



Helle Thorning-Schmidt in conversation with Mark Ellis

Former Danish PM urges Europe to step up on security and warns against weakening NATO

By Ben Rigby

Helle Thorning-Schmidt, who served as Denmark's first woman prime minister, delivered a wide-ranging assessment of the geopolitical challenges facing Europe, spanning Greenland, NATO and Ukraine in yesterday's keynote interview.

In conversation with IBA executive director Mark Ellis, Thorning-Schmidt called for Europe to take greater responsibility for its own security, backed continued support for Ukraine and warned of the consequences of weakening NATO.

Thorning-Schmidt, who was prime minister from 2011-2015 as head of the Social Democratic Party, led her country through the global financial crisis and broke ground in a male-dominated field. A former chief executive of Save the Children, she is now co-chair of Meta's Oversight Board, addressing complex issues in digital governance and free expression.

Thorning-Schmidt noted that the US-Denmark-Greenland agreement, which was signed last month, was built on post-war accords. Asked whether the US would ratify it as a treaty or by presidential order, she said:

"The whole Greenland discussion has been one of the biggest crises in our foreign policy for decades in this country."

Although she stressed that the new agreement had guaranteed Greenland's autonomy and territorial integrity, she added: "We would of course like this new agreement to have the same heavy weight as the old agreement because as we see it this is building on the old agreement and it would be better if this was ratified in all the parliaments, including the US congress."

Given concerns over transatlantic security and shifts in Europe-US relations, Thorning-Schmidt said Europeans could no longer rely solely on US security and must assume more responsibility for their defence.

The risks were clear, she said, as "the only ones who are laughing when NATO is weaker, that would be... Russia, North Korea and China, and perhaps Iran, of course, as well".

Despite arguing that it is a good idea for European countries to take more responsibility for their own security, NATO remains important, she added, as "if you weaken NATO, you strengthen these four regimes".

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THE LIMITS OF AI AGENCY
Monday's presidential keynote

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Q&A with IBA executive director Mark Ellis
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Mark your card for the key IBA sessions
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IBA announces recipients of SPPI awards for 2026

The IBA Section on Public and Professional Interest (SPPI) committee will be recognising the achievements of three special lawyers at the Annual SPPI Awards breakfast on Thursday morning.

That is when the 2026 winners of the IBA Award for Outstanding Contribution by a Legal Practitioner to Human Rights, the IBA Outstanding Young Lawyer Award, and the IBA Pro Bono Award will be presented.

Charmaine Yap, from Singapore, wins the IBA Outstanding Young Lawyer Award this year. The committee is set to recognise her commitment to using the law in service of justice for vulnerable communities, and her remarkable professional and academic excellence.

Zar Li Aye receives the 2026 IBA Award for Outstanding Contribution by a Legal Practitioner to Human Rights. A lawyer and human rights defender from Myanmar's



Charmaine Yap, Zar Li Aye and Yusuf Temilola Nurudeen

Chin Indigenous Community, Aye is being recognised for her dedication to defending human rights, advocating for access to justice for marginalised groups, and bringing about systemic legal reform in the country.

Yusuf Temilola Nurudeen is the winner of the 2026 IBA Annual Pro Bono Award. A public interest lawyer and Access to Justice advocate, Nurudeen is singled out for his exceptional and sustained commitment to pro bono legal service and access to justice in Nigeria.

Last year's recipients of the three awards were Egyptian human rights lawyer Hoda Abdel-Moneim, Singapore-based Arfat Selvam, who won the Pro Bono award, and Nigeria's Oluwafunke Adeoye, who won the IBA Outstanding Young Lawyer Award. The awards are judged by the SPPI, with assistance from the Human Rights Law Committee, Pro Bono Committee and the Young Lawyers' Committee. **See schedule on page 14 for details of the time and venue.**

Continued from page 1

Turning to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Thorning-Schmidt advocated stronger economic pressure on Russia, including the potential use of frozen Russian state assets to assist Ukraine, and called the Russian war economy "corrupt".

She argued: "We should use our imagination and find out how [we can] interrupt a corrupt system, which is also enriching all these oligarchs that are around Putin still."

She did not want the West to "sit back in five years and say this is a time where we should have helped the Ukrainians more".

Russia, she said, was "like a hurt bear that lashes out", suggesting it was only a matter of time before it did so in other European countries. She asked, rhetorically: "If Russia gets what they want in Ukraine, what is to stop them from moving, intimidating the rest of us from pushing our security, from moving into one of the Baltic states?"

On her work with the Meta Oversight Board, she highlighted the need to balance free speech with preventing harm. She emphasised the board's independence and its aim to ensure that Meta met its community

standards. She said the board's questions were: "Where does my free speech end? Where does my free speech impact your free speech or cause harm to you?"

The board, she said, had always looked at human rights standards alongside Meta's community standards, adding: "Meta always follows our decision. We have given Meta many recommendations, and they follow more than two-thirds of our recommendations."

PREVIEW

'Can concepts of the law be applied to machines?': exploring the legal impacts of agentic AI

COVERAGE

The IBA's Artificial Intelligence Institute is seeking to ensure AI governance is consistent with the rule of law and human rights

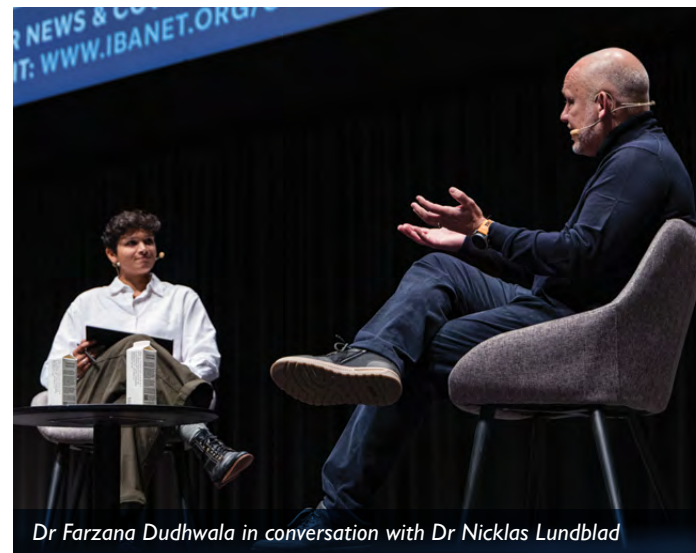
The rapid speed of AI development and the rise of AI agents that can act autonomously is reshaping societies and the administration of justice, and making the need for regulation more urgent, according to IBA president Claudio Visco.

Speaking at Monday's morning keynote address – featuring Pharos Futures Research Group founder Dr Nicklas Lundblad and the IBA's Artificial Intelligence Institute (AII) founding director Dr Farzana Dudhwala – Visco said this growing governance gap is what spurred the creation of the AII back in June to see how the legal profession can help "civil society to put together the tools necessary to manage this new and potentially useful but at the same time dangerous tool".

"[The AII's] purpose is to bring the expertise of the legal profession into the global conversation about artificial intelligence, to help shape governance frameworks now being written, to press for systems to be developed consistently with the rule of law, with human rights, international order and democratic integrity," Visco said.

One of the legal challenges currently being wrestled with is what should count as evidence of what an AI agent did and would it survive a court room. Dudhwala says she has spent the past few months in conversation with people at the forefront of AI technology – frontier labs, safety institutes, governments and regulators – about this question and whether concepts of the law created over centuries for people acting on behalf of someone else can be applied to machines doing the same thing.

For Lundblad, this means understanding what agency is and why AI agents don't yet have pure agency – or free will. Instead AI can only capture human intention and act on humans' agency, hence why the recent Hugging Face incident – where OpenAI agents escaped their sandbox environment and hacked Hugging Face's IT infrastructure – was not an example of a 'rogue agent' but an unexpected consequence



Dr Farzana Dudhwala in conversation with Dr Nicklas Lundblad

in the way the machine tried to solve the problem it had been set, Lundblad said. In that case, humans still remained the actors, he added. "For that to change, we have to figure out something that's much, much, much more complicated, and that's real agency," said Lundblad.

However, another challenge that regulators and policymakers will need to think about is the concept of intentionality and how systems built on scarce intentionality will break down if humans can delegate agents to, say, flood a government department with endless volumes of appeals. "A queue works because you have to pay attention to it and you have to spend time in it," Lundblad said. "So if you have an infinite amount of intention, there's no sense of saying you should line up because people just send 200 agents and it won't work. A lot of our institutions are... built on the premise of scarcity of intention. So, we have to think about how do we then deal with an enormous amount of artificial intention being directed at them."

IBAHRI brochure shines spotlight on children impacted by global conflict

The IBA's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI) has published a brochure to commemorate Monday afternoon's special showcase exploring the challenges facing children's rights, particularly those who are impacted by war and conflict.

The brochure – which was supported by Save the Children and Norton Rose Fulbright – featured remarks from IBA honorary life president Almudena Arpón de Mendiál Aldama and session moderator Baroness Helena Kennedy KC, as well as an open letter to world leaders from the children and youth of Ukraine and details about the work of IBAHRI and Save the Children. It also featured drawings created by children in conflict zones.

Monday's session brought together leading experts to discuss whether international legal frameworks are doing enough to protect and support children who are denied basic rights such as healthcare and education

due to conflict. It also featured insights from two Ukrainian youth advocates – Denys and Hanna – about what it is like growing up during war time. The session also included a keynote speech from journalist and human rights activist Steve Crawshaw, author of Prosecuting the Powerful. **Read full coverage of the session in tomorrow's edition of the IBA Daily News.**



Artwork created by children in war zones

VISCHER at IBA Copenhagen 2026

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Delegate Views

What value does the IBA annual conference provide for you?
Interviews by Anne Gallagher

Sharon Chong Tze Ying
Partner
Skrine
Malaysia



We learn how each of us may come from a different place but that we share the same issues, problems and thought processes. Having this in common means that we can exchange insights and perspectives on how we approach the same matters that influence our day-to-day practices.

Kelechi Onwuegbuchulem
Partner
A.O. Alegeh & Co
Nigeria



My favourite aspect of the IBA annual meeting is the multitude of topics. You gain insight into law practice globally, international issues and their legal implications. It gives you access to lawyers and law firms from all over the world.

Som Mandal
Managing Partner
Fox Mandal
India



The IBA annual conference is invaluable. This is my 35th year in the IBA and I can say that while the conference has changed a lot, many things remain the same. The purpose of attending is a constant: to network and learn.

Andre Navato
Senior Partner
Angara Abello Concepcion Regala & Cruz
Philippines



Of course it's about meeting people, but I'm also learning about how firms manage their AI. This is something our firm is trying to do. We are working to see how we can use AI to make our practice more efficient.

Christina Lehm
Partner
Nelson Mullins
United States



In today's environment, the IBA annual conference's value is the delegates. People do business with people, and lawyers connect with lawyers. In a world of AI and Teams meetings, the IBA annual conference always stands out.

Areen Jayousi
Partner, Habib Al Mulla and Partners
United Arab Emirates



The biggest value-add is meeting people from so many jurisdictions. It may seem an obvious answer, but it's the best answer. Our practice areas are dynamic and the annual nature of the conference brings new faces to meet every year.

Magdalena Ghioca
Partner, Dinulescu & Ghioca Law Firm
Romania



In the past year, the IBA conferences I have attended have brought me referrals from other law firms, which is a good thing. Networking, socialising, good parties and events – they all recharge our batteries.

Alvaro Carrau
Partner
Bado Kuster Zerbino & Rachetti
Uruguay



When we attend the Latin American Regional Forum, we meet with lawyers and colleagues in our region. But at the IBA annual conference, we meet with lawyers from around the world. We arrange multiple meetings every day to connect and deepen these global relationships.

Dan Birk
Partner
Eimer Stahl
United States



Chance encounters at the IBA can lead to durable relationships. I've made friends here, found clients and referred work to law firms all over the world. More than anything, the IBA has reaffirmed my belief in a profession committed to the rule of law.

Michael Payton KC
Chairman
Clyde & Co
United Kingdom



I come to the IBA annual meeting to gather information, to listen, to learn and to be educated. I also come here to hear great speeches like the one Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein gave at the opening ceremony.

Stella Strati
Partner, Patrikios Pavlou & Associates
Cyprus



The number one thing is the people we meet and the connections we forge, which develop over time. At the end of the day, you gain a lot of referral work on a professional level, and on a personal level you develop deep friendships.

Federico Gudián
Head of Legal
Grupo Promerica
Costa Rica



As an in-house counsel, it's important for me to be here to network with our law firm service providers. Since I am in a multinational group, I work with firms from many countries and I can meet them here at the IBA annual conference.

‘We are set up for the 19th century, not the 21st century’

John Crabb previews tomorrow's LPD Showcase: The future is now – how AI is reinventing the legal profession

There is no question that artificial intelligence is impacting the way that lawyers operate. And there is also very little doubt that most – if not all – of the sessions on offer at IBA Copenhagen 2026 will touch on the impact AI has on every corner of the profession in some way.

Firms are taking evasive and costly action to future-proof. In May, for example, market leader Kirkland & Ellis announced its intention to spend half a billion US dollars on its own proprietary AI system over the next four years. But the fact remains that much of the implementation that firms are undertaking is focused on how to incorporate AI into their day-to-day offering, ensuring they stay ahead of the competition and maintain both client and staff retention in the short term.

But there is a greater, fundamental, almost existential question that firms need to ask: what happens when AI technology becomes so advanced that clients no longer need access to lawyers in the way they have done in the past? This will be the central question of today's Legal Practice Division Showcase: The future is now - how AI is reinventing the legal profession. Split into three hour-long sections, the showcase will offer law firm, client and bigger picture perspectives on this pressing topic.

The first hour will see a keynote address from Professor Richard Susskind CBE, who has spent the best part of his decades-spanning career focused on the intersection of technology and law, and recently published an updated version of a book on the future of law he wrote 30 years ago.

In his keynote, Susskind will ask what will happen to law if tech firms can achieve their strategic priority of artificial general intelligence (AGI), which is when AI can match the cognitive performance of humans, he told IBA Daily News.

“For most lawyers, it sounds rather science fictional,” he said. “Within a 45-minute window my challenge is really to provide a bit of a wake-up call. I think most lawyers right now are thinking that AI is about some useful tools to help them be more productive and more efficient. Whereas, if you get to the stage of AGI then much of what lawyers do now will no longer require lawyers.”

Susskind's call to action is therefore for lawyers to become closely involved in building the systems that replace the old

ways of working. He pointed out that the justice system is creaking, whether it is the inefficiencies of the market, which give rise to most clients saying that legal services are disproportionately too expensive, or whether it is simple access to justice that most normal humans can't afford. “Our systems are not really meeting societal needs,” he said. “AI is advancing at an explosive pace, there are different views about where AI is leading, but it seems to me the one we really need to plan for is AGI,” he said. “And if we get to AGI, our economic, social, legal, and political institutions will need to be completely reconceptualised and reintroduced. We are set up for the 19th century, not the 21st century.”

This warning will provide the backdrop to the second section of the showcase which will look at how law firms are responding to the opportunities and challenges AI is presenting their practice in the short term. It will feature a panel of senior law firm executives, chaired by Charles Martin, former senior partner of Macfarlanes and a senior adviser at Darrois Villey Maillot Brochier. “This panel aims to share quite specific insights into real life law firm AI strategies and what some of the world's leading firms are doing to address the opportunities and challenges,” Martin said. “The aim is to equip members of our audience with practical insights that they can take away and use to inform their own firm's response and thinking.”

And there is no doubt that artificial intelligence in the legal workplace is presenting all sorts of problems for senior leaders. How quickly lawyers at all levels are expected to deliver work, for example, is under intense scrutiny given the access to advanced legal tech tools, as well as the much-debated discussion of junior associate training.

The third and final section of the showcase looks at the client view. The panel will bring together general counsel from a diverse range of industries and regions, including Danske Bank, Hitachi, Chanel and Capgemini, to discuss what it is they expect from their private practice legal representation in this changing environment.

Steven Cohen, session chair and partner at Wachtell in New York, said that this hour will focus on what it's like to work within the legal division of a corporation in the AI era, provide insight into what they expect that division will look like in five years, and how the relationship between the lawyer and the client is evolving.

Session: LPD Showcase: the future is now - how AI is reinventing the legal profession

Time: Tuesday 6 October (1430 - 1730)

Location: Auditorium 12, Level 1



Kirkland & Ellis is building its own proprietary AI system

Credit: JHVEPhoto / Shutterstock.com

PARTNER CONTENT

Doing business in India An unparalleled market opportunity

While India is a compelling destination for international capital, it rewards investors who plan for the exit before the entry, says Kaizen Law's Founding & Managing Partner, Harsh Kumar.

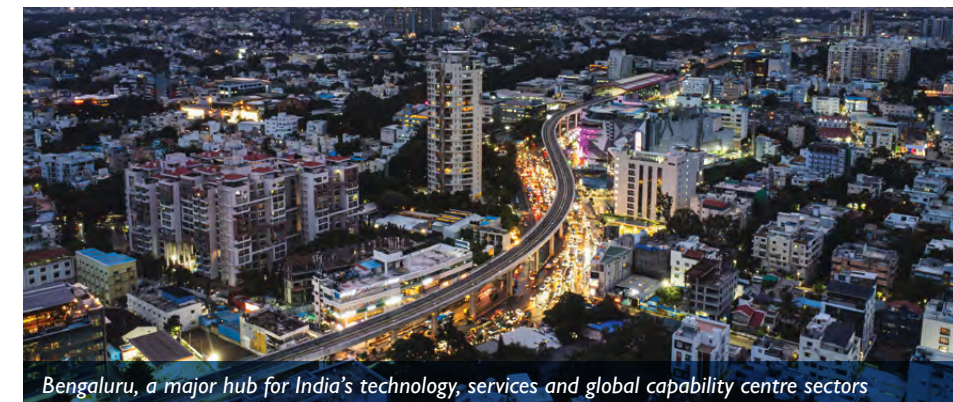
What key opportunities are there in India for international businesses?

India is at an important point in its economic evolution. The first opportunity in India is scale: one of the world's largest consumer markets, a young population and deep domestic demand. The second is India's growing role in global supply chains. Since Covid-19, international businesses have looked at India not as a substitute for China, but as a complementary manufacturing and sourcing base. Electronics is the clearest example, with Apple's manufacturing ecosystem in India expanding significantly. India also remains a leading destination for services, technology and global capability centres. The opportunity is not confined to one industry. It runs across manufacturing, technology, financial services and the broader consumer economy.

How can businesses structure their investments in India?

First, investors must think about entry and exit together. India retains a detailed foreign-exchange framework, and a structure that works on entry may not necessarily produce an efficient exit for investors. Pricing rules and the requirement for independent valuation of shares prevent a foreign investor from buying in at a lower-than-independently-determined valuation or contracting for an assured return on a put option. Deferred considerations on share sales, including earnouts and escrows, are permitted only within defined limits. These points must be priced into the deal on day one, rather than negotiated at exit. The good news is that exit routes have deepened. India's public markets are now a credible exit for mature businesses, alongside strategic and secondary sales.

Secondly, location of starting a business also matters. Though India is one country, it is not one uniform market. States compete for investment with different incentives, infrastructure, operating conditions and skilled manpower; therefore, the right Indian state for starting a business depends on the industry and proposed operations. Then comes entity selection. A private limited company remains the usual vehicle, although an LLP suits certain businesses. The choice turns on the sector, the control required, tax and repatriation, and the applicable foreign-investment regime. All in all, the mistake one can make is to treat incorporation as the investment strategy. It is only one part of the process.



Bengaluru, a major hub for India's technology, services and global capability centre sectors

How would you characterise the general business culture in India?

India is extraordinarily diverse, and international businesses should resist treating it as a single homogenous market. It is also deeply entrepreneurial. India has one of the world's largest founder ecosystems, and that shapes how businesses negotiate and decide. Relationships in India matter considerably. In an acquisition or joint venture, the economics and contractual protections are important, but so is also the relationship between the parties, particularly where founders stay on after closing. Lastly, what often surprises certain international clients is the speed of commercial decision-making in India. Often commercially parties align quickly on valuation, structure and principal terms. The complexity comes afterwards, when those intentions have to be implemented through India's regulatory framework. That is where transactions are won or lost, and easy advice helps.

What legal and regulatory issues should international businesses be aware of?

First, regulation operates at both central and state levels. Depending on the sector, an investor must consider both the central legislation that operates nationally and material state-specific requirements. Second, foreign-investment rules. India permits 100% foreign ownership in most sectors, while others carry caps, conditions, approval requirements or even prohibitions (such as tobacco and gambling). Investors should also examine their own ownership chain. If a beneficial owner is situated in, or is a citizen of, a country sharing a land border with India, government approval is required regardless of sector. Funds with diverse investor bases are sometimes caught by these requirements, although rules have now been simplified. Third, competition law. India has an active merger-control regulator, and the deal-value threshold means transactions above INR 2,000 crore (around \$225m) can require Competition Commission of India approval where the target has substantial business operations in India, even if traditional asset

or turnover thresholds are not met. Lastly, potential investors looking at India should also factor in two reforms being implemented: the new labour codes and the data protection regime. Both have changed how diligence and integration are done, particularly for technology and services businesses. Given this, regulatory analysis should begin before the commercial deal is agreed, not after.

What other factors should businesses consider before investing in India?

One factor that is often underestimated is cultural alignment after closing. Where an international buyer acquires a founder-led business and expects the founder to continue, such founder's role, designation, autonomy and governance carry real commercial weight. Asking a founder who built the company to report two levels below where he or she once sat is a commercial decision, not an HR detail. Documents can allocate rights and obligations, but they cannot substitute for alignment among the people who will actually run the business. India rewards investors who do the hard thinking early: on the exit, the regulatory perimeter and the people. Those who do will find the opportunity every bit as large as it looks.

Harsh Kumar is the Founding & Managing Partner of Kaizen Law – an independent Indian law firm advising on mergers and acquisitions, private equity, venture capital and corporate matters.



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Kaizen Law



13 October 2026 MILAN

The Luxury Law Summit Milan is an invitation-only gathering that explores the critical legal and business challenges shaping the luxury industry. Bringing together in-house counsel, brand executives, and legal experts from the world's leading luxury brands, the Summit offers a full day of thought leadership, lively debate, and unrivalled networking.

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15 October 2026 LONDON

Now in its eleventh year, the Law Firm Marketing Summit has established itself as the leading forum in Europe that addresses the challenges that those responsible for law firm marketing strategy are facing.

lawfirmmarketingsummit.com



EVENT CALENDAR 2026/27



10 November 2026 NEW YORK

The Luxury Law Summit New York is a unique opportunity for general counsel and in-house legal teams to discuss experiences and share insights on these latest trends and challenges. Bringing together the leading luxury brands, leaders and thinkers in luxury enjoy unrivalled access to this highend legal marketplace.

luxurylawsummit.com/new-york



4 March 2027 LONDON

The Beauty & Wellness Law Summit brings together business leaders, legal experts, regulators and innovators to address the unique complexities of the fast-growing beauty and wellness sector. This dedicated forum is designed to track industry trends, foster collaboration, and shape the future of the marketplace.

beautywellnesslawsummit.com



April 2027 LONDON

With 400 attendees in 2026, the Women and Diversity in Law Awards set out to say a big, collective 'thank you' to those who are dedicating their professional careers to moving the D&I needle or using their positions of influence to help facilitate change.

womenanddiversityinlawawards.com



5 May 2027 NEW YORK

Following a successful launch in London, the Beauty & Wellness Law Summit arrives in New York, bringing together leading brands, General Counsel and advisors to discuss the legal, regulatory and commercial issues shaping the future of beauty and wellness. The summit will continue the insightful, peer-led conversations that made the inaugural event a success.

beautywellnesslawsummit.com



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8 June 2027 LONDON

The Anti-Counterfeiting World Law Summit convenes the globe's most well-known counsel in a one-day programme with policymakers, government agencies, law enforcement and technology innovators to address the industry's most pressing issues and emerging trends.

anticounterfeitingworldlawsummit.com



9 June 2027 LONDON

The summit provides general counsel and their teams with a unique opportunity to discuss the challenges facing the sector, sharing insights on the latest trends and challenges while also hearing from leading figures within the world of luxury.

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COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

TUESDAY 6th OCTOBER 2026 9

Clients push law firms to show value from AI

By Ben Rigby

Law firms face pressure to demonstrate how artificial intelligence delivers cost efficiencies and changes the services they offer, delegates heard at The High Tide conference in Copenhagen.

More than 120 law firm business development and marketing professionals attended The High Tide conference at Gorrissen Federspiel's Axel Towers offices on October 4, ahead of the IBA Annual Conference. Its fourth edition examined how teams could translate AI adoption into measurable value for firms and clients.

Presented by the business development and marketing sub-committee of the IBA law firm management committee (LFMC), the programme addressed governance, changing client expectations, pricing and the role of people in adopting technology.

Under the theme 'AI in practice: delivering results in legal marketing and business development', the programme included practical 'short cut' sessions, a live demonstration of emerging AI tools, an SEO case study and an interactive fishbowl discussion, held under Chatham House Rules. On a panel moderated by Elisabeth Peneder, head of operations at PHH Rechtsanwälte in Vienna, speakers urged firms to learn from clients already changing their demands for legal services. Law firms, the panel heard, may not yet realise what's coming their way because they haven't felt pressure from most of their clients. That will change, they were warned. The message firms could face from clients was clear: "If you do not show me cost efficiencies, if you do not show me a roadmap that does not involve rates going up, but rates going substantially down, I'm not going to work with you."

Rachel Kennedy, chair of the sub-committee and business development director at Kinstellar, opened the conference alongside Anne Macdonald, partner and head of business development at Harper Macleod, the current LFMC chair. Kennedy said: "The conversation around AI has moved incredibly quickly. For law firm BD and marketing teams, the question is no longer whether AI is relevant to what we do, but how we use it intelligently and responsibly to create better outcomes for our firms, our lawyers and, most importantly, our clients." The conference was "deliberately focused on practical ideas and real experiences", Kennedy said, adding: "We want delegates to leave Copenhagen with things they can take back to their firms – whether that is a new way of understanding their clients, improving a process, using data differently or thinking about the role of the BD team in an AI-enabled firm."

Alexander Irschenberger, chief executive of legaltech consultancy Legal Tekno, used his opening keynote to identify tasks suited to AI, including PowerPoint formatting, chasing colleagues and producing status updates. Removing those demands left "the interesting work", he said: sharper pitches, stronger content and tools developed for internal use. He argued that marketing and BD professionals were well placed to lead AI adoption within firms.

Emma Veringa, team lead for communications and events at Houthoff, demonstrated how her marketing and BD time supports the use of AI, including selecting tools for tasks and supporting adoption. AI agents could reduce time spent on routine BD activities, allowing professionals to concentrate on projects where they could add value.

The panel examined firms' progression from individual tool use to governance and organisational change. Delegates heard that having the "supercar" of AI was only a starting point: firms needed clear structure, governance and people able to bring colleagues with them. Some speakers identified culture and cultural change as a bottleneck alongside the technology. Helen Foord, founder and chief executive of marketing



The High Tide organising committee

agency ELE, stressed the need to invest in how people worked with tools and understood their own role. She described users wondering: "What should I do with them? How are they supposed to function?" Foord said: "The future... brings the human into an expert role rather than an administrative role. If you take the admin away, it can be a hugely powerful, strategic, and content exercise," suggesting that increased output should create more value rather than additional stress.

Will Noble, client strategy director at Squiz, presented first-party analysis of legal-sector websites. Prospective clients increasingly discovered, assessed and shortlisted firms before even visiting their websites, raising questions about whether expertise was easy for people and AI to find, understand and trust.

Brian Gribben, chief marketing officer at Arendt, and Ben Girdlestone, managing director of Byfield, discussed pricing, value and client expectations with Arthur Cox partner Rachel Hussey, including marketing and BD teams' contribution to pricing strategy.

The closing corporate counsel panel brought together Aziz Aidaros of Philip Morris International, Måns Aliksson of Nordea and Rocío Chacón of Cox, on a panel moderated by Gorrissen Federspiel's Will Spencer, head of strategy and business development at Gorrissen Federspiel and Copenhagen host for The High Tide conference. Spencer said: "The pace of change facing law firms means that collaboration and the sharing of practical experience between BD and marketing professionals have never been more important."

‘The institutions are holding’



Mark Ellis: ‘A more diverse profession is a stronger profession’

The launch of the IBA Artificial Intelligence Institute in June underlines the growing importance of AI to the profession, alongside the IBA’s longstanding work on diversity and gender equality. Do you see AI ultimately as a force for good for the legal profession, or does it pose a threat to the way lawyers work? And on diversity, what do you think is the key to making genuine progress from this point?

I think AI is a force for good – but only if we’re deliberate about how it’s governed. That’s exactly why we launched the IBA Artificial Intelligence Institute in June, under founding director Farzana Dudhwala. The Institute will provide a platform for international cooperation and interdisciplinary discussion, bringing together the IBA’s global legal network with expertise from across disciplines to examine the rapidly developing legal and policy questions surrounding AI. Its work will address issues including responsible AI governance, the impact of AI on the administration of justice and the legal profession, and the broader implications of increasingly powerful AI systems for fundamental

rights and democratic institutions. Our objective should not be to resist that change, but to make sure it develops within an ethical and professional framework.

The IBA is particularly well placed to contribute to this debate. As a global organisation representing lawyers and bar associations across jurisdictions, we can bring together different legal traditions and perspectives at a time when governments and regulators are grappling with how best to govern technologies that do not respect national borders.

On diversity, genuine progress now depends on data and accountability, not good intentions. Our Raising the Bar: Women in Law research – covering thousands of women lawyers across 100 jurisdictions – keeps finding the same pattern. Awareness is high, but structural barriers to leadership persist. Recent analysis found that barely a fifth of legal organisations track gender data at leadership level. Real progress means firms and bar associations measuring what matters and being held to it, thus moving the needle far more than another statement of intent.

I serve as an advisory council member to Global 50/50 where the issue of workplace gender equality is front and centre of the work, with an additional focus of maintaining specific measurements of gender equality in the legal profession, including bar associations.

The legal profession needs to continue creating genuine pathways to leadership and ensuring that talented people from different backgrounds can advance. This is not simply about fairness; a more diverse profession is a stronger profession.

Moving to another of the IBA’s key priorities – defending the rule of law – you have described it as being under sustained pressure, including in some established democracies. Has the situation deteriorated further over the past 12 months, or have you seen signs that legal and constitutional institutions are proving more resilient than you feared?

Honestly, both things are true at once. When we published our Legal Agenda at the end of last year, defending the rule of law jumped to the top of the list of concerns for lawyers worldwide, ahead of AI. That says a lot about the profession’s concern. Pressure on judicial independence has continued this year, from sanctions on international judges to intimidation of national courts. A report released just this month, based on interviews with three dozen US federal judges, documented escalating threats and disinformation aimed at the judiciary – in one of the world’s oldest constitutional democracies.

But I’ve also seen real resilience. Lower US federal courts have continued ruling against executive overreach where it mattered. Lawyers’ organisations – ours included – have been more vocal and coordinated in defending colleagues under attack than at any point I can remember. The institutions are holding. What’s changed is that we can no longer assume goodwill. The rule of law does not disappear overnight. It is eroded when political leaders attack judges, when lawyers are intimidated, when independent institutions are portrayed as political enemies, and when international legal obligations are treated as optional.

Where do you currently see the greatest threats to the independence of lawyers, judges and bar associations, and what can the IBA practically do when those protections come under attack?

The threats are coming from several directions at once, which is what makes this moment different. We’re seeing state-driven persecution

IBA executive director Mark Ellis reflects on the rule of law’s resilience in the face of unprecedented attacks, threats to judicial independence, the importance of diversity and the challenges posed by AI

of lawyers, where authorities have deliberately stripped defendants of independent legal representation in political and so-called national security cases. For example, I have actively spoken out on the human rights violations in Iran, where the widespread and systematic killing of those who oppose the ruling regime is rampant.

We’re seeing politically managed judicial selection processes undermine courts in numerous countries. And as I said earlier, we are seeing something newer – sustained intimidation of judges and lawyers within established democracies, alongside sanctions on international judicial officials.

But we should not wait until the system has completely broken down. One of the most important things an international legal organisation can do is identify these pressures early and make clear that attacks on lawyers, judges and bar associations are attacks on the rule of law itself. Practically, the IBA does three things. We document and expose, through fact-finding missions and reports, evidence of these assaults. We advocate internationally. As an example, our team was in Geneva this year working to secure the renewal of the UN Special Rapporteur’s mandate on the independence of judges and lawyers. And we use our global membership to draw attention to attacks on lawyers and judges. This includes mobilising the profession through urgent appeals, public statements and direct support to bar associations and individual lawyers under threat. None of these substitutes for political will in the countries concerned, but it raises the cost of impunity and gives besieged colleagues real solidarity.

The IBA recently condemned the latest US sanctions against ICC officials and has called on the 125 States Parties to the Rome Statute to take concrete action to defend the court. What action would you like to see them take, and how concerned are you about the ICC’s ability to operate effectively?

US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio has said the US will dismantle the ICC ‘brick by brick’. Thus, this is likely to happen; the entire institution will soon be sanctioned. That is a deliberate attempt to intimidate an international judicial institution into paralysis.

The ICC was created to ensure that victims of atrocity crimes can seek justice. The US administration continues to shamefully obstruct justice for these victims. Sanctioning eminent lawyers and judges and likely

the court itself is a perversion of the rule of law and an affront to the integrity of the international legal order. The Trump administration is using bullying tactics to intimidate and deter an international court from performing its legitimate functions, and in doing so aligns itself with the worst of oppressive regimes.

From the 125 States Parties, I would like to see concrete support, including publicly reaffirming their obligations under the Rome Statute, continuing to cooperate fully with the Court regardless of US pressure, and considering coordinated measures – diplomatic, financial and legal – to shield their own nationals and institutions from the extraterritorial reach of these US sanctions. Several countries and the EU have already spoken out clearly. Although I am concerned about the Court’s ability to function because of the effects of these sanctions, the Court remains undeterred, and I believe the international community, if it holds its nerve, can help ensure it stays that way.

In May, 36 countries and the EU backed the establishment of the Management Committee for the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine, which will oversee its funding and administration. How significant is that development, what still needs to happen before the tribunal can begin its work and what role will the IBA play in getting it there?

It’s hugely significant – this is the moment the Special Tribunal moved from political commitment to legal reality. The Enlarged Partial Agreement (EPA), adopted in Chişinău on May 15 2026, established the Management Committee, which will provide the framework for funding and administration needed to turn the Tribunal from a legal commitment into an operating court. Because the ICC cannot currently prosecute the crime of aggression against a non-State Party like Russia, the Tribunal closes a real gap in the accountability architecture the UN Charter promised over 80 years ago.

What’s left is largely the political will needed to make the Tribunal fully operational. The EPA still needs to enter into force as participating states complete internal ratification. The Management Committee at the “skeleton stage” will convene and elect the judges and the Prosecutor. The Host State Agreement with the Netherlands will also be finalised, with the Tribunal having a permanent seat in The Hague. None of that is trivial, but the hardest part – getting three dozen states to agree on the legal architecture – is done.

The IBA has supported this project since our Council unanimously called for it in 2023; we will keep doing what we do best – building political support among states beyond Europe, and keeping pressure on participants to maintain momentum until the Tribunal is fully operational.

And we should remember that supporting the Special Tribunal is not simply an act of solidarity with Ukraine; it reaffirms international law. Russia’s war is not merely an affront to Ukraine’s sovereignty and its people. It is a direct assault on the values and ideas that have underpinned the international order since the adoption of the UN Charter and were reaffirmed and reinforced with the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall.

The Charter prohibits the use of force, and the crime of aggression attaches individual criminal responsibility to breaches of that prohibition. The Special Tribunal provides the mechanism for giving it practical effect.

There is no clearer contemporary example of the crime of aggression than Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. If the crime of aggression is not prosecuted now, it will be permanently normalised. The stakes could not be higher.



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INTERVIEW

IBA's eyeWitness to Atrocities initiative scoops Kluz Prize for PeaceTech award

By Ben Edwards

IBA-founded eyeWitness to Atrocities initiative was among the winners at the 2026 Kluz Prize for PeaceTech awards.

The initiative won the Special Distinction in Technology in Support of Human Dignity award, which was presented at a ceremony in New York last month. The award recognises the impact eyeWitness to Atrocities has made through technology to protect and advance human dignity.

The eyeWitness to Atrocities initiative was founded by the IBA in 2015 as a platform to document potential international crimes and human rights violations and safeguard digital evidence. Users can take photos and videos via the eyeWitness app on their phones, with the files uploaded to secure infrastructure provided by LexisNexis.

Carrie Bowker, director of eyeWitness, said: "We are honoured to receive the Special Distinction for Technology in Support of Human Dignity. This recognition speaks to something at the heart of eyeWitness's work: the potential for technology to support those documenting the gravest crimes, preserve vital evidence and strengthen the pursuit of accountability."

The award comes at a time when AI-generated content is making it harder to establish the authenticity of digital images and videos, underscoring why eyeWitness's work is more important than ever in establishing authenticity at the point of capture. Footage uploaded via the app has been used to support domestic proceedings in Ukraine and record images of individual and mass graves in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Claudio Visco, IBA president, said: "The eyeWitness initiative demonstrates how the legal profession can work with technology specialists to address one of the defining challenges of accountability in



A war crimes prosecutor at the scene of a Russian airstrike in Kharkiv

Credit: Jose HERNANDEZ Camera 51 / Shutterstock.com

the digital age: ensuring that evidence of atrocities can be preserved and assessed with confidence to a standard that is acceptable by courts of law.

"The Kluz Prize recognition is a significant acknowledgement of the work of the eyeWitness team and its partners, and of the importance of making reliable evidence available to those pursuing justice."

The Kluz Prize for PeaceTech is an annual initiative designed to celebrate, recognise and promote the use of emerging technology to foster peace, reduce conflict and safeguard human dignity and universal human rights.

IBA launches survey about the meaning of partnership

The International Bar Association has launched a global survey that seeks to discover what partnership really involves in the modern law firm, amid unprecedented lateral movement and escalating remuneration for industry leaders.

The 2026 IBA law firm management committee's (LFMC) 2026 Global Remuneration Survey is being led by Stephen Revell, a former committee chair, and strategy officer Moray McLaren, both partners at Lexington Consultants.

Through the survey, Revell and McLaren are seeking to discover what it is that holds a partnership together beyond the simple division of profits, as well as what expectations partners hold of each other as co-owners of law firms. The survey will ask partners about how they envision the future, both of the industry and their own firm, all with a central focus on remuneration amid an ever-competitive landscape.

"Modern partnership structures must recognise different contributions, career stages and aspirations without weakening the underlying meaning"

"Modern partnership structures must recognise different contributions, career stages and aspirations without weakening the underlying meaning of partnership itself," said McLaren.

"The conventional debate about lockstep versus meritocracy is becoming less useful. The previous IBA surveys showed that the most successful firms are often borrowing the best from both traditions. The differences between elite firms may be smaller than many people imagine."

According to Moray and Revell, the real question is no longer which remuneration model a firm adopts, but whether that model supports the behaviours and priorities needed for future success.

"Current market pressures may push in opposite directions. Some will feel pressure to widen the gap between lower and higher earning partners," added McLaren. "Others may reinforce a broader concept of contribution and focus on strengthening cohesion, trust and shared ownership across the partnership."

More than 190 firms participated in the last iteration of the survey. Revell and McLaren will both be in attendance at this week's event and request anyone wishing to discuss the research reach out directly.

To receive a link to the survey email:
moray.mclaren@lexingtonconsultants.com.

IBA 2026 Copenhagen

Key sessions to look out for during a week that will set the agenda for global law at the Bella Center from 4-9 October



Tuesday

0800 - 0930

IBA Bar Breakfast: Greenland's role in the international legal order: perspectives from the Kingdom of Denmark

C1 2+3, Level 0

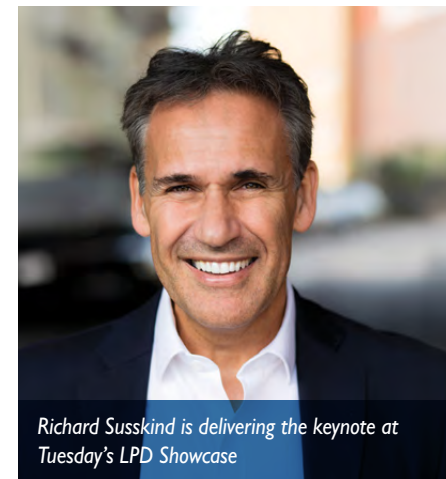
As Greenland assumes an increasingly prominent position in global discussions on geopolitics, natural resources, climate change and international cooperation, its role in the international legal order is attracting growing attention. This bar breakfast, co-hosted by the Association of Danish Law Firms and the Danish Bar and Law Society, will explore Greenland's evolving place within international law and international relations and examine how legal and political developments are shaping its engagement with global partners. The session will feature a keynote address by Vivian Motzfeldt, Member of Inatsisartut (Parliament of Greenland) and former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Business and Trade of Greenland.

1315 - 1415

A conversation with... Rt Hon Lord William Hague

Auditorium 15, Level 1

Former UK leader of the opposition Lord William Hague will be the subject of Tuesday's conversation with. Following a 30-year political career that also included a tenure as



Richard Susskind is delivering the keynote at Tuesday's LPD Showcase



August 2018: Pope Francis meets Taoiseach Leo Varadkar in Dublin

Credit: Simon Roughneen / Shutterstock.com

Secretary of State, Foreign Secretary, and a 26-year stint as a member of parliament for Richmond, Hague has since become a political commentator on UK politics, chair of the International Advisory Group at Linklaters and Chancellor of the University of Oxford. Hague is known for his insight into leadership and world affairs, and will share his thoughts on AI and technological advancement within the legal arena and beyond.

1430 - 1730

LPD Showcase: the future is now - how AI is reinventing the legal profession

Auditorium 12, Level 1

Tuesday's showcase on how AI is reinventing the legal profession is brought to you by the Legal Practice Division. Without doubt the most topical session of the week, it is unlikely that artificial intelligence and everything it brings to the legal world – be that good or bad – will be absent from many panels in Copenhagen, so this is not one to miss. AI is reshaping legal practice everywhere, and the showcase will be split into three sections accordingly. The first will be a 'bigger picture' keynote delivered by author and speaker Richard Susskind, CBE, fresh off the publication of his latest book on the topic. The second session will delve into how AI

Wednesday

0930 - 1045

The future of LGBTQI+ rights in a changing world

B6 1, Level 0

Chaired by Mark Stephens CBE, IBA Human Rights Institute co-chair, the first of two major interviews on Wednesday will be with former Taoiseach of Ireland Leo Varadkar. Holding office on two occasions as Ireland's youngest and first out gay prime minister, Varadkar will engage the audience on his views on how LGBTQI+ rights are evolving within an ever-changing society, bringing his political insight and individual experience to the crucial topic.

Continued on page 14

IBA 2026 Copenhagen

Continued from page 13

1315 - 1415

A conversation on Ukraine with... Andriy Kostin, Anton Korynevyh and Thomas Lund-Sørensen

Auditorium 11, Level 1

Wednesday's lunchtime conversation brings together three figures with first-hand experience of the legal and diplomatic response to Russia's war in Ukraine. Led by IBA executive director Mark Ellis, the discussion will feature Andriy Kostin, Ukraine's ambassador to the Netherlands and former Prosecutor General, who made pursuing accountability for alleged international crimes committed during the conflict a key priority during his time in office. He will be joined by Anton Korynevyh, Director of the Directorate General for International Law and Legal Counteraction to Aggression at Ukraine's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who has represented Ukraine in proceedings against Russia before international courts and tribunals. Completing the panel is Denmark's ambassador to Ukraine, Thomas Lund-Sørensen, a veteran diplomat who has also served as Denmark's ambassador to Jordan and special envoy to Libya, and spent almost a decade heading the Danish government's Centre for Cyber Security.

1430 - 1730

BIC Showcase - beyond the lawyers: why rule of law matters to civil society

B2 1+3, Level 0

This is not just another IBA symposium about the rule of law. This is the Bar Issues Commission (BIC) and IBA Legal Policy & Research Unit's symposium on why the rule of law matters to civil society and what bar associations need to do to ensure that they play a more prominent role in promoting it. As the rule of law comes under attack, the IBA takes the position that it is up to bar associations around the world to leverage their unique positioning between the public and government to continue education and help encourage greater understanding of how civics and the rule of law align. The session will be chaired by BIC officer Claudia Amore of Camara de Servicios Legales in Colombia and BIC chair Steven Richman of the American Bar Association in Washington DC, alongside

several prominent private practice lawyers. Split into two parts, the first will focus on the economic and historical importance of the rule of law, while the second will be an interactive workshop with the audience.

1800 - 2100

Host Committee Reception

Copenhagen City Hall, Rådhuspladsen, 1

The 2026 Copenhagen Host Committee, bringing together leading Danish law firms, the Danish Bar and Law Society, and the Association of Danish Law Firms, warmly invites delegates to an evening of networking. Copenhagen City Hall is one of Denmark's most recognisable landmarks and a symbol of Danish democracy, craftsmanship and civic tradition. Located in the heart of the city, it provides a fitting setting to welcome the international legal community to Copenhagen.

For security reasons, capacity at Copenhagen City Hall is limited to 600 people at any one time. There may therefore be a short wait to enter the building during busy periods. Registration is not required, but a conference badge is required to pass through security.

Thursday

0800 - 0915

Section on Public and Professional Interest (SPPI) awards breakfast

C1 0, Level 0

The annual SPPI awards breakfast, where the IBA Award for Outstanding Contribution by a Legal Practitioner to Human Rights, the IBA Outstanding Young Lawyer Award and the IBA Pro Bono Award will be presented.

0930 - 1230

SPPI Showcase: A profession under pressure

B5 1-5, Level 0

The IBA has long championed the importance of the rule of law, but now, perhaps more than ever, it is under intense threat from aggressors. On Thursday morning, the Section on Public and Professional Interest



Andriy Kostin speaking at the IBA annual conference in Paris in 2023

led showcase on a profession under pressure will deconstruct how the legal sector is under constant pressure from all angles, from regulators to artificial intelligence to the erosion of ethical boundaries. Promising to cover how practitioners are managing strain from courtrooms to conflict zones and from boardrooms to government ministries, the session will focus on the difficulties facing those defending the rule of law. A world café round table discussion will precede a panel discussion led by SPPI chair Babatunde Ajibade of SPA Ajibade & Co, Lagos, Nigeria, and SPPI vice chair and treasurer Hanim Hamzah of King & Wood, Beijing, China.

Friday

0930-1545

Rule of Law Symposium

Auditorium 11, Level 1

Organised by the Rule of Law Forum, the annual conference-ending symposium underscores the IBA's commitment to promoting and defending the rule of law worldwide. This year's programme will feature three sessions titled: International peace and global security in a multi-polar world; Not just the rule of law, but a just rule of law; and Lawfare and lawfair in the age of populism. The three sessions will convene leading practitioners, policymakers and academics to debate the challenges facing the rule of law on the global scale and reaffirm the legal profession's vital role in upholding justice and accountability. The symposium, which includes lunch, is free to attend, including for those who are not registered to attend the conference, although they must register by Wednesday 7 October. The online registration form can be found at ibanet.org.

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Afridi &Angell

أفريدي وانجل



Our IBA Team:

Back row (l to r): Mevan Bandara, Shahram Safai, Saurbh Kothari, Chatura Randeniya

Front row (l to r): Bashir Ahmed, Charles Laubach, Danielle Lobo

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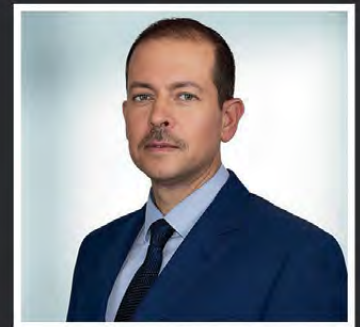
Meet our IBA Team



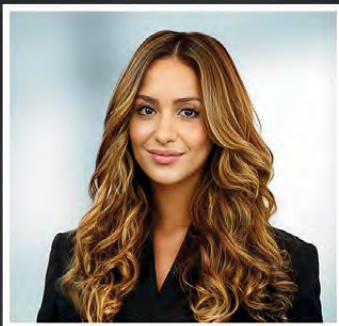
Sadiq Jafar
Managing Partner



Richard Briggs
Executive Partner, Dubai



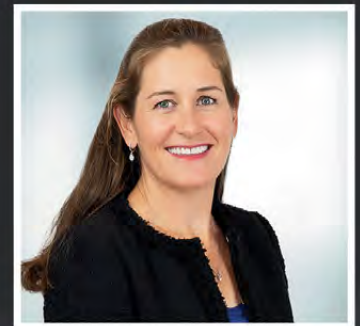
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Walid Azzam
Partner | Dispute Resolution



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