiciary.

The Central Council approved unanimously the resolution, enclosed to these minutes and published on the website: [English](#), [French](#).

Ms. Mariela Hernandez (Chile) explained the situation in the country, where various initiatives and public actions tend to weaken the constitutional role of the judiciary.

The Central Council approved unanimously the resolution, enclosed to these minutes and published on the website: [English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#).

Mr. Oswaldo Ordoñez (Peru) informed the CC that the National Council of Justice of Peru has opened a preliminary investigation against him for statements he allegedly made before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

The Central Council approved unanimously the resolution, enclosed to these minutes and published on the website: [English](#), [French](#), [Spanish](#).

President Barone illustrated the statement drafted by the Presidency Committee on the separation of powers. After a debate and some slight amendments, the Central Council approved unanimously the statement, enclosed to these minutes and published on the website: <https://www.iaj-uim.org/iuw/documenti/iaj-statement-on-the-relationship-between-the-powers-of-the-state/>

### ***Next IAJ annual meeting***

The Portuguese delegation came to the podium to present the venue for the 2026 meeting that will take place in Lisbon, in October.

The passage of the IAJ flag between Mr. Ramiz Rzayev, President of the Azerbaijani Association, and Mr. Nuno Matos, President of the Portuguese Association, took then place.

## *IAJ Judicial Independent Award*



On 12th October 2025, during the 67th annual meeting of the IAJ in Baku, the IAJ Judicial Independence Award was delivered to Prof. Margaret Satterthwaite, UN Special Rapporteur on Independence of Judges and Lawyers and to Mrs. Norma Lucía Piña Hernández, former President of the Supreme Court of Mexico. For more information, [click here](#).

## *International Conference*



On the occasion of the 67<sup>th</sup> IAJ annual meeting in Baku, an International Conference was organised by the International Association of Judges (IAJ) in co-operation with the Azerbaijan Union of Judges. The theme of the Conference was: *Relations Between the Judiciary and the Other Two Powers of the State*.

The programme and the speeches are accessible at the following link:

[International Conference](#)

## MEETINGS OF THE FOUR REGIONAL GROUPS OF THE IAJ

On the occasion of the 67<sup>th</sup> Annual meeting of the IAJ, the meetings of the four regional group of the IAJ took place on 12 October 2025.

### *ASIAN, NORTH AMERICAN AND OCEANIAN GROUP*

The ANAO regional group of the International Association of Judges met in Baku on October 12, 2025, chaired by Mr. Clayton Conlan (Canada). New officers were elected, with Mr. Conlan as President, Ms. Margaret McKeown (USA) and Grace Yin-Lun Lin (Taiwan) as Vice-Presidents, though the Taiwanese delegation was absent due to visa issues.



Country reports revealed common challenges: judicial independence under pressure, inadequate resources, growing concerns about judges' wellness, and security issues in courtrooms. Canada, Australia, Bermuda, the U.S., New Zealand, Mongolia, and Kazakhstan each highlighted specific national developments, while Kurdistan attended as an observer.

In broader discussions, the IAJ leadership encouraged recruitment of new members, with Bangladesh, India, and South Korea under consideration. Mexico's judicial reforms raised concerns about its continued

membership, while Nigeria's admission was recommended. ANAO's future meetings are planned for Bermuda in 2027 and possibly Australia in 2029. Members also supported Mongolia's proposal for a Memorandum of Understanding to strengthen cooperation. Upcoming conferences will focus on appeals systems, civic education, AI in judicial work, and judicial wellness.

### *AFRICAN GROUP*

The meeting of the African Group was held in Baku on 12 October 2025, with the participation of the President of the African Group, Ms. Marcelle Kouassi, the Deputy Secretary General of the IAJ, Mr. Raffaele Gargiulo, as well as delegates representing their respective national associations from Algeria, Angola, Benin,



Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea Conakry, Liberia, Mali, Morocco, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Senegal, Togo and Tunisia. Nigeria also participated as an observer.

In her report, Ms. Kouassi presented the meetings of the UIM Presidency Committee in which she had taken part. She recalled that, in her capacity as Vice-President of the International Association of Judges (IAJ) and President of the African Regional Group, she travelled to Vienna (Austria) from 29 to 30 January 2025 to participate in a meeting of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which launched the initiative "Judges United against Synthetic Drug Trafficking (JUST)". However, this meeting could not take place, as it was cancelled on the

same day following the decision of the United States government to suspend the activities of bodies and organisations dependent on the American State.

Ms. Kouassi recalled the situation of magistrates in Burkina Faso. Some of them were sent by the government to a military camp to act alongside soldiers in combat, with the aim of sanctioning them.

Furthermore, a report on the Tunisian judiciary, the Association of Tunisian Magistrates and its President was submitted to Professor Margaret Satterthwaite, the UN Special Rapporteur on the independence

of judges and lawyers. She also informed the Group about the difficult situation of the Niger judiciary association. The Government of Niger dissolved the association and struck off the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General.

### **EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF JUDGES**

After approving the minutes of the previous meeting in Yerevan, the President of the group Mr. Mikael Sjoberg (Denmark) and the members of the Board reported on recent activities, highlighting the strong spirit of cooperation within the Board and ongoing contacts with other institutions, particularly on issues such as judicial independence and judges' well-being. Considerable attention was given to the situation of the judiciary in several countries, with a special focus on Romania, Spain and Italy. The Assembly unanimously adopted resolutions on [Romania](#) and [Spain](#) and approved a text to be submitted to the IAJ Central Council concerning the Italian constitutional reform, which was considered to pose serious risks to judicial independence and to the constitutional balance of powers.



Updates were also provided on Ukraine, where despite the ongoing war the judiciary continues to function, and on Albania, where the killing of a judge during a court hearing raised

grave concerns about the safety of judges.

The Assembly also reviewed follow-up reports on previous EAJ interventions, the work of the various working groups, relations with EU institutions and the financial situation of the Association, which was reported to be sound.

During the session of 14 October, Ms. Sabine Matejka (Austria) was elected by acclamation as the new President of the EAJ. A resolution on the security of judges in [Albania](#) was unanimously adopted, and the composition of the permanent working groups and the Provident Fund Committee was approved. The meeting concluded with information on forthcoming EAJ and IAJ meetings and a call for continued active engagement by member associations.

### **IBEROAMERICAN GROUP**

The meeting was opened with the acknowledgment of the participants and the countries represented.

The following delegations were present: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Spain, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Portugal.



The minutes of the previous meeting were approved. This was followed by the reports of the President, Mr. Barone, and the Deputy Secretary General, Mr. D'Agostino. Greetings were then delivered by Mr. Sessa and Mr. Oberto.

A report was presented by Dr. Norma Lucía Piña Hernández, former President of the Supreme Court of Justice of the Nation of Mexico, on the topic of the reform of the Judicial Branch. The content of the presentation corresponded to the report previously submitted to the CC.

Reports from the individual countries of the Group were then presented.

In Argentina, a significant number of judicial vacancies was reported, amounting to approximately 25% of the total staff, resulting in delays in judicial proceedings. Concerns were expressed regarding government pressure linked to the announcement of further pension system reforms, which had already been reformed in 2020. Issues related to the personal security of judges were also highlighted.

In Brazil, a historical assessment of attacks against the judiciary was provided, noting that such attacks have coincided with periods of authoritarian governments. The importance of financial autonomy of the judiciary was emphasized.

In Chile, serious security concerns affecting judges, prosecutors, and judicial staff were reported. Reference was made to mechanisms aimed at paralyzing judicial activity through complaints for abuse of office. A proposed reform of the judicial appointment system was discussed, which appears to worsen the situation by leaving control primarily with political authorities and by establishing a disciplinary body without clarification regarding its composition.

In Costa Rica, attacks by the executive branch and efforts to delegitimize judges were reported.

In Ecuador, a severe shortage of judges, including within the Supreme Court, was reported. The lack of financial autonomy of the judiciary was emphasized. Judges are frequently dismissed, and the public image of the justice system is significantly distorted. A request for support was expressly made.

In Spain, concern was expressed regarding a proposed law that would grant permanent positions to approximately 1,000 substitute judges without requiring a competitive examination. Attacks against judges investigating relatives of the Prime Minister were also reported.

In Panama, the overall situation was described as positive, with particular reference to the introduction of oral civil proceedings.

In Paraguay, Judicial vacancies were reported, along with cases of persecution of judges for their decisions. Political initiatives aimed at reforming the pension system were noted, in a context of significant national deficit.

In Peru, an unprecedented political crisis was reported, together with an increase in criminal activity. Certain political groups were described as destabilizing the judicial system through legislative measures, the criminalization of judges, and actions favoring organized crime. Disciplinary proceedings are being considered against the leadership of the judicial association following protests against a reform criminalizing judicial activity.

In Portugal, an ongoing investigation involving the Prime Minister was reported, within a broader context of political polarization and a general shift of the country toward the right.

# RECENT ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES OF THE IAJ AND REGIONAL GROUPS



*INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF JUDGES*

## **IAJ Presidency Committee (PC) Statement on Niger**

On 18 August 2025, following the news that the Government of the Republic of Niger has dissolved the *Syndicat Autonome des Magistrats du Niger* (SAMAN), free association of judges and prosecutors in that country, and a member of the International Association of Judges since 1997, the Presidency Committee of the International Association of Judges decided to issue a statement, in English and French.

The PC concludes the statement urging the executive branch of the Republic of Niger to withdraw the aforementioned decrees concerning the *Syndicat Autonome des Magistrats du Niger* (SAMAN) and its Secretary-General.

[Statement in English](#)

[Statement in French](#)

## **President Sessa Reacts to Croatian Judges Participation in Turkey**

On 3 October 2025, an article was published about the IAJ President Duro Sessa's open letter judges in Croatia; judges who are going to Turkey to attend the programs of the Turkish Judicial Academy.

[Here the full article in English](#)

[Article in Croatian](#)

## **IAJ Presidency Committee letter on Tunisia**

On 26 October 2025, the IAJ Presidency Committee drafted a letter regarding the critical situation in Tunisia and sent it to the following authorities and institutions: the President of the Republic of Tunisia; the President of the Government of Tunisia; the Ministry of Justice of Tunisia; the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers; the President of the European Union; the

Secretary General of the Council of Europe; the Chairperson of the African Commission; the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights.

[Letter](#)

The letter was accompanied by other relevant documents, including the [IAJ Statement 2024](#) and the [Tunisian report](#).

### **IAJ Presidency Committee Statement in support of the ICC**

On 23 December 2025, following the recent sanctions imposed by the US administration on judges and prosecutors of the International Criminal Court, the Presidency Committee of the IAJ decided to issue a statement in support of this institution and its judiciary.

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

### **IAJ PC Statement in support of the President of the Association of Tunisian Magistrates, Judge Anas Hmedi**

On 27 December 2025, the Presidency Committee (PC) of the International Association of judges (IAJ) issued a Statement in support of the President of the Association of Tunisian Magistrates, Judge Anas Hmedi.

The PC took, in fact, note of the new criminal proceedings being initiated in Tunisia against Judge Anas Hmedi, based on media statements he made in his capacity as president of the association and in defence of judicial independence in Tunisia.

[Statement \(English\)](#)

[Statement \(French\)](#)



### **2025 Rule of Law Report**

On 8 July 2025, the European Commission officially adopted the 2025 Rule of Law Report.

The official press release, the full report, and related materials are available on the European Commission's website at the following links:

- [Press release](#);
- [Materials](#).

The European Association of Judges (EAJ) looks forward to continuing its cooperation with the Commission in preparation for the next edition of the Report.

### **EAJ resolutions adopted in Baku, 2025**

On the occasion of the meeting of the European Association of Judges (EAJ) in Baku (Azerbaijan), on 12 October 2025, the assembly adopted the following resolutions:

[Albania](#)

[Romania](#)

[Spain](#)

### **Hearing at the Court of Justice of the EU**



On 2 December 2025, the EAJ and three other European associations and organisations of judges were heard by the Grand Chamber of the Court of Justice of the European Union (C-555/24 P).

The appeal is directed against an order of 4 June 2024 of the Grand Chamber of the General Court dismissing the actions brought by them against the EU Council decision approving the recovery and resilience plan for Poland as

inadmissible because of lack of standing and legal interest of the four, even when representing suspended Polish judges (cases T-530/22 to T-533/22). The associations of judges launched their lawsuits to contribute to upholding judicial independence in the European Union and to stand by the suspended Polish judges.

For more information please see the [press release](#) and the article published on [EU LAW LIVE](#).

### **EAJ board statement on Greece**

On 13 December, 2025, the EAJ Board issued a statement on abusive behaviour by lawyers towards judges in Greece.

[Statement](#)



### **IBA Group statement on Peru**

On 2 September 2025, the Ibero American Group, regional group of the IAJ, issued a statement in defence of judicial independence in Peru, following the declarations of the Vice President of the Congress of the Republic, who accused a Peruvian judge of malfeasance for not applying a law in the exercise of diffuse constitutional and conventionality control, and therefore requested his removal before the competent disciplinary body of that country.

[Statement in Spanish](#)

### **IBA Group Statement on the Suspension of the Public Prosecutor of Peru, Ms. Delia Espinoza Valenzuela**

On 24 September, 2025, the IBA Group has issued a statement defending the autonomy and independence of the Public Prosecutor's Office in Peru, following the suspension of Public Prosecutor Delia Espinoza Valenzuela by the National Council of Justice.

The suspension was imposed after Ms. Espinoza refused to comply with a resolution ordering the reinstatement of former Public Prosecutor Patricia Benavides, despite the fact that this administrative decision is currently being challenged before the courts.

[Statement](#)

### **IBA Statement in defence of the right of association and freedom of expression of judges in Peru**

On 28 September, 2025, the IBA Group has issued a statement in defence of the right of association and freedom of expression of judges in Peru.

The National Council of Justice of that country (JNJ) has launched a preliminary investigation against the current President of the *Asociación Nacional de Magistrados del Perú*, Judge Oswaldo Ordoñez, for alleged bias in a case under his jurisdiction.

[Statement](#)



### **Report on the situation in Tunisia**

On 23 October, 2025, the "Association des Magistrats Tunisiens" has recently drafted a report describing in detail the serious situation the country is facing, highlighting the difficulties encountered by the judiciary in carrying out its functions and the concerns regarding the independence of the judicial power.

[Full report in English](#)

[Full report in French](#)

# RECENT ACTIVITIES AND CO-OPERATION WITH INTERNATIONAL BODIES

## International Association of Prosecutors (IAP)

For many years, our two associations have enjoyed a constructive and cordial relationship, keeping each other informed about our respective activities and meetings. As a sign of this long-standing cooperation, last July Mr. Oberto had a meeting with the Secretary General of the IAP in Italy. During this meeting, the challenges currently facing international professional associations was discussed and exchanged views on how the two organizations can best serve their members. In the coming year, the IAJ looks forward to further strengthening and developing this valuable collaboration.

## Procedural documents, when do they turn from a help to a hindrance?

Mr. Van Osch (the Netherlands), vice president of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Study commission of the IAJ, has written an article for a Dutch legal magazine about the subject of the Second Study Commission, the length of the written arguments in civil cases:

*'Procedural documents, when do they turn from a help to a hindrance?' A discussion of limiting the size of procedural documents from a comparative law perspective. 'Less is more'. Article in [English](#) and [Dutch](#)*

## 1st International Congress of Notaries in Berlin, 2-4 October, 2025 – IAJ's Contribution



From 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> October 2025, the 31<sup>st</sup> International Congress of Notaries was held in Berlin, Germany (see: <https://www.uinlberlin2025.com/en>). The event was organised by the International Union of Notaries (UINL) (<https://uinl.org/>), in collaboration with the German *Bundesnotarkammer*.

The International Association of Judges (IAJ) and its Secretariat-General participated in this initiative. Within the framework of this cooperation—and pursuant to the cooperation agreements signed between the IAJ and UINL 1994 and renewed in 2023 in Brasilia—the IAJ was represented by Judge Janja Roblek (Slovenia), Judge Yvonne Summer (Austria) and Secretary-General Giacomo Oberto.

- Secretary-General Oberto delivered opening remarks under Theme II of the Congress, entitled “Non-contentious Proceedings: New Roles at the Service of the Public,” outlining the current state of relations between the IAJ and UINL.

The official address of Secretary-General Oberto, delivered in German on behalf of the IAJ, is available here: [Richter und Notare in Europa: Mögliche gemeinsame Nenner](#)

During Round Table No. 4, dedicated to “Outside Perspectives”, the following IAJ representatives took the floor on these subjects:

The Judiciary's Point of View on the Transfer/Sharing of Competencies with Notaries –

- In Family Law: Giacomo Oberto, Secretary-General of the International Association of Judges (Italy) – [\*The Judiciary’s Point of View on the Transfer/Sharing of Competencies with Notaries in Family Law\*](#)
- In Estate and Housing Matters: Yvonne Summer, Judge, International Association of Judges (Austria)
- In Business and Economy Matters: Janja Roblek, Judge, International Association of Judges (Slovenia) – [\*The Judiciary’s point of view on the redistribution of competences between judges and notaries in business and economy matters\*](#)

Finally, on 4<sup>th</sup> October, Secretary-General Oberto participated as a panellist in the Forum on “The Values of Continental Law – Protection, Prevention, Pacification”, presenting on the topic: “Preventing Conflict in Family Law – The Usefulness of Notarised Family Contracts (marital property agreements, prenuptial agreements, etc.).”

The written outline of Secretary-General Oberto’s presentation is available here: [\*Preventing conflict in family law – The usefulness of notarized family contracts\*](#)

In this context, Secretary-General Oberto also presented his monograph entitled: “Contractual Solutions to Family Problems.”

The full text of the monograph is available here: [\*Contractual Solutions to Family Problems\*](#)

### **CEPEJ’s Meeting and Conference in Malta on the Theme of “Towards More Effective and People-Centered Digitalised Justice in Europe: Facing Future Challenges”**



CEPEJ (European Commission on the Efficiency of Justice of the Council of Europe) organised in Malta the meeting of its working groups and a conference on the theme of “Towards more effective and people-centered digitalised justice in Europe: facing future challenges”, with a view to prepare its activity programme.

IAJ and EAJ are represented there by IAJ First Vice-President and EAJ President Sabine Matejka and IAJ Secretary-General Giacomo Oberto.

As part of Malta’s Presidency of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, on the initiative of its President, Mr. Francesco Depasquale, the CEPEJ invited its various Working Groups and its Bureau to meet in Valletta (Malta) on 20 and 22 October 2025 for a conference on the theme ‘Towards more effective and people-centred digitalized justice in Europe’ and an exchange of views on future activities, in preparation of the CEPEJ action plan for 2026-2029 and of the CEPEJ’s programme of activities, which is expected to be adopted at its 45th plenary meeting, on 4 and 5 December.

The discussion on the challenges facing the justice system and on the future work of the CEPEJ will continue during an exchange of views with the President of the ECHR, Mattias Guyomar, on 22 October, during which the possibilities for more effective cooperation between the Court and the CEPEJ will be discussed, in particular the possible use of national judicial statistics in the preparation of the Court's decisions.

### **HCCH a/Bridged Innovation in Transnational Litigation 2025 conference**

On 20 November 2025, the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH) hosted an [online conference](#): HCCH a/Bridged: Innovation in Transnational Litigation. The Edition 2025 was on: *ENHANCING THE GLOBAL CIRCULATION OF JUDGMENTS WITH THE HCCH 2019 JUDGMENTS CONVENTION*.

The IAJ was represented by M.F.J.N. (Tijn) van Osch in Session II – The Legal and Practical Perspective: [presentation](#) – [power point](#).

### **IAJ's Secretary-General Report before the 45th Plenary Assembly of the CEPEJ in Strasbourg (4 and 5 December, 2025)**



On 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> December, 2025, IAJ Secretary-General Giacomo Oberto submitted to the 45<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly of the CEPEJ a report on the activities of the CEPEJ-SATURN WG on the subjects of judicial time management.

Information on the 45<sup>th</sup> Plenary Assembly of the CEPEJ available here:

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/cepej/-/the-european-commission-for-the-efficiency-of-justice-cepej-adopts-its-new-roadmap-for-the-next-four-years-focusing-on-the-protection-of-users-of-justice-within-the-framework-of-the-rule-of-law>