

# International Legal Developments Year in Review: 2011

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The year 2011 was a year of profound change in many parts of the world. In the Middle East and North Africa in particular, demonstrations unprecedented in many countries brought political changes that no one could have predicted even a year ago. What came to be known as the “Arab Spring” began after Mohamed Bouazizi, a fruit seller from southern Tunisia, set himself on fire on December 17, 2010 as a protest against the repressive government in Tunisia. Anti-government demonstrations brought down the government of Tunisia’s President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, who left office in January 2011. Those protests spread to other nations in the Middle East and North Africa, leading to the fall of President Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi in Libya, and President Ali Abdullah Saleh in Yemen. Demonstrations were seen in other nations in the region throughout the year, and some are continuing in 2012. The most disturbing are the demonstrations in Syria, where the United Nations estimates that more than 8,000 persons have died in Syria since demonstrations began in March 2011.<sup>1</sup>

Other significant events in 2011 including the end of the U.S. war in Iraq, one of the longest wars in U.S. history. Osama bin Laden, the alleged mastermind of the September 11th attacks on the United States, was located and killed in Pakistan by U.S. forces. And in March 2011, an earthquake in Japan was followed by a tsunami which claimed the lives of at least 16,000 people, with more than 3,000 others still missing a year after the event.

The most important political and legal developments of 2011 are reviewed in this volume, which compiles reports from various committees of the American Bar Association Section of International Law. Not every event can be covered in this volume, and the omission of an event from any particular committee’s report should not be construed as meaning that the event was insignificant. All of our committees work under extremely strict guidelines that limit the number of words that each committee has to roughly 7,000 words, including footnotes. Articles are written by members of each committee and, in some cases, non-section members who may have particular knowledge or expertise in an area. In most cases, the articles are first edited by a committee editor who heroically

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1. [http://lawprofessors.typepad.com/international\\_law/2012/03/syria.html](http://lawprofessors.typepad.com/international_law/2012/03/syria.html).

brings the events of the year into a report within our word count limits. An amazing team of Deputy Editors then reviews those articles, which I then review as the overall editor of the 2011 Year in Review. Student editors at the Dedman School of Law at Southern Methodist University then closely review the articles line by line and word by word, checking also the sources cited by the authors.

Because of all of the work that goes into producing this volume, the final product that you now hold in your hands (or that you may be accessing electronically) is a useful and reliable overview of important international law events of 2011. This volume for 2011 takes its place in the annual year in review that the Section of International Law publishes in *The International Lawyer*. Readers interested in a particular subject area or region should consult not only this issue but may also profit from looking at earlier reviews from the same committee. To facilitate that look back to earlier years, the articles in this year's volume include citations to the two previous years. We hope that readers find it useful to consult those earlier sources and to consider developments over more than one year.

This year, the team of Deputy Editors was larger than ever. These editors include a great many law professors who specialize in legal writing, international law, and topics related to foreign and international law. Our Deputy Editors include law professors from across the United States but also France, Israel, and Switzerland. Our Deputy Editors also include law clerks and staff attorneys from the federal courts, and even a law student (Paul Kossoff) who speaks English, Spanish, Italian, and Chinese. The section is blessed to have such a skilled and dedicated team of Deputy Editors, all of whom volunteer their efforts and many of whom have now served for a couple of years. Here is the list of this year's 62 Deputy Editors:

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- Christine M. Venter (Notre Dame Law School)
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The section thanks all of the authors, committee editors, deputy editors, and law student editors who helped bring this volume into existence. You all provide an important service to the members of the ABA Section of International Law and to all of the researchers who will rely upon your work in future years.

As editor of the overall year in review, I thank all of the authors and editors who make this project so interesting and enjoyable. I also extend special thanks to my colleague (and former co-editor) William B.T. Mock, Jr., who now serves as the Publications Officer for the ABA Section of International Law. Professor Beverly Caro Duréus at SMU Dedman School of Law, Co-Executive Editor of *The International Lawyer*, provided essential support and encouragement to me throughout the year and supervised the important work of the law student editors. Thomas Annis did an outstanding job as Managing Editor and I appreciate also his work on this volume.

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