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INTRODUCTION

The 2024 Annual Meeting of the Society convened under the theme "International Law in an Interdependent World," reflecting the interconnected challenges and possibilities confronting our ever-changing international community. Our agenda prioritized panels that underscored opportunities for international law to respond to crises old and new, while also recognizing significant advancements already being made toward human progress through international law.

The past year provided no shortage of conflict. The war in Ukraine entered its third year, spurring international lawyers to pioneer creative responses within existing frameworks such as international criminal law, humanitarian law, economic law, and diplomacy. That conflict cast a long shadow over the proceedings, as did the tragic events of Hamas's attacks in Israel on October 7 and Israel's ensuing military campaign in Gaza by land, air, and sea. These crises prompted myriad questions for the vitality and legitimacy of the international legal system, testing in particular the legal frameworks governing the use of force, the conduct of armed conflict, and fundamental human rights.

The panels of the 2024 Annual Meeting sought to engage with these crises head on. With NATO marking its 75th anniversary, one prominent panel highlighted the crucial role of alliances in promoting stability and fostering cooperation among nations. Similar recognition was given to the Geneva Conventions by examining their continuing relevance to today's armed conflict situations. We also conceived a "late-breaking panel" exploring legal aspects of the conflict in Gaza. We additionally sought to focus the spotlight on more promising developments, for instance through a second late-breaking panel on the contribution of African courts and institutions to international law and democracy.

A particularly poignant event this year was the commemoration of Benjamin Ferencz's legacy. As a towering figure in the development of international criminal justice, his contributions serve as a testament to the remarkable achievements that are possible through dedicated advocacy and highlight the considerable progress of international criminal law, while simultaneously reminding us of new challenges that must be addressed as a matter of urgency by his successors.

Throughout the Meeting, we also considered how international law can effectively respond to transnational challenges such as migration, cybersecurity, and the need for equitable resource distribution. Environmental aspects received special attention both in the plenary sessions and in specialized panels, such as those addressing the International Court of Justice's advisory proceedings related to climate change. Several sessions also confronted the diverse challenges of climate change and environmental justice, including in relation to the law of disasters and the evolving concept of the rights of nature. Our panels reflected a vibrant dialogue on international law's adaptability in confronting these multifaceted issues, while still confronting soberly its limitations—both contingent and inherent.

We left the Annual Meeting imbued with a profound conviction that international law retains a vital role in our interconnected world despite, or indeed because of, the existential global circumstances we face. International law and international lawyers cannot do it all, but there remains much that our discipline—and our community—can do to better our world. This belief is supported most of all by the remarkable dedication of the community of professionals (and students!) of

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which this Society is the great convenor. It has been our honor to serve as your Co-Chairs, and we are deeply appreciative of the Society for the opportunity to come together in our shared pursuit of upholding the rule of international law and promoting its progressive development.

Julian Arato, Christina Beharry, and Hannah Garry
2024 ASIL Annual Meeting Co-Chairs

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