



## Events

### The Position of Heads of State and Senior Officials in International Law

Arthur Watts public international law seminar series  
sponsored by Volterra Fietta

Thurs 23 January 2014

17:30-19.30  
Followed by a reception

British Institute  
of International and  
Comparative Law,  
Charles Clore House,  
17 Russell Square,  
London WC1B 5JP

2 CPD hours

The position in international law of Heads of State and other top-level State representatives is a controversial and rapidly developing subject which lies at the heart of the tensions between principles of accountability and immunity. The international trials of Slobodan Milosevic, Charles Taylor and Jean Kambanda and the indictments of Omar Al Bashir, Muammar Gadaffi, Laurent Gbagbo and Uhuru Kenyatta have attracted worldwide attention and increased the expectation that leaders should be held accountable for serious violations of human rights. Yet the personal immunity of Heads of State which would bar proceedings in national courts has been the subject of firm endorsement by the ICJ in the *Arrest Warrant Case*. Such immunity is derived from customary international law and was deliberately left untouched by the UN Convention on Jurisdictional Immunities of States and Their Property.

This seminar will examine some of the unresolved issues concerning the personal immunity of Heads of State, its scope and, in particular, who else may be covered by it and how it applies in both criminal and civil proceedings before domestic courts. The work of the International Law Commission in this area will also be considered, together with certain other aspects of the legal position of Heads of State and other top State office-holders, such as the legal effect of unilateral statements made by them.

Sir Arthur Watts (1931-2007), with extraordinary foresight, pioneered the study of this subject in 1994 in his Hague lectures and published what has remained until now the leading work. Joanne Foakes' forthcoming book *"The Position of Heads of State and Senior Officials in International Law"*, which will provide an updated and comprehensive treatment of the subject, was inspired by Sir Arthur's early work as well as Ms Foakes' practical experience in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office where she worked under his leadership.

This subject is closely interwoven with the law of state immunity, on which Lady Hazel Fox QC and Dr Philippa Webb are the leading authorities.

#### Speakers

- **Joanne Foakes**, Chatham House; former Legal Counsellor, Foreign and Commonwealth Office
- **Dr Philippa Webb**, King's College London

#### Chair:

- **Dame Rosalyn Higgins DBE QC**, President of the Institute; Former President, International Court of Justice

#### Guest of Honour:

- **Lady Hazel Fox CMG QC**, former Director of the Institute

The seminar will be followed by a reception.

This event is convened by Jill Barrett, Arthur Watts Senior Research Fellow in Public International Law, British Institute of International and Comparative Law

Sponsored by:

**Volterra Fietta**  
THE PUBLIC INTERNATIONAL LAW FIRM

CPD hours may be claimed by both solicitors and barristers through attendance at this event.

## Pricing and registration

Members:		Non-members:	
Individual	£35	Individuals	£59
Full-time Academic	£20	Full-time Academic	£35
Full-time Student	£12	Full-time Student	£20

*N.B. The Academic rate also applies to staff of government and non-profit organisations.*

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