



2 February 2017

STATEMENT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL LAW STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Like all of you, and like everyone who believes in the importance of international law, we are distraught over President Donald Trump’s Executive Order of 27 January 2017, and its implications for the Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition, for law students and lawyers of nationalities affected by the Executive Order, and for the United States’ traditional role as a beacon for those forced to leave their own countries for fear of persecution.

The Jessup Competition, which traces its history back to 1959, has always proudly welcomed student participants and judges from around the world. Our constituency from over 100 countries is extraordinarily diverse, but it is unified by one thing: a commitment to and passion for the rule of law in international affairs. That objective is now under unprecedented threat.

Some of the consequences of President Trump’s Executive Order will affect the Jessup and ILSA directly. Two teams – the University of International Relations in Iran and the winner of the Iraqi National Rounds (which have not yet taken place) – will almost surely not be permitted to attend the White & Case International Rounds in Washington in April. We are aware of at least four teams (representing Jordan, the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Palestine) one or more of whose members are citizens of the (temporarily) blacklisted countries; those students and coaches will in all likelihood be denied entry visas. We do not yet know whether there may be other individuals in a similar situation.

The Board of Directors and the Executive Office of the International Law Students Association are considering a number of options that would permit the affected teams and students to participate, while at the same time preserving the quality, reputation, and significance of the Jessup Competition, without causing massive disruption to the organization and to other teams and schools. We hope to have a proposal to offer to the Jessup community within a short time.

ILSA is aware of the seriousness of the current situation, and we express our support for those directly affected by it. Of course, we are painfully aware of the ironies implicit here: one of the victims of President Trump’s new policy – which we believe to be illegal under both U.S. domestic and international law – will be an organization whose mission is to expand the study, teaching, and practice of international law around the world.

Please continue to visit the ILSA website for updates. Questions and concerns, including from Jessup team members likely to be impeded from attending the 2017 International Rounds by virtue of the new Executive Order, should be directed to Jessup@ILSA.org. This includes individuals that have dual citizenship with one of the countries listed in the Executive Order.

Thank you for being a member of the ILSA community. And best of luck to all who are preparing for and participating in the 2017 Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition.

Yours sincerely,

Steven M. Schneebaum,
Chair, Board of Directors

William W. Burke-White,
Chair-Elect, Board of Directors

Lesley A. Benn,
Executive Director