



EMORY | LAW

CENTER FOR
INTERNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE LAW

Spring 2026

Notes from the Director



Welcome to the Spring 2026 CICL Newsletter! Here, we highlight our accomplishments throughout 2025 and share exciting developments planned for the year ahead. 2025 has been a dynamic year for the Center: we organized seminars and panel discussions, hosted international conferences, welcomed global practitioners for career talks, and strengthened our community through coffee chats, morning gatherings, and “family and friends” events.

We also established the CICL Advisory Board, bringing together distinguished international and comparative law scholars from Emory, other U.S. and international institutions, and accomplished legal professionals. Additionally, we celebrated the outstanding scholarly contributions of our faculty.

Below are some of this year’s highlights.

The Bederman Fund and Distinguished Lecture Series

Our flagship initiative, the Bederman Fund, established in 2011 in memory of Emory Law’s beloved Professor and world-renowned international law expert David J. Bederman, continues to enrich our community. Each year, the Fund enables CICL to host a distinguished scholar for the Annual Bederman Lecture and provides scholarships for students to attend the Hague Academy of International Law.

2025 Annual Bederman Lecture

On **March 26, 2025** we hosted Professor **Siobhán Mullally**, UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons who delivered a compelling lecture on the limitations of current national and international anti-trafficking laws. The lecture, luncheon, and reception brought together faculty, students, and special guests, including members of Professor Bederman's family.

Since its inception, the Bederman Distinguished Lecture Series has welcomed many notable speakers, including:

David Bederman, Stephen J. Rapp, Fatou Bensouda, Symeon C. Symeonides, T. Alexander Aleinikoff, President Jimmy Carter, and Fionnuala Ní Aoláin, among others.

Looking Ahead: 2026 Bederman Symposium

For the first time, the Distinguished Lecture Series will take the form of a full-day **Symposium** in March 2026. More details appear in the *Forthcoming Events* section below.

Bederman Fellows and the Hague Academy

The Bederman Fund also supports the **Bederman Fellows Program**, providing scholarships for students to attend the Hague Academy of International Law.

2025 Bederman Fellows

Congratulations to:

- **Gabriella Cabrera**
- **Mingjie Lin**
- **Joseph Park**

They attended the Hague Academy during Summer 2025 and later shared their experiences with fellow students at a CICL-sponsored event.

2026 Bederman Fellows

This year, CICL received **13 applications** from 1L and 2L students. After a competitive review, the nominating committee selected:

- **Jennings Dixon**
- **Sophia McWilliams**

They will attend the Hague Academy in Summer 2026, taking courses in Public and Private International Law from July 6 – August 14, 2026.

Congratulations to both!



Events and Programming in 2025

Distinguished Scholar Visit

In April, CICL co-hosted Professor **Wojciech Sadurski**, renowned comparative constitutional law scholar, who met informally with students over coffee and cake.

Lunch & Learn: Careers in International Law

We hosted three panels featuring experienced international attorneys:

- **Livingstone Johnson** (Vice-President and Associate General Counsel, Coca-Cola Co.)

reflected on his pathway to becoming a leading in-house counsel

- **Mary Bartkus** (Hughes Hubbard & Reed) spoke about her career, and other career options in international litigation and arbitration
- **John Parkerson** (Chalmers, Adams, Backer & Kauffman LLC) described his career in international business law and his service as Honorary Consul for Hungary

Comparative Law Showcase

In May, we celebrated outstanding student scholarship in the Comparative Law Course (Fall 2024). Five papers were selected for presentation and publication in the Emory International Law Review's Recent Developments section:

- **John McHale** – Legal personality for natural features and environmental protection
- **Thomas Lynch** – Indigenous law in the U.S. and Guatemala
- **Samuel Wolff** – Revising comparative law methodologies for non-traditional governance systems
- **Andrew Hull** – Parliamentary sovereignty in the UK, Sweden, and New Zealand
- **Wenhan Tang** – Shareholder primacy in China and the U.S.

International Conference on Aggregate Litigation

In June, CICL co-hosted the International Conference on Aggregate Litigation with Stellenbosch University (South Africa) and Lewis & Clark Law School. CICL Director Dr. Magdalena Tulibacka and Emory Law student **Akosua Asafu-Adjaye Frimpong** (winner of a paper competition CICL organized) attended in person. This global conference explored litigation practice, policy, funding, and the future of aggregate disputes, including a panel on AI.

Community-Building

Our bi-weekly cookie chats continued to spark lively conversations on international affairs.

CICL Student Fellows

In the Fall we formally started our CICL Fellowship program. Students who volunteer to become CICL Fellows are instrumental in designing and running of the CICL Currents blog (see below), help the Center with organization of events, liaising and networking with Emory

Law Faculty, our Advisory Board members, our guests and visiting scholars, and get involved in our scholarly work. The Fall 2025-Spring 2026 Student Fellows are: **Veronica DeGennaro, Jennings Dixon, Akosua Asafu-Adjaye Frimpong, and Sydney Hamilton.**

CICL Advisory Board

In Fall 2025, we finalized the membership of our newly established Advisory Board. The inaugural meeting took place in November.

We are honored to be guided by the following members:

- **Dean Rich Freer** (Honorary Member) – Emory Law
- **Mary Bartkus** – Hughes Hubbard & Reed
- **Laurie Blank** – Emory Law
- **Christopher Hodges OBE** – Oxford University
- **Livingstone Johnson** – Coca-Cola Co.
- **Sam Kaywood** – Alston & Bird
- **John Parkerson** – Chalmers, Adams, Backer & Kauffman LLC
- **Teemu Ruskola** – University of Pennsylvania
- **Stacey Strong** – Emory Law
- **Martin Syblis** – Emory Law
- **Stefaan Voet** – KU Leuven
- **John Witte** – Emory University

Their expertise and commitment will shape CICL's direction for years to come.

New Initiative: “CICL Currents” Blog

In **March 2026**, CICL will launch **CICL Currents**, a new blog featuring:

- commentary on current international law issues
- faculty and student research spotlights
- updates on international and comparative law education
- resources on international, comparative and transnational law

- training, career, and networking opportunities

Stay tuned for the launch!

How We Communicate

Our quarterly newsletters remain our main communication channel, but more frequent updates are available on:

- the [CICL website](#)
- our [LinkedIn page](#)
- the upcoming [CICL Currents blog](#)

Visit us!

Magdalena Tulibacka is in Room G130 (Office Hours: Wed 9–12, Thu 1-3pm)

Ben Verell is in Room G580



Forthcoming Events

Featured Event: 2026 David J. Bederman Symposium

Access to Global Justice: National Justice Systems as Engines of International Law

Thursday, March 26, 2026 | 9:00am–6:00pm | Tull Auditorium

Reception to follow

The Symposium will feature keynote addresses by:

- **The Honorable Lee Rosenthal**, U.S. District Judge, Southern District of Texas
- **Advocate General Laila Medina**, Court of Justice of the European Union

Speakers will represent four continents and more than a dozen countries.

Symposium Theme

As international law becomes more pluralistic and more focused on individual rights, domestic justice systems increasingly serve as essential venues for enforcing privacy, environmental, family, and freedom of expression rights. Although grounded in national constitutions, these rights are universal in character. Ensuring meaningful access to justice therefore requires robust domestic enforcement mechanisms.

This Symposium brings together global experts to explore how national justice systems function within the international legal order and how they can shape the future of global justice.

David J. Bederman Symposium 2026

Access of Global Justice: National Justice Systems as Engines of International Law

Hosted by: Emory University School of Law

Center for International and Comparative Law (CICL)

Date: Thursday, March 26, 2026

Location: Tull Auditorium

Time: 9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m.

Reception to follow

Program

8:30 a.m. – Breakfast

8:45 a.m. – Welcome

9:00 a.m. – Keynote Address

Enforcing Fundamental Rights in a Pluralist Legal Order: Lessons from National and International Courts

Advocate General Laila Medina

Court of Justice of the European Union

10:00 a.m. – Panel 1

Reimagining Access to Justice: Constitutional Foundations and Digital Innovation

Panelists:

- **Prof. Theo Broodryk** (Stellenbosch University, South Africa)
 - **Prof. Xandra Kramer** (Erasmus University, Netherlands)
 - **Judy Perry Martinez** (Simon, Peragine, Smith & Redfearn)
 - **Prof. Alan Uzelac** (University of Zagreb, Croatia)
 - **Leanne Webster** (Rule of Law Program, Carter Center)
 - **Prof. Tadeusz Zembrzuski** (University of Warsaw)
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11:30 a.m. – Lunch

1:15 p.m. – Keynote Address

Rule of Law, Access to Justice, Due Process, and Private Vindication of International Law

The Honorable Lee Rosenthal

United States District Judge, Southern District of Texas

2:00 p.m. – Panel 2

Innovations in Rights Enforcement: Strategic Litigation, Group Claims, and ADR

Exploring how domestic justice systems can be used to advance social good and meaningful reform.

Panelists:

- **Prof. Maria José Azar-Baud** (Paris-Saclay University)
 - **Prof. Nikki Chamberlain** (University of Auckland)
 - **Nick Diamand** (Liefv Cabraser)
 - **Prof. Chris Hodges** (Oxford University)
 - **Prof. Jagna Mucha** (University of Warsaw)
 - **European Commission Representative** – TBC
 - **Prof. Stefaan Voet** (Catholic University of Leuven)
-

3:30 p.m. – Coffee Break

3:45 p.m. – Panel 3

Financing Access to Justice: Public Funding, Private Capital, and the Future of Rights Enforcement

Panelists:

- **Peter Cashman** (Third Floor Wentworth Chambers, Sydney)
- **Adrian Cordina** (Erasmus Law School, Rotterdam)
- **Prof. James Sandman** (University of Pennsylvania)
- **Prof. Anthony Sebok** (Cardozo Law School)
- **Prof. Magdalena Skibińska** (University of Zielona Góra, Poland)

- **Prof. John Sorabji** (University College London)
- **Prof. Ianika Tzankova** (Rubikon Impact & Litigation; Tilburg University)

5:45 p.m. – Conclusion

6:00 p.m. – Reception

2026 Events:

January 14th, 2026, panel discussion on the US Actions in Venezuela – chaired by Magdalena Tulibacka and featuring Emory Law’s international law and national security experts – Professors Laurie Blank and Mark Nevitt.

Below is a review of the event written by CICL Student Fellow, **Veronica DeGennaro**

On January 14, Emory Law hosted a discussion on recent U.S. actions involving Venezuela, featuring Professor Laurie Blank and Professor Mark Nevitt. The event examined the domestic and international legal consequences of U.S. military force against vessels identified by U.S. intelligence as linked to Venezuelan drug trafficking and the joint military-law-enforcement operation that resulted in the capture of Nicolás Maduro. Throughout the discussion, both speakers emphasized that the controversy turns on law and facts together, and that disagreement often stems from disputes over both the applicable legal framework and the factual predicates being asserted.

Professor Nevitt opened by taking the audience “back to September of 2025,” focusing on the domestic legal issues surrounding the administration’s actions. He began by acknowledging that the President has constitutional authority as Commander in Chief to defend the nation, but also a constitutional obligation to take care that the laws are faithfully executed, including statutes and treaty law. He explained that the administration’s decision to label certain Venezuelan drug cartels as terrorist organizations was, in itself, “just that, a label,” and did not automatically confer new war-making authority apart from implications under material-support-to-terrorism statutes.

Nevitt highlighted what he described as a significant historical shift. Drugs, he noted, have for decades been treated as a law-enforcement mission primarily conducted by the Coast Guard

through maritime interdiction, boarding, and seizure, not through kinetic military force analyzed under the law of armed conflict. Against that backdrop, he described the reported September order to strike a vessel thousands of miles from the United States as a big moment marking a move away from law enforcement toward a war-powers framework. One month later, he noted, the administration publicly asserted that the United States was engaged in a non-international armed conflict with so-called narco-terrorist groups.

A recurring concern, Nevitt emphasized, is that the public still does not know the precise legal authority being claimed because the relevant Office of Legal Counsel opinion, described as the executive branch's core legal justification, has not been released. Without that opinion, the scope of the asserted NIAC and the reasoning behind it remain unclear. He concluded his opening remarks by stressing that Congress has not authorized force, that the situation relies on a very bold view of Article II powers, and that Congress has largely been absent from the debate despite the War Powers Resolution's intent to constrain unilateral presidential action. Professor Blank then shifted the discussion to the international law frameworks, explaining that the situation illustrates why both facts and law matter. She outlined the U.N. Charter system, created to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war by prohibiting the use of force against another state's territorial integrity or political independence. She explained that there are only three exceptions to that prohibition: consent, U.N. Security Council authorization, and self-defense. Applying those rules, she noted that there is no consent, no Security Council authorization, and serious questions about whether self-defense can plausibly be invoked.

Blank also discussed the prohibition of intervention, which bars coercive interference in a state's *domaine réservé*, its core internal affairs including political systems, elections, and control over natural resources. She then turned to the law of armed conflict, explaining the difference between international armed conflict and non-international armed conflict and emphasizing that LOAC applies only once specific legal thresholds such as intensity of violence and organization of armed groups are met. Declaring that a NIAC exists, she stressed, does not make it so, the facts must satisfy the legal criteria.

Student questions drove the remainder of the event. Students pressed both speakers on whether post-9/11 national security approach, particularly Bush-era doctrines emphasizing preemption, made the current approach less novel. Both professors responded that national security strategy documents articulate policy, not law, and do not themselves create legal authority. They similarly rejected the idea that the Monroe Doctrine supplies independent legal justification, describing it as a worldview or policy framework rather than a source of constitutional or international legal power.

Several questions focused on self-defense and imminence, prompting discussion of the Caroline standard requiring necessity that is instant, overwhelming, and leaving no choice of peaceful means. Both speakers emphasized that drug trafficking, however devastating its

consequences, does not resemble an armed attack as understood in international law, and that layering inference upon inference, particularly when vessels are far from U.S. territory and not moving toward it, raises serious legal concerns. Professor Nevitt underscored that intelligence can be wrong, which is precisely why interdiction has historically been treated as a law enforcement matter rather than warfare.

Students also asked whether consent could be derived from the Venezuelan people rather than the Maduro government. Professor Blank explained that under international law consent to the use of force is vested in the sovereign government, not in a generalized notion of popular will even where legitimacy is contested. Discussion of Panama and Operation ‘Just Cause’ illustrated how fact-specific and legally contested such arguments can be.

The event concluded with questions about the practical value of international law and the doctrine of Responsibility to Protect. Professor Blank emphasized that international law enables predictability, stability, and functioning relationships between states and that abandoning shared rules makes everyone, including U.S. service members, less safe. On R2P, both speakers stressed that it is a doctrine, not a legal authorization for force, and warned that expanding humanitarian justifications risks dangerous reciprocity, pointing to how similar arguments have been invoked by other states to justify unlawful aggression.

The discussion closed on a sober note. While the humanitarian and security concerns raised by Venezuela are real, the speakers warned that eroding legal constraints on the use of force carries long-term consequences for constitutional governance, international order, and global stability, concerns that will remain pressing beyond this single episode.

Other Upcoming Events

- **February 25, 2026 | 4:15pm | Hunter Atrium or Zoom**

Book Talk & Panel Discussion:

Jewish Law and International Law: Sovereignty and Exogenous Authority in a Transnational World

Featuring Professor Michael Broyde and panelists Maria Teresa Gil Bazo, Rabea Benhalim, and Judith Hahn.

- **April 2026 - Date TBA**

A presentation on Professor Tonya Jacobi’s work on the Australian High Court.

- **Webinar on Collective Litigation in Europe**

May 2026 – Date TBA

Based on the recently published volume *Collective Litigation in Europe: Law and Practice*.

- **Monthly Coffee Mornings**

Held third Wednesday in the Student Commons.

- **Lunch & Learn with International Attorneys**

Spring 2026 sessions will be announced via the CICL website, On the Docket, and CICL Currents.

For reminders about upcoming events and other items of interest, follow the **Center for International and Comparative Law** on Facebook and LinkedIn (links below.)

You can reach us via email at LAW-CICL@EMORY.EDU.

We welcome your suggestions and comments!

