

Note from the Editor-in-Chief



The *Arab Law Quarterly* at 35: Paths Forward

In 2019 I was privileged and humbled to accept the position of Editor-in-Chief of this esteemed journal, following in the footsteps of its pioneering founders, Professors Ballantyne and Hoyle, to whom I remain indebted. At that time, in the pages of the *Arab Law Quarterly*, I reflected on the important role that it provides as a space for the dissemination of knowledge related specifically to law in the Arab world, and I described my own belief as to why that work was especially important now, during a period of considerable legal and political tumult across the Arab world. I concluded that short note by describing as premature any sort of detailed blueprint for how the *ALQ* would evolve over the next few years, and instead only offered some general ideas that I committed to discuss with our new, energized, and highly committed Board of Editors.

As the *ALQ* now reaches its 35th anniversary, and I reach my second year at its helm, it seems time to share with our loyal readers the steps forward that we are taking as a team to maintain the pre-eminent reputation of the *ALQ*. We take these steps with due humility, aware of the gigantic strides it has taken over the past 35 years and desirous of continuing a proud tradition through salutary evolution and healthy change to match the needs of the times. In so doing, we are guided not only by our instincts and our inclinations, but also by data. In this regard, I must give due regard to the careful, and extensive, bibliometric analysis of the *ALQ* offered by Board of Editors Member Professor M. Kabir Hassan, along with Professors Muneer M. Alshater and Aishath Muneeza, which has proven so helpful to us that we have published it and made it publicly available online in its entirety at [10.6084/m9.figshare.14381225](https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.14381225). For those interested in where the *ALQ* has thrived, and where it has room to grow, I highly recommend a thorough and careful read.

We have developed three areas of focus that I wish to highlight in this limited space, which I hope readers will start to notice in our future issues as we

begin to implement them. The first concerns the creation of a Special Issue on an annual basis relating to a matter of particular interest to the Arab world. We have successfully published our first Special Issue, which concerned the subject of Islamic Finance and was managed by the indefatigable Professor Hassan. Our second Special Issue, due for publication next year, will be on the subject of Arab Authoritarianism, and it will be managed by Board of Editors Member Professor Nathan Brown and Mai El-Sedany, J.D. Thereafter, we have planned a 2023 Special Issue on Administrative Law in the Arab world. Board of Editors Member Professor Mona Oraby will lead this effort, for which a call for papers was recently issued. I am grateful to all those who have chosen to devote such time and attention to these extremely important initiatives.

Second, we have chosen to add one section to the *ALQ* and strengthen another section, thereby in the process broadening our core leadership team. Respecting the first, under the leadership of Dr. Lena-Maria Möller, we plan to dedicate a few pages of each issue to 'Current Developments'. This section will feature contributions that describe a recent legal development in the Arab world—whether that be a new law, court decision, administrative order, or otherwise—and offer commentary thereon. One notable piece, for example, written by Board of Editors Member Professor Kilian Bälz (available online at <https://doi.org/10.1163/15730255-14030065>) describes a recent Libyan Supreme Court case interpreting restrictively a 2013 law prohibiting 'transacting with interest, borrowing or lending, in all civil and commercial transactions' (*at-ta'āmul fi ḡamī al-mu'āmalāt al-madaniyyah wa-l-tiḡāriyyah*). Specifically, the Court held that it only applied to credit transactions rather than to interest for delayed payment for commercial transactions. The work, which we have made publicly available, is almost an ideal version of that which we hope to promote in the new Current Developments Section, in that it is timely, succinct, and offers commentary of great use to practitioner and scholar alike.

We have also committed to re-energizing our Book Review Section under the leadership of Associate Editor Professor Serdar Kurnaz and his team. They have put forward an ambitious plan to ensure that we are aware of work that is published in a diverse array of publishing houses in a diverse array of languages, and they are committed to finding reviewers who can offer thoughtful and beneficial insights on the work reviewed. Professor Kurnaz and the team are particularly focused on ensuring that lesser known work in foreign languages receives the attention it deserves in our pages.

This brings me to our third major area of focus in the coming years, which is renewing our longstanding commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our journal is proud of its deep, inclusive tradition, making it a regular practice, for example, to publish work from authors in the Global South and with

citations full of scholars and practitioners in the Arab region, rather than exclusively academics working in Western universities. We have much more work to do in the diversity space. In particular, our Board of Editors remains primarily Western trained academics, and women are under-represented at all levels of the *ALQ*. We have made improvements—our Board of Editors now has four times the number of women it did only two years ago, and, for the first time in our history, we have a woman on our core leadership team in Dr. Möller. We must do more, and we will be considering and implementing various initiatives in the coming years to this end.

It has been a pleasure and an honor to serve as this august journal's Editor-in-Chief over the past two years, and I look forward to the opportunity to continue to advance the mission of the *ALQ* in the upcoming years.

Haider Ala Hamoudi

Editor-in-Chief

Professor of Law, Vice Dean, University of Pittsburgh School of Law,
Pittsburgh, PA, USA

hamoudi@pitt.edu

