

Academy offers chance to Palestinian students

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This year's Laureate line-up. From left: competition judge Diego Fernandez Arroyo, the prize's presenter Gabrielle Kaufmann-Kohler, winner Liang-Ying Tan and runners-up Shafik Jamous and Jorge Vargas Neto

This year's International Arbitration Academy in Paris awarded two scholarships to students from Palestine, selected through the new Jerusalem Arbitration Centre, which aims to facilitate settlement of Israeli and Palestinian business disputes.

Ala Touqan and **Shafik Jamous** joined 120 participants from 54 countries on the programme from 2 July to 20 July, which was taught by leading academics including **Michael Reisman**, **Gabrielle Kaufmann-Kohler**, **Jan Paulsson** and **William W Park**.

Twenty-eight of the participants received scholarships, four funded by the Academy and the others sponsored by law firms and companies including EDF Energy, Shearman & Sterling, Salans, Obeid, Herbert Smith, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer and Clifford Chance.

Israel is Palestine's largest trading partner, with the two engaging in an estimated US\$4 billion in trade every year. The Jerusalem Arbitration Centre, established by ICC Israel and ICC Palestine, intends to improve the arbitration capability of the two countries, an initiative which its members hope will encourage peace in the region.

Catherine Rogers, professor at Penn State Law School in Philadelphia and con-

sultant for ICC Palestine, says the centre seeks to bring “peaceful dispute resolution to disputants from jurisdictions that are openly hostile to each other,” but one significant challenge it faces is addressing the “sometimes significant gaps in relative capacity and experience between Israeli and Palestinian lawyers.”

Rogers says the Academy has provided an “invaluable” opportunity for Touqan and Jamous. “Palestinian attorneys are not generally able to participate in high-end international arbitration conferences and programmes that are so essential to developing skills and knowledge in international arbitration,” she explains.

Shearman & Sterling’s public international law head and Academy faculty member **Yas Banifatemi** says the initiative definitely paid off as one of the Palestinian participants, Jamous, ended up being the runner-up in the Academy’s annual Laureate competition. Entrants in this year’s competition, won by Singaporean student Liang-Ying Tan, had to write an essay on the topic ‘Is arbitration the equal of state justice?’, with Academy faculty member Gabrielle Kaufmann-Kohler presenting the prize.

24 year-old Jamous, who practises at Jamoos Law Office in Ramallah and Nablus and teaches at AnNajah National University, says: “It is a great honour to be the runner-up for both me and my country”.

He says that he was mindful in writing the piece that he was addressing “some of the most sophisticated legal minds” in the world – jury members **Diego Fernandez Arroyo**, a Spanish professor at the School of Law of Sciences Po, **Jean-Baptiste Racine**, a professor at the University of Nice, and Banifatemi.

Jamous hopes to work closely with the Jerusalem Arbitration Centre in the future, calling it “a great ambition”.

“The institute will not only be a model centre for international arbitration, but also a chance to push the peace process in the Middle East forward through promotion of justice,” he says.

This year saw a rise in applications to attend the Academy, with candidates drawn from over 250 applicants from 78 countries. China, France and Italy were most represented.

The programme included a course on the rule of law in international arbitration led by Boston University professor William W Park and lectures on topics ranging from sports law arbitration to investment treaty arbitration practice in China, Japan and Korea.

An inaugural lecture was given by Russian arbitrator Sergei Lebedev, on the negotiations for the New York Convention, while the Berthold Goldman lecture – which focuses on historic cases – was given by Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer partner and Miami School of Law professor Jan Paulsson, on the Pyramids arbitration.

The president of the Academy, Shearman & Sterling’s head of international arbitration **Emmanuel Gaillard**, says: “We are extremely pleased with the tremendous

success of this year's Academy. This is due to the outstanding profile of the participants selected from all around the world and to the incomparable quality of our faculty and programme."

Liang-Ying, 28, who won the laureate prize and is embarking on a career at Gibson Dunn & Crutcher in New York later this year, says that the Academy "provided an excellent overview of international investment and commercial arbitration, with a good mix of topics engagingly addressed by leaders in the field."

She says she was particularly happy to get to know fellow participants with "diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives."

Third place in the Laureate competition went to **Jorge Vargas Neto**, a Brazilian.