

EDITORIAL COMMENT

This is the second issue of the *International Journal of Legal Information* (IJLI) since the global pandemic struck early in 2020. More than a million people around the world have died from the disease, and many millions more are infected and suffering. I must admit that with so much national and international drama unfolding around us editing this issue of the journal has felt a bit surreal at times. But I also have to say that I believe the content in this issue is some of the strongest we have ever published and I am extremely proud of the final result. There are just two feature articles, though they are very substantial, and yes, a bit longer than many of our other feature articles have been. Both articles are authored by people I have known and respected for many years. The other content stands up to the weight of the feature articles as well. I believe that this may very well be an issue you wish to keep on your shelf for future referral. There is no shortage of excellent content here!

As many of you may recall, the 36th Annual Course on International Law and Legal Information, *Civil Rights, Human Rights, and Other Critical Issues in U.S. Law*, was held in Atlanta, Georgia, USA from October 22–26, 2017. The keynote speaker for that conference was **Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im**, PhD, Charles Howard Candler Professor of Law, Emory School of Law. He has an international reputation as one of the foremost scholars on human rights and Islamic law in the world. He is widely published and also has an incredible list of professional honors to his credit. I had the honor of introducing my friend and colleague, Professor An-Na'im (affectionately known as “Abduh” by his many friends), at the conference. As part of our usual practice, we invited all speakers at the Atlanta conference, including Abduh, to publish the texts of their lectures in a forthcoming issue of the IJLI. Abduh, with great humility, let me know that his presentation was to be incorporated as a chapter in his next book and was therefore not available to be published in the IJLI. But true to his reputation for generosity, he offered to prepare and submit a piece for the IJLI at a later date – and so I settled in to wait. Time passed, and successful IALL conferences were convened subsequently in Luxembourg and then Sydney. There was an opening for a substantial piece in this forthcoming issue of the IJLI, so I (carefully and respectfully!) called in the favor, and Abduh truly delivered.

When he submitted his manuscript, Abduh told me that he was concerned I would think that the piece was too long, but I actually had difficulty finding much of anything that needed editing or changing. It is a thought piece, and is not at all too long or too esoteric for IJLI readers. He is a really wonderful writer, and I think you will appreciate this amazing piece of writing! He opens the piece with a very simple declaratory statement of purpose: he “seeks to develop ways of holding governments accountable for their failure to satisfy the requirements of conflict management, political stability, economic growth, and social welfare.” While this seems simple enough on its face, the complexity of the problem he addresses unfolds throughout the essay as Professor An-Na'im walks his readers through the many challenges and areas of resistance for nations to do what is so obviously the right thing to do. He explains simply and persuasively why and how nations should make these necessary ideological changes as a way to move us all forward to a more peaceful and equitable world. This is more than just good writing – these are important thoughts. Read it.

The second feature article in this issue of the IJLI is by **Jootaek Lee**, a law library colleague and past contributor to the IJLI. Professor Lee argues that a flaw in understanding the status and place of US academic law libraries is the tendency to emphasize the economic value of law libraries or other aspects of law libraries. Instead, Lee argues that we should emphasize the intrinsic value of law libraries and their historic and ongoing, critical role in society and culture. Lee lays out his assessment of the “true value” of law libraries and the librarians who work in them and how that should be more than sufficient to justify their existence and support from host institutions and patrons. He goes on to make a comparison of US law libraries and Korean law libraries and posits how the US model could be used by Korean law libraries to improve Korean libraries' status and situation. This is one of

several recent IJLI articles that takes a comparative approach in examining aspects of law librarianship. I found it a really interesting read and believe you will too.

Finally, I encourage you to take a few minutes to look through the book reviews, edited by **Caroline Osborne**. Whether you use the reviews for collection development ideas, to read what a colleague has published, or to keep up with what is new in the published world of legal information, the Book Review section can meet those needs. Our slate of reviewers have been busy, as has Professor Osborne, and there are more book reviews than usual in this issue. And rounding out this issue – as it does in every issue, is the International Calendar, edited by **Amy Flick**. Thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, nearly every law library conference, symposium, and meeting has been cancelled or postponed, but the Calendar also gives information about postponements or, where appropriate, those gatherings that have gone virtual.

As I mentioned at the outset, I am very proud of this issue. It was edited and compiled during a particularly difficult period for many of us. Perhaps the crucible of personal, political, environmental, societal, and cultural challenges helped to refine this issue into something truly special. I believe it may have done just that. I do hope you enjoy it as much as I do.

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