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INTERNATIONAL  
INSTITUTE  
OF HUMANITARIAN LAW  
www.iihl.org

# NEWSLETTER



## NOBEL DAYS IN OSLO

Dear Fellows, Alumni and Friends of the International Institute for Humanitarian Law.

For any of you who were able to attend our first (and probably for the future, annual) Alumni and Friends of the IIHL Meeting in Oslo, Norway with seminars and meetings in conjunction with the Nobel Peace Prize Celebrations and in co-operation with the Norwegian Bar Association's Human Rights Board and the Center for Continuing Legal Education of the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights, you will know what a truly remarkable experience it was for all of us. For those of you who were unable to take advantage of this amazing opportunity to reunite with colleagues from the Institute, network with others instrumental in the fields of international human rights, and international humanitarian law, I hope to spark your interest in the coming year's alumni events by briefly encapsulating the Oslo experience for you.

We were treated to two days of seminar presentations that ran the gamut from the Chairman of the Oslo Chapter of the Norwegian Bar Association, Mr. Sigurd Knutzon on "The Role of Lawyers in the New Global Law," to the Norwegian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs giving his personal insights on "International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights, and Peace Negotiations" to, Judge Erkki Kourula, of the International Criminal Court, in The Hague, to the Bishop of Oslo, Gunar Stalsett, a former member of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee.

All of these presentations were fascinating and insightful and would have made the trip to Oslo worthwhile in themselves, but one cannot even imagine how moving, inspirational, and absolutely profound all the actual activities associated with the Nobel Peace Prize were for all of us. The ceremony honoring the Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai, her acceptance speech, the CNN live interview with her, and the Nobel Peace Prize Concert in her honor were so moving that the vast majority of us were moved to tears at several junctures. One cannot even explain the emotions associa-

### CONTENTS

- Nobel Days, Oslo 8-12 December 2004
- Military Courses
- Activities 2005

## THE XXVIII<sup>th</sup> IIHL ROUND TABLE

The XXVIII<sup>th</sup> Round Table on current problems of International Humanitarian Law was held in Sanremo from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> of September 2004 and dealt with the "STRENGTHENING MEASURES FOR THE RESPECT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW AND OTHER RULES PROTECTING HUMAN DIGNITY IN ARMED CONFLICT".



This edition gathered together around 250 participants amongst experts, diplomats, politicians, university professors, academics, military officers and humanitarian personnel. On that occasion the Institute presented its report on "Measures of Implementing International Humanitarian Law - Current Situations and Certain Reflections" elaborated by Yves SANDOZ in collaboration with Delphine PRATLONG.



ted with being part of such a revered ceremony.

For those of us who devote our lives to the protection of human rights, the rule of law, and the upholding of international humanitarian law, such a series of events reinforces our commitment to the work we do.

There was an overwhelming sense of solidarity with all who toil in the world that often scoffs at our idealism and our belief in peace, humanitarian law, and human rights for all. Music, the universal language, conveyed this spirit so triumphantly at the concert where several musical genres all mingled together to send the message of the universality of hope and peace. Interspersed throughout all these activities was a vast array of cultural excursions in Oslo (such as the Henrik Ibsen Museum, the Norwegian Folkmuseum, the Viking Ship Museum,



The Nobel Peace Laureate, Wangari Maathai

and the National Gallery of Art) that were a wonderful bonus to our very busy schedule of events.

Two other highlights of the experience were the visit to the Norwegian Parliament where Prof. Madhi Abdel Hadi, of the PASSIA in Jerusalem spoke of the current situation in the Middle East in the Post Arafat Environment. Professor Hadi's talk was one of the most provocative and at the same time one that filled many of us with great sorrow. We were uplifted, nevertheless, by the Bishop of Oslo, Gunnar Stalsett, who reminded us that the last serious attempt at Peace in the Middle East bears the Oslo name as well as the former peace prize recipients who moved the process along despite the fact that so much more needs to be done to reach a real Peace in the Middle East. The Bishop ended his very interesting and candid talk with us by inviting us to the mass he was giving in the Lutheran Cathedral in Oslo for the Nobel Laureate. We were honored to have been invited and those of us who attended the mass were moved yet again by the power of hope and be-

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from the first page

lief in the ideals to which we are all committed, namely peace and human rights.

None of this would have been possible, nor nearly as enjoyable, informative,



Torch Procession

and entertaining were it not for the organizational and creative efforts of Vidar Birkeland who went above and beyond hospitality and graciousness in all that he did for everyone associated with the Institute. Everywhere we went, Vidar seemed to have magical diplomatic powers that opened doors (quite literally, even at the National Museum of Art where the remaining Edvard Munch collection has been closed to the public since the robbery of The Scream, our group managed to get in to view it) or reservations at the Grand Hotel on the night of the Peace Concert where all the musicians and entertainers were dining, or the countless times he talked our way into cafes, museums, city hall, parliament, not to mention obtaining the much sought after seats to the concert. Vidar's lovely sister Guro, shares Vidar's gift for hospitality to the point of virtually single handedly preparing a traditional Christmas feast of reindeer and other Norwegian specialties on Ulvoya Island where she lives.



The Nobel Concert

The entire experience was positively inspirational from the opening lectures at the University of Oslo's Faculty of Law to all the Nobel Peace Prize Ceremonies and the cultural cornucopia of Oslo, each of us were enriched by the experience individually and collectively. So, when future Alumni and Friends of the IIHL opportunities arise, I urge all my fellow alumni and friends to take advantage of them. You will be reunited with colleagues and friends and reenergized by the experience.

Christianna Nichols LEAHY  
Associate Professor of  
Comparative Politics,  
McDaniel College  
USA

## Refugee Law Courses

29 <sup>th</sup> Course (French)	11 – 15 May
30 <sup>th</sup> Course (English)	1 – 5 June
31 <sup>st</sup> Course (Spanish)	26 – 30 October
32 <sup>nd</sup> Course (English)	2 – 6 November

The Institute held the above-mentioned Courses on Refugee Law, in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, with Espana con Acnur, the U.S. State Department and the Swiss Federal Office for Migration.

The participants represented, as usual, all the different countries of the world. In particular, at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Course participants from countries where refugee protection is really at stake, such as Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and several African countries took part.



## IIHL Summer Course

The 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the IIHL Summer Course on International Humanitarian Law was held in Sanremo from the 5<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> and in Geneva from 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> of July 2004.



The next edition will be held in Sanremo/Geneva from 4<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> July 2005. For further information, please, take a look at our website ([www.iihl.org](http://www.iihl.org)) and download the Information Bulletin n° 4.

## Light a Candle for Peace with the IIHL and the Sanremo UNESCO Club

The Institute participated in a special ceremony together with the UNESCO Club. This initiative, which was held at the exact same time in different parts of the world as well as Italy, consisted in an exhibition of drawings, poems and written texts from pupils of the local public school, which expressed a feeling of hope and peace. On Friday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2004 the Institute hosted this symbolic but meaningful celebration at its official seat, Villa Ormond, gathering together classes from



the local public schools, which contributed to the initiative by collecting the texts, poems and drawings. During the celebration a candle was lit.

The UNESCO Clubs are national representative centres of UNESCO which promote and encourage initiatives, at the local level, to promote UNESCO principles and objectives. The International Institute of Humanitarian Law has been actively engaged, since 2002, in a productive collaboration with Sanremo's UNESCO Club.

# NEWS

## FROM THE MILITARY DEPARTMENT

From May to December the Institute ran an important number of Military Courses:

- 107<sup>th</sup> Basic Course on the Law of Armed Conflict (in English with an Arabic-speaking class), from 17<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> May with 55 participants;
- 108<sup>th</sup> Basic Course on the Law of Armed Conflict (in Spanish), from 13<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> September, 24 participants;
- 109<sup>th</sup> Basic Course on the Law of Armed Conflict (in English with a Russian-speaking class), from 8<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> November, 103 participants;
- 5<sup>th</sup> Specialised Course on the Law of Armed Conflict, from 11<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 66 participants;
- Planners and Executors of Naval and Air Operations, from 29<sup>th</sup> November to 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 29 participants
- 1<sup>st</sup> Course on International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law in Peace Operations, from 6<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> December with 54 participants.



The 109<sup>th</sup> Course (above group picture) was a particularly special event as it was the largest Course which the Institute had ever run, with about 104 military officers from all over the world at the same time.



Thanks to the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and especially the Italian Embassy in Baghdad and in Beijing, it was possible to receive a delegation of participants from Iraq and from China at the 1<sup>st</sup> Course on International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law in Peace Operations (held in Sanremo from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> December 2004). The Iraqi delegation included the Deputy Minister for Human Rights, Mrs. Alda SH. Ussayran.



Participants during one of the Courses



Gen. Vargas (from the Philippines) and his daughter, on the right, visited the IIHL on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September 2004.



Major Livar Salte, from the Norwegian Armed Forces, joined the Military Department of the Institute in late July.



On the 10<sup>th</sup> September a delegation of the Institute was invited to visit the prestigious Italian Navy Petty Officers' cadets training ship "PALINURO". Above a group picture with, in the middle, the commanding Officer of ITS Palinuro, Commander Flavio BUGOSI

## My experience at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Refugee Law Course

During an internship at the International Institute of Humanitarian Law of San Remo, I had the chance to attend the 32<sup>nd</sup> Course on International Refugee Law, held between 2 – 6 November 2004. This represented for me an excellent opportunity to deepen my knowledge of this branch of international law, after the completion of a Masters degree in human rights. I really enjoyed those five days of intensive learning and animated discussions, in the beautiful framework of the Institute and its luxuriant garden.

I found the course useful and comprehensive, since it dealt both with the theoretical aspects of international refugee law as well as with its practical implementation, both by international organisations and at the national level. All fundamental elements of international refugee law were touched upon, ranging from the notion of persecution and the nexus requirement in the refugee definition, to the issue of internally displaced persons. Some critical issues, such as the question of refugee protection in situations of large-scale influx, were also addressed.

Most of the lectures held in the plenary sessions were followed by the discussion of case studies in smaller groups. On these occasions everybody was called to give his or her own opinion on how to deal with some practical situation. There we often found out that, as it often happens, more than one solution was possible, which reminded us to always keep an open mind when dealing with such a complex matter. A large number of useful and updated documents was also distributed during the course, which will probably have made somebody exceed their weight allowance on the flight back home.

This course was particularly enriching also due to the fact that the lecturers had different backgrounds. Some were part of the academic world, some were experienced practitioners of UNHCR and OCHA and others were civil servants, working for national refugee offices, all of them distinguished experts in the field of international refugee law and refugee protection. The issue of refugees and internally displaced persons is always very sensitive on the political level and practice demonstrates that it is often difficult to translate legal principles into fair and good decisions, for example regarding questions of refugee status determination and the assessment of credibility of refugee claimants. In this respect, it was particu-

## PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES 2005



### I. MILITARY COURSES

International Military Courses on the Law of Armed Conflict

110 <sup>th</sup> Course (English)	7 – 18 March, Sanremo
111 <sup>th</sup> Course (English with Russian class)	18 – 29 April, Sanremo
112 <sup>th</sup> Course (French)	9 – 20 May, Sanremo
113 <sup>th</sup> Course (English with Arab class)	30 May – 10 June, Sanremo
114 <sup>th</sup> Course (Spanish)	26 September – 7 October, Sanremo
115 <sup>th</sup> Course (English with Russian class)	31 October – 11 November, Sanremo

12<sup>th</sup> Course for Directors and Instructors of Training Programmes in LOAC (English-French)  
21 – 25 November, Sanremo

Competition on IHL for Military Academies – Fourth edition (English)  
4 – 8 April, Sanremo

6<sup>th</sup> Specialised Course on the Law of Armed Conflict (English/French)  
10 – 21 October, Sanremo

5<sup>th</sup> Course for Planners and Executors of Air Operations (English)  
21 – 25 November, Sanremo

5<sup>th</sup> Course for Planners and Executors of Naval Operations (English)  
21 – 25 November, Sanremo

5<sup>th</sup> Course on International Human Rights and Humanitarian Law in Peace Operations (English)  
13 – 17 June, Sanremo

### II. COURSES ON INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE LAW

33 <sup>rd</sup> Course (French)	12 – 16 April, Sanremo
34 <sup>th</sup> Course (English)	24 – 28 May, Sanremo
35 <sup>th</sup> Course (English)	25 – 29 October, Sanremo
36 <sup>th</sup> Course (Spanish)	15 – 19 November, Sanremo

III. 5<sup>th</sup> SUMMER COURSE ON INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW (English)  
4 – 16 July, Sanremo/Geneva

### IV. INTERNATIONAL ROUND TABLE

“UN Security Council, Peacekeeping Forces and the Application of International Humanitarian Law, Human Rights and Refugee Law”  
8 – 10 September, Sanremo

### V. “STAGES” FOR RESEARCHERS AND STUDENTS

larly enlightening to see what kind of problems states must face in the day-to-day implementation of international refugee law.

Fourty-four participants from all continents attended the course, so the course was also an excellent occasion for exchanging ideas and sharing experiences. Many questions were raised and, due to their knowledge and experience, the lecturers could always help us clear our doubts and provide illustrative examples. In one way or another, everybody benefited from this experience which, above all, represented a precious occasion of reflection and confrontation.

Eventually, I can say that this course definitely met my expectations and I am glad that I had the opportunity to attend it. I wish the Institute all the best for the future, in pursuing its long and praised tradition of dissemination of international refugee law across the world.



Irene Ferraris  
Intern, IIHL



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