



IARLJ

International Association of Refugee Law Judges

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Newsletter

May 2011

President's Report

Dear Friends,

As I write this, it is the beginning of May 2011 and only four months to go to our next World Conference in Bled, Slovenia. It seems a short time, but just like the previous World conferences the last period is the busiest. Plans and schedules change, other unexpected things happen so there is a lot to do yet. Fortunately, everything is falling into place, although sometimes a little late.



With IARLJ Office Manager Liesbeth van de Meeberg, I went to Ljubljana and Bled in March to meet with Conference Organizer Bostjan Zalar and Council member Kashim Zannah and a representation of the Slovenian judiciary to discuss the progress. We visited the hotels and restaurants in Bled and around which will take part in the programme.

As regards the programme, some have indicated that it is very full. This is true. The reason for this is the combination of what were originally to be two conferences: that of the Slovenian Judiciary, and that of the IARLJ. We have chosen to try and include something for most tastes and preferences. We also wished to include speakers from as many parts of the world where we are represented. In addition, the Working Parties and the Chapters are to be facilitated during the three days. We hope that it will provide something for all. Updates of the actual programmes will follow from time to time.

Regarding the venue, all conference hotels are adjacent to each other and are situated at Lake Bled. The conference room is situated pointing to the lake. The Alpine countryside is so beautiful as to be tantalizing. The airport is half an hour's drive away and just in between Bled and the Slovenian capital Ljubljana. Ljubljana is a beautiful gem, a relatively small historic city with a car-free centre. It is a 'must see' site in an unspoilt area of Europe. In the preparation of the conference we have worked with a Slovenian Tour Agent who will be able to give any advise on tourist trips in the area.

As the closing of an EU Project on the use of Country of Origin Information in asylum procedures (the European Chapter was a co-partner, together with UNHCR and others), I attended a conference in Budapest with about 90 European Asylum Judges from almost all EU countries. Many IARLJ members were present, among them Council member Hugo

Storey. He talked about the Judicial Guidelines for assessing COI (published on our website) and our member Rodger Haines, who put the topic of the Conference in a global context with a comparison with the situation in New Zealand.

For now, I wish you all the best from Haarlem and hope to meet up soon in Bled!

Sebastiaan de Groot
IARLJ President

Chapter Reports

European Chapter

With financial assistance from Taiex (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument of the European Union), the European Chapter intends to host a number of seminars for countries in Europe which are not member states of the European Union. We hope to stage three seminars later in the year. The venues will be in Sarajevo, Ankara and Moscow. The subject matter will differ somewhat in each of the locations. For example, Turkey has achieved candidate status and the Ankara seminar will have an emphasis on recent developments in European law. The Sarajevo seminar will be for countries from the former Yugoslavia. One of these countries is Croatia which is also a candidate country and which will require the same EU law format. All of the countries participating at Sarajevo suffer from similar problems. There is a marked migration flow through the region towards countries within the EU. Partly because of this judges have few opportunities to write decisions. The Moscow session is for Russia and CIS countries and is scheduled to take place next November. The geographical area in this region is vast. Problems can differ. Some countries experience bureaucratic interference; xenophobia is often a major issue in the asylum process. Capacity building at judicial level is a constant problem.

Membership of the Association in this part of Europe has long been an issue. Between Ukraine, Russia and the CIS states, the one common language is Russian which is not a common feature elsewhere in Europe. Our conferences are seldom attended by judges from Eastern Europe unless UNHCR is in a position to cover expenses. A possible solution might be found in employing interpreters who would translate papers published by our Association into Russian and which would be made available to judges who want to update their knowledge of developments elsewhere in Europe and beyond. We will see if this proposal is realistic during the course of the year.

Finally, UNHCR will host a seminar in Kiev, Ukraine for judges and legal officials from Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova. The agenda in Kiev will not be as advanced as with the other three events. A solution is to identify ourselves to judges from eastern Europe who greatly need our support especially in the maintenance of their judicial independence.

Eamonn Cahill
Chair, Europe Chapter



*IARLJ President Sebastiaan de Groot and
Australasian Chapter Chair Rolf Driver
discuss weighty matters at a recent meeting*

Australasian Chapter

The highlight in the work of the Chapter in the period to April 2011 was the Train the Trainers workshop which was held in association with the UNHCR at Torquay, Victoria immediately following the National Tribunals Conference of the MRT-RRT (Migration Review Tribunal / Refugee Review Tribunal) at the same location. The choice of time and venue offered the advantage of permitting participating RRT members to stay on for the workshop. It also offered the opportunity to bring together at one location members of the RRT, the IPA (Independent Protection Assessment – that is, the Australian review body for off-shore arrivals) and the New Zealand IPT (Immigration Protection Tribunal).

The workshop was led by Rick Towle, regional director of the UNHCR. Rick was supported by Ellen Hansen, also from the UNHCR regional office. Fourteen decision makers from the RRT, IPA and IPT participated in the workshop, together with Federal Court judge Tony North and Federal Magistrate Rolf Driver. The workshop covered planning and designing of a training programme, exercises in the delivery of training, different learning approaches and impact assessment and follow up. The workshop programme gave a very valuable insight into principles of adult learning and group dynamics as well as cross cultural issues.

The workshop participants were extremely enthusiastic and active in their participation in the workshop programme. Feedback from participants on the day was very positive and Rick, Tony and I were all delighted with the success of the day. The participants all received certificates of completion issued jointly by the UNHCR and the IARLJ. Our intention is that the participants could now be available for selection to conduct future training opportunities in the region.

It was unfortunate that many more Chapter members wished to participate in the workshop than could be accommodated. I am exploring options for follow up Train the Trainers workshops in Sydney and Melbourne in consultation with Chapter members and the UNHCR.

World conference

The Association governing council is now in an advanced stage of preparation for the World Congress in Bled, Slovenia from 7-9 September 2011. An issue of concern to the Chapter has been to ensure that there is a sufficient Asian component in the programme. Apart from contributors from Australia and New Zealand, it is likely that judicial representatives from South Korea will attend, including a speaker. I am also pleased to report that the Indonesian Director-General of Human Rights, Professor Harkristuti Harkrisnowo has agreed in principle to speak at the Congress with Justice Tony North.

A conference in Delhi?

Recent correspondence between members of the Association governing council and Justice Markandey Katju of the Indian Supreme Court has highlighted the need for a closer engagement between the Association and the Indian judiciary. Justice Katju has suggested that the Australasian Chapter conduct a refugee law conference in Delhi. I am seeking to explore the feasibility of such a conference sometime in 2012 and will report further developments as they occur.

Rolf Driver

Chair, Australasian Chapter



Participants in the UNHCR Train the Trainer course held in Torquay, Australia in March 2011. Rick Towle and Ellen Hansen who conducted the course are on the right in the photo above.



Justice Visram (far left) from the Court of Appeal, Kenya, Justice Tony North (left), Justice Luka Kimaru (right), Justice Isaac Lenaola (far right) from the High Court of Kenya and presently a member of the Judicial Services Commission of Kenya

Meeting the Challenges the Refugee Law – Training the Judiciary in Kenya

Following the successful establishment of the South African Cluster of the African Chapter of the Association and then the establishment of the West African Cluster of the Chapter, Justice Isaac Lenaola of the High Court of Kenya, has proposed the establishment of an East African Cluster of the Chapter. Encouraged by this enthusiasm I visited Nairobi following the Expert Roundtable in Arusha and discovered a wonderful story of the efforts of the Kenyan judiciary. Kenya, a country of about 30 million, is host to just over 400,000 refugees and asylum seekers mostly from Somalia. In 2006 a Refugee Act was passed that provided that asylum seekers should be dealt with under that act and not under the legislation dealing with illegal entrants. It soon emerged that many Magistrates and Judges were not aware of the significance of this legislation and consequently when asylum seekers were arrested by the police under the legislation concerned with illegal entrants they were penalised under that regime. During Justice Isaac Lenaola's tenure as the Chairman of the Kenya Magistrates and Judges Association (KMJA), KMJA and UNHCR started negotiations to address this situation. With funding from UNHCR and the Swiss government a training program was (and continues to be) implemented to sensitize Magistrates and Judges in refugee law, and more specifically on the Refugee Act. In the three years of operation, the program has sensitized 250 of the just over 400 Judges and Magistrates and has influenced other programmes targeting the Kenyan Immigration department and Police as well as members of Court Users Committees; this are

committees comprising of prosecutors, police, lawyers, Magistrates and judges among other users of the court and they exist for each court in the country. The idea was a brainchild of KMJA and is responsible for a lot of reformative actions in the country's judiciary. Justice Lenaola gave me a copy of a handbook produced for the purposes of this training. As a result of the success of the program UNHCR has extended funding in order to deliver training to the remaining Judges and Magistrates.

As far as I know this program is a unique achievement. It is the first time I have heard of the judiciary leading the way in sensitising the community and decision makers in refugee law. This is the very type of initiative which George Okoth-Obbo, now the head of the UNHCR Africa Bureau, advocated so articulately at the Cape Town Conference.

Justice Lenaola also introduced me to a group of Judges in Kenya, including a judge of the Court of Appeal, currently (pending implementation of the Kenyan constitution) the highest court of law in the land, who are devoted to the advancement of refugee law and enthusiastic for the establishment of an East African Cluster of the African Chapter of the Association. This matter will be further considered at the World Conference in Bled in September.

Tony North
Australia



Justice Tony North and Justice Isaac Leanola with Kenyan magistrates and judges at the Nairobi meeting.

UNHCR Expert Roundtable – held at Arusha, Tanzania on 11 – 12 April 2011

This Expert Roundtable was sponsored by UNHCR and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. It aimed to bring together experts in international refugee law, international criminal law, international humanitarian law, and international human rights law to explore the complementarities between these various areas of the law. The event is part of the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Refugee Convention. It was designed to respond to the perceived fragmentation of international law in these various areas. It was significant that the event occurred on the 15th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide at the place where the leaders of the genocide ultimately faced justice in the ICTR. The Prime Minister of Rwanda and a number of cabinet ministers responsible for the genocide received lengthy, and in some cases life, sentences from the ICTR for their part in the genocide.

UNHCR invited IARLJ to send a delegate to the Expert Roundtable. The invitation was circulated amongst members of the IARLJ and Justice Tony North volunteered and was ultimately selected to attend.

Many subjects which seemed to overlap between these various areas of the law were discussed. In some cases it was concluded that each area of the law dealt specifically with matters in a way relevant only to that area, and in other cases it was generally concluded that the learning in one area applied equally in the other. Thus, for instance, jurisprudence concerning the definition of war crimes and crimes against humanity in international criminal law is learning directly applicable to exclusion under Article 1F of the Convention. In due course, UNHCR will produce a summary of the outcome of the Expert Roundtable and the newsletter will hopefully have a reference to it.

In the course of the discussion concerning exclusion, UNHCR indicated that it was likely to seek to improve its current Guideline on Exclusion. It sought expressions of interest from the gathering to assist in the finalisation of that Guideline. The IARLJ indicated that it would be happy to be involved. The participation of the IARLJ in the Expert Roundtable is a pleasing example of the recognition by UNHCR of the value of the IARLJ in the work of UNHCR.

The event was also a valuable opportunity to further connections between the IARLJ and the African judiciary. The Expert Roundtable was opened by the Chief Justice of Tanzania, Justice Mohamed Othman. The Chief Justice is very interested in the IARLJ World Conference in Slovenia and details have been forwarded to him as a result. Similarly, the event gave the opportunity to meet the President of the African Court on Human and Peoples Rights, Justice Niyungeko, who also indicated an interest in the work of the IARLJ, and details of the World Conference have also been forwarded to him.

One of the participants in the Expert Roundtable was Laurence Masha. He was the Minister for Home Affairs in Tanzania in April 2010 when Tanzania naturalised 162,000 asylum seekers from Burundi. Mr Masha expressed great pride in this initiative. The acceptance of such a large number of refugees brought into sharp focus the difference in

approach between the underdeveloped world which has 80 per cent of the world's refugees, and the restrictive approach of countries in the developed world.

Tony North
Australia

Working Parties at the World Conference

The International Association of Refugee Law Judges (IARLJ) strives to achieve a number of its constitutionally endowed fundamental objectives, primarily, to assist in the development of a coherent body of international refugee jurisprudence. In fact, the IARLJ has defined itself in the following way: "The Association is an independent body of individual judges whose aims are broadly *to encourage standardization of practice procedure and interpretation of refugee law and practice* throughout the world." It is worth underscoring that IARLJ members are committed to promoting "within the judiciary and quasi-judicial decision makers world-wide *a common understanding of refugee law principles and to encourage the use of fair practices and procedures to determine refugee law issues.*" (*IARLJ Constitution*, Part 1: Objects of the Association, Section 2(1), Emphasis added) Indeed, it is the Inter-Conference Working Parties Process of the Association that has been one of the principal means and mechanisms for promoting these fundamental objectives.

The Inter-Conference Working Party Process is comprised of a number of discrete transnational groups of IARLJ members, called Working Parties, who study particular problematic areas of international refugee law with the aim of trying to resolve any discrepancies and divergences in the application and interpretation of international refugee law instruments. Since the Inter-Conference Working Party Process was first establishing, following our second World Conference of the IARLJ in Nijmegen, The Netherlands and the formal founding of our Association in Warsaw, Poland, in 1997, the IARLJ Working Parties have presented their conference research papers, reports, and related materials, at each of the six subsequent IARLJ World Conferences.

The IARLJ Inter-Conference Working Parties Process presently consists of ten Working Parties as follows:

- *African Asylum Systems*, Rapporteur: Amor Boubakri, Faculty of Law, Economics and Politics, University of Sousse, Tunisia.
- *Asylum Procedures*, Rapporteur: Justice Jacek Chlebny, President, Regional Administrative Court in Warsaw, and Justice, Supreme Administrative Court, Poland;
- *Country of Origin and Country Guidance*, Rapporteur: Dr. Hugo Storey, Upper Tribunal, Immigration and Asylum Chamber, United Kingdom
- *Exclusion Clauses*, Rapporteur: Professor Satvinder Juss, School of Law, King's College London, and Part-Time Judge, Upper Tribunal, Immigration and Asylum Chamber, United Kingdom
- *Expert Evidence*, Rapporteur: Geoffrey Care, Chairperson of the Eurasyllum International Advisory Board, founding President and life member of the IARLJ,

former Chairman of the Immigration Appeal Tribunal, United Kingdom, and Justice of the High Court of Zambia;

- *Human Rights Nexus*, Rapporteur: Justice Russel Zinn, Federal Court (Canada);
- *Membership in a Particular Social Group*, Rapporteur: Patricia Milligan-Baldwin, Tribunal, Immigration and Asylum Chamber, United Kingdom;
- *1951 Refugee Convention and Subsidiary Protection*, Rapporteurs: Linda Kirk, Refugee Review and Migration Review Tribunals, Australia, and Berto Volpentesta, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB);
- *Statelessness*, Rapporteur: Lois Figg, Assistant Deputy Chairperson, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB)
- *Vulnerable Persons*, Rapporteur: Catriona Jarvis, Upper Tribunal, Immigration and Asylum Chamber, United Kingdom.

IARLJ Working Party Rapporteurs, supported by their Associate Rapporteurs, have the responsibility of leading the work of their specific Working Party which are typically between six to ten IARLJ members. The composition of IARLJ Working Parties is balanced carefully to try to ensure that all continents and legal systems and traditions are represented. The roles of the Rapporteurs and participants have been described in some detail and are posted on our IARLJ website.

As the Association gears up for our 9th IARLJ World Conference in Bled, Slovenia, the IARLJ Working Parties have been busy preparing their conference research papers, reports, and other materials, for presentation and dissemination to the delegates who will be attending the Bled Conference and the IARLJ membership as a whole.

The IARLJ Working Parties play an active role at IARLJ World Conferences. The Rapporteurs and Associate Rapporteurs hold a breakfast meeting to consider their work and activities between World Conferences and to decide on a work plan as they go forward to the next Conference. IARLJ World Conference programmes also incorporate a highly dynamic and interactive segment in its proceedings that allows each of the IARLJ Working Parties to meet with interested IARLJ World Conference delegates to discuss their conference research papers and reports and the legal issues that pertain to their specific areas of international refugee law and practice. The IARLJ Working Party parallel and plenary sessions have proven to be the most well attended, informative and interesting sessions at our World Conferences. The Bled Conference will feature Working Party parallel and plenary sessions on the second day (Thursday 8 September).

The IARLJ Inter-Conference Working Party Process has helped to further the work of our Association by providing an ongoing forum for serious research and reflection and for trying to address some of the most pressing legal issues and concerns confronting international refugee law and practice. For example, the Country of Origin and Country Guidance Working Party has developed a checklist of “Judicial Criteria for Assessing Country of Origin Information (COI)” (see the *International Journal of Refugee Law* (2009) 21 (1), pp, 149-168) and the Expert Evidence Working Party has issued its Guidelines on the “Judicial Approach to Expert Medical Evidence” (see the IARLJ website and follow the links to Working Parties, Guidelines Expert Evidence). The IARLJ Working Parties have made many other significant substantive contributions to the Association in many other ways since they were first established by the Association and undoubtedly will continue to do so at our forthcoming World Conference in Bled, Slovenia.

IARLJ World Conferences are not only the premier highlights of our Association's activities but a genuine opportunity to meet and share viewpoints and perspective with judicial colleagues and adjudicators in refugee law from all parts of the globe. It is an opportunity for interaction and dialogue and professional development but also an opportunity for personal engagement in the mission and vision of our Association. We all look forward to meeting you in Bled, Slovenia, and to welcome your direct participation and, hopefully, ongoing engagement and participation in our Association's Inter-Conference Working Party Process.

Dr. James C. Simeon

Coordinator, IARLJ Inter-Conference Working Party Process



Dr James Simeon, Convenor of the Working Parties is pictured centre (in blue shirt) with other IARLJ participants at the Toronto workshop which he arranged.

Critical Issues in Refugee Law – Research Workshop held at York University, Toronto, Canada on 26 – 27 April 2011

James Simeon was the first Executive Director of the Association and served from 2005 to 2008. Since then he has been an Associate Professor at the Centre for Refugee Studies at York University. In that capacity he has arranged three research workshops on Critical Issues in Refugee Law.

These workshops are a unique collaboration between the academic world and the judiciary. They have been enthusiastically supported by York University which has embraced and promoted a concept of building bridges between the academic world and the world of professional practice. James has been able to bring together his academic world and the judges who he served so well as Executive Director.

In particular, he has fostered the involvement of judges from Africa at the workshops. At the just concluded workshop Judge President Bernard Ngoepe from the High Court in Pretoria attended, as well as Justice Esmé Chombo from Malawi. The newly appointed Chair of the Refugee Appeal Board in South Africa, Mr Maemo Chipu, attended for the first time. Judge President Ngoepe gave a particular perspective to the participants from the standpoint of South Africa with large mixed inflows and limited resources to deal with them. This contribution highlighted the need to address the refugee law issues faced by underdeveloped countries and provided a salutary warning against too great an emphasis at such gatherings on the issues faced by developed countries whose refugee numbers are much less.

Members of the IARLJ played a leading role in the 2011 workshop. Professor James Hathaway facilitated discussions over the two days and also established a very high level of exchange by a riveting opening keynote address which surveyed the issues in refugee law from a very broad perspective. Chief Justice Alan Lutfy of the Federal Court of Canada chaired the workshop in his usual highly professional and good natured way. Justices James O'Reilly and Robert Barnes from the Federal Court of Canada, Senior Immigration Judge Hugo Storey from the Upper Tribunal in the UK, Justice Harold Dorig from the German Supreme Administrative Court and Brian Goodman, the Chair of the IRB of Canada, also participated.

It is expected that the proceedings of this critical workshop will ultimately be published. Those issues ranged from the future of international protection for stateless people to the interface between soft law and hard law, the intersection of international refugee law, international humanitarian law and international criminal law to security issues and special procedures.

CAT Training for decision makers – held in Hong Kong on 5-11 March 2011

Hong Kong is not a signatory to the Refugees Convention but is a signatory to the Convention Against Torture (the United Kingdom made notification in 1992 that CAT applied to Hong Kong). Many claimants who might seek protection under the Refugees Convention such as, for example, Tamils from Sri Lanka apply for asylum under CAT.

From 1992 until 2003 the Hong Kong Administration relied on the UNHCR to make determinations under CAT but in *Prabakar v Secretary for Security [2005] HKCLR 289* the Court of Final Appeal determined that reliance on the UNHCR did not accord with procedural fairness thus requiring the Hong Kong Administration to implement its own procedures.

The Hong Kong Administration set up its own system for CAT determination in 2009 which follows fairly closely refugee determination processes in the UK. Most noticeably, the procedures on appeal are adversarial.

The Immigration Department of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region approached the UK and Australian Tribunals for assistance in training their decision makers in determining applications lodged in respect to the Convention Against Torture.

Mr Markus Schmidt, Senior Legal Adviser with UNHCR Geneva, Mr Mark Ockelton, Vice President of the Upper Tribunal Immigration and Asylum Chamber in the United Kingdom, and Dr Irene O'Connell Senior Reviewer, Independent Protection Assessment Office Australia provided the training. Mark and Irene are both members of the IARLJ.

Two training programs were run; one for the second tier decision makers known as Adjudicators, who are primarily Judges, Magistrates and Registrars the other for first tier decision makers who are immigration department officers and legal officers and petitioners who assist in presenting the department view at the review stage.

The training programs proved to be a success and further such programs are planned.

Irene O'Connell
Australia

Honour for Paul Tiedemann

In December 2010, Dr Paul Tiedemann and his team were awarded the *Hessischer Hochschulpreis - Exzellenz in der Lehre* (Hessian University Award - Excellence in Teaching) 2010, which came with 100,000 euros.

Paul received this honour in recognition of the work being done at the Refugee Law Clinic which he established in 2007 at the Justus Liebig University in Giessen, Germany. This was the first Law Clinic in all of Germany. Even before UNHCR set up its office in Berlin, Paul had been trying to stimulate interest amongst universities for this project, but unfortunately in vain. Finally in 2007, Thomas Gross, then a professor in Giessen (now Frankfurt) was convinced of the usefulness of the Law Clinic project and gave Paul all the support he needed.

Not only is the Law Clinic idea new in Germany, but it is also very unusual to teach refugee law at the university. However, many students have shown a keen interest and it was students who nominated the Law Clinic for the prize.

Meet Your Council - *Katelijne Declerck* from Belgium

My original idea to go into the diplomatic service stopped when in 1979 I was asked to lead a special refugee emergency project in Thailand under the auspices of the King of Belgium. In 1981 I worked for a brief period for UNICEF and went to Cameroon. In 1983 I joined UNHCR until 1994 when I became a judge.



I have been privileged to work around the world in various capacities, from crisis situations in Thailand, Poland (1989) and Haiti (1994) to legislative drafting in the Caribbean and legal representation in Luxemburg and the Netherlands and Belgium. I left UNHCR in 1994 for my three children were at a school age and my late husband, a law professor, was not able to move around as much as was required by an international association. I decided to stay in Belgium where the asylum system had just changed setting up the Permanent Appeals Commission for refugees. I was nominated as a judge to this court. From 1996 to 2000 I was a member of the ad hoc working group on Gender, asylum, migration and human rights of the National Women's Council of Belgium and from 1999 to 2001 of the Belgian Ministerial advisory group on gender issues.

I have been in contact with the IARLJ from the early start and gradually became more active. In October 2002 when I became the vice-president of IARLJ I dropped my volunteer activities as an expert for the umbrella agency of the Flemish non-governmental development agencies in which capacity I made visits to Central and East Africa. As knowledge is something to be shared, I was pleased with the opportunities by the European Union, UNHCR, Helsinki Committee, the Judicial Academy of Trier and others to give refugee law training for judges, administrative officers and police officers around Europe and Central Asia. In 2002 the IARLJ set up a European Branch in order to be able to receive co-financing from the European Union for training activities around the European Union and neighbouring countries. The *lustitia* project was a great success and training activities could continue through the financing of the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument of the European Union (TaieX). Since 2006, together with John Barnes from the UK I represent the IARLJ in the Reference Group for the European Asylum curriculum (EAC) which is one of the largest asylum projects in Europe and consists of preparatory self-studies in online e-learning. In May 2007 after passing the exams, I was elevated to the Council for Alien Law litigations in Brussels dealing with all administrative appeals concerning non-citizens.

To balance a hectic professional life I like, and so does our dog, to go Nordic walking in the woods near my home. I like gardening and any sport related to water, either on solid frozen water, or in, on, and deep under water. I try not to miss the orchestra rehearsals where I play the violin. A good book is a real treat.

Katelijne Declerck
Belgium

Vive le chain de la solidarité – a colleague in Côte d'Ivoire in need

Our Australian member Suzanne Leal was in touch with Judge Dominique Digbeu Ble of the Supreme Court in Ivory coast. Suzanne did whisper translation for him and other colleagues at the Cape Town World Conference. Suzanne was concerned about his situation in view of the situation in Ivory Coast and inquired if we could help him in any way. Dominique confirmed to Suzanne that the most essential thing is that he is alive and further:

Je suis particulièrement touché par votre démarche qui démontre que notre association constitue une famille malgré la disparité des membres. Comme vous le suivez la situation en Côte d'Ivoire est aujourd'hui préoccupante surtout du point de vue humanitaire. Je suis avec ma fille sans argent depuis deux mois toutes les banques du pays autant fermées. (...)

In line with Suzanne's suggestion, the IARLJ is happy to assist with the transfer of money. Pending the opening of a separate account, we invite members who would wish to contribute towards the need of our colleague in Côte d'Ivoire to do this on the IARLJ bank account or by credit card. If you wish to make a donation, then please send an e-mail to the IARLJ secretariat info@iarlj.org to get the details of the bank account or how to provide your credit card details. We will be in touch with Judge Ble on the best way to get the funds to him and of course report back.

For the future, we will open a bank account specifically for such matters.

Thanks very much Suzanne for your involvement and initiative!

Memo from Professor James Hathaway

We're excited and pleased to reveal our completely redesigned Refugee Caselaw Site <www.refugeecaselaw.org>, which is now open for business.

The carefully reworked site features, in addition to an elegant new look and feel, rich new members-only features to help you research smarter, not harder. Members can now save their searches and create auto-update email alerts linked to those searches. They can also ask for advice from their fellow practitioners -- or offer it - using a new "Need Advice" feature that comes with unique privacy features allowing users to control exactly who sees which comments. Advice and comments left by other users are searchable, too. Users can even set up email alerts to let them know when someone has responded to advice or comments.

The new features are rounded out with a more versatile "Briefcase" function that allows users to share contents with others; the ability to comment on or rate RCS cases; and a very comprehensive member account area that allows users to administer saved searches, email alerts, personal preferences and privacy settings.

Additionally, our popular "Guided Search" and "Quick Search" tools have been expanded

and refined. The newly redesigned expandable drop-down menus on the "Guided Search" page make it easier to select multiple criteria and also feature a new summary window displaying your selections. The "Quick Search" page now enables users to search by words, phrases or word combinations. And the new "Case Details" page now displays all related "Hathaway Concepts" and "Hathaway Numbers" for convenient cross-referencing when creating or refining searches. Finally, cases will be easier to share.

We're very excited about the new RCS and its important new enhancements and hope you will be, too. Please stop by soon and try it out, and be sure to spread the word to your colleagues, as well!

Memo to women members of the IARLJ

Since the establishment of the Women Judges Group at the World Conference in New Zealand in 2002, there have been some wonderful dinners at the subsequent conferences. However, in Cape Town, no such event was organised and this led to a number of questions and expressions of regret.

The organisation of the Women Judges Forum is keen to have a women's meeting at the next world conference in Bled. However, since the programme is rather full, it is not easy to plan such an event in a way that there will be enough time to meet and speak.

Therefore Liesbeth has been asked to do an inventory of the women registrants to find out if there is a desire to have a separate women's event. So could you please reply email Liesbeth with your views on the following questions:

- Would you like to attend a women judges gathering?

If the answer is yes, would you then prefer:

- dinner on Wednesday - the first day of the conference (although bear in mind that this means you will not be able to attend the boat trip to and concert on the island, followed by a traditional informal dinner elsewhere);
- lunch on Thursday;
- either one - no preference.

Please could the women members attending the IARLJ conference at Lake Bled let Liesbeth know whether or not they are interested in a women judges' meeting, and if they are, which time they would prefer.

Last word

There will be one more newsletter before the conference – an issue is scheduled to appear in late August. Please send your contributions by the beginning of August. All contributions are welcome – reports of interesting seminars you have attended, or books you have read, or appointments that have been made. Send material to the editor: suezelinka@bigpond.com .

Remember, this is *your* newsletter and it can only be as good as the contributions that come in!

*Sue Zelinka
Australia.*