



**World Jurist**  
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## COVER LETTER

**Javier Cremades García**  
**President of the World Jurist Association**

As president of the World Jurist Association, it is a pleasure to greet all the WJA members and friends on the occasion of our quarterly WJA Journal.

As you all know the WJA was formed in response to an international outcry for a free and open forum where judges, lawyers, government officials, law professors and other professionals from around the world could work cooperatively to strengthen and expand the Rule of Law and its institutions. For 60 years the WJA

served as an instrument to bring together stakeholders from a wide range of professional fields to promote a fruitful and cooperative dialogue in favor of peace, prosperity, justice, and equality.

Therefore, with the publication of our Journal, we seek to foster collaboration among different stakeholders and establish a conversation within the international juridical community about the most relevant current issues in terms of human rights, Rule of Law, judicial independence, climate change, or energy transition.

On our first issue of our quarterly WJA Journal, please allow me to shortly go through our main activities and distinctions. The WJA has been organizing and celebrating biennial congresses around the world, since its founding in 1963 under Charles Rhyne, president of the American Bar Association, in places such as the United States, Switzerland, Thailand, Philippines, Brazil, Egypt, China, South Korea, Canada, Spain, Qatar, Australia, Ukraine, or the city Athens in fulfillment of its mission to bring together leaders from different countries and legal backgrounds to interact and learn from each other and to create consciousness in favor of the Rule of Law, world justice, defense of human beings, their dignity, rights and freedoms.

In July 2023, the 28th biennial Congress took place, coinciding with the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the World Jurist Association. During several days, New York became the world capital of Law and hosted this international conference, marked by the participation of several heads of State, presidents of national and international courts among others. As such the World Law Congress 2023 was honored to have amongst its invitees H.M. King Felipe VI of Spain; Justin Trudeau, president of Canada; Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission; Guillermo Lasso, president of Ecuador; Anthony Kennedy, Senior Justice at the Supreme Court of the United States; Kerry Kennedy, president of the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights; Rosalie Abella, former Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada and human rights activist; Civil Rights leader Andrew Young; Martin Baron, former editor of the Washington Post and Boston Globe, and a prestigious group of presidents of national and international courts, professors and lawyers, women and men committed a world "ruled by peace and not by force".

On the occasion of the World Law Congress, New York 2023, the World Law Peace & Liberty Award was bestowed on to the European Commission, represented by its president Ursula von der Leyen, in recognition of its outstanding contribution to the defense of the Rule of Law and global peace. The World Peace & Liberty Award is awarded by the World Jurist Association, to commend exceptional global figures who have actively defended the Rule of Law. This award has been intrinsically linked to the WJA since its creation during the Cold War. Considering the existent geopolitical context, it became imperative not only to create an institution dedicated to the promotion of peace and global cooperation in terms of justice and the Rule of Law, but also to acknowledge the commendable endeavors of individuals and organizations contributing to the objectives of the WJA. Due to its prestigious reputation, the award not only recognizes exceptional individuals, but also serves as a symbol of excellence within the legal world, highlighting the achievements of its awardee in terms of promotion of peace, justice, equality, and freedom.

It is undeniable that there is a perpetual threat to the Rule of Law arising from the inherently flawed and imperfect nature of human beings, as our insatiable desire for power and self-interest has the potential to undermine the fragile and transiently delicate essence of freedom, justice, and equality. These fundamental principles are vital to uphold our societal fabric, preventing our descent into the unfathomable abyss of autocracy. Therefore, it is crucial to constantly work on promoting and recognizing individuals and organizations who seek to promote these values of transcendental importance.

In the past the WJA recognitions were given to such preeminent figures as been given to prominent leaders like Winston Churchill, for defending democracy against its toughest enemies; René Cassin, for his invaluable work in the writing of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Nelson Mandela, for his fight for human rights in South Africa; Luis Almagro Lemes, Secretary General of OAS, for his commitment to Democracy in the Americas; H.M. King Felipe VI of Spain, for the unwavering commitment of the Spanish Parliamentary Monarchy to the Rule of Law; Ruth Bader Ginsburg, for her outstanding defense of human rights and gender equality; the Colombian Society, represented by president Iván Duque, for being the longest standing democracy in Latin America; and Andrew Young, for his leadership in the civil rights movement against racial segregation.

Since 2021, the World Jurist Association also seeks to promote the recognition of female jurists through the WJA Ruth Bader Ginsburg Medal of Honor, named in honor of the first Jewish woman to serve on the Supreme Court of the United States and one of the most important jurists of our generation. With the presentation of these medals, the WJA intends to acknowledge the role of women in the legal world throughout history, as well as their economic, social, and political impact on society. This award is about women who have undoubtedly created value for the world of law, and therefore, the strengthening of democracy and the Rule of Law at the international stage.

These medals have been awarded to prominent female jurists like Rosalie Abella, Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada (2004-2021); Brenda Hale, Baroness Hale of Richmond and first female Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom (2017-2020); Asifa Kakar, Judge of the Supreme Court of Afghanistan, Imrana Jalal, prominent human rights and gender equality lawyer; Navi Pillay, UN High Commissioner of Human Rights (2008-2014); Christine Lagarde, president of the European Central Bank; Ambiga Sreenevasan, president of the Malaysian Bar Council (2007-2009); Luz del Carmen Ibáñez, judge at the International Criminal Court; Gillian Triggs, UN Deputy High Commissioner for Refugee Protection; Maite Oronoz, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico; Young Hye Kim, Judge

Commissioner of the South Korean Human Rights Commission; Sujata Manohar, Judge of the Supreme Court of India (1994-1999); and Rosario Silva Lapuerta, Vice-President of the Court of Justice of the European Union (2003-2021).

We live in a globalized world characterized by significant achievements in both social and technological realms. Despite this, we live in a world that effectively mirrors crucial geopolitical, economic, social, and environmental challenges with the potential to undermine the delicate nature of the Rule of Law. Given the multitude of crises and challenges existing in our contemporary world, it becomes imperative to protect the fundamental values of freedom, equality, and peace. This entails confronting obstacles like war, corruption, nationalism, authoritarianism, and the growing disparity between law and justice.

These two concepts can be used interchangeably and may have a similar significance. Nevertheless, the philosophical division between them becomes clear when we observe how they are perceived within dictatorial regimes. Despite not being considered just, they are still deemed legal as they operate within the established laws of the country. Therefore, it is our objective to work in promoting a just world, upholding, safeguarding, and fortifying the Rule of Law through the construction of a just community that not only functions within the boundaries of the law, but also emphasizes the welfare of all women and men, offers educational and employment prospects to the youth, and shields the most vulnerable members of our society.

We hope you enjoy our quarterly WJA Journal and that you will join us in our efforts to promote peace through law, either if you are already a member or if you choose to become a member or collaborator of our organization.