



## MEMBER OF THE UNIVERSAL JURISDICTION COMMISSION OF EXPERTS IN THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE OF SPAIN LECTURES AT IMLI

The Institute had the pleasure of welcoming Mr. Manuel Miguel Vergara Céspedes (Member, the Universal Jurisdiction Commission of Experts, Ministry of Justice, Spain), on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2019 and delivered a lecture on the topic “*Universal Jurisdiction in Practice*” to the IMLI Class of 2019-2020.



*Mr. Manuel Miguel Vergara Céspedes, (Member, the Universal Jurisdiction Commission of Experts, Ministry of Justice, Spain) meeting the IMLI Class of 2019-2020*

Mr. Vergara Céspedes commenced his lecture by enumerating the five principles of jurisdiction before homing in on Universal Jurisdiction in particular, the crux of his lecture. In his discussions, Mr. Vergara Céspedes stated that the principle of Universal Jurisdiction establishes the right or the obligation of a national court to examine and, if appropriate, try certain international crimes by implementing national and/or international criminal law, regardless of where those crimes were

committed, the nationality of the alleged perpetrator and the victims, or any other connection to the State exercising the jurisdiction.

Subsequently, he proceeded to discuss the nature and grounds for Universal Jurisdiction with the aid of decided cases, followed by the rights and obligations of States on "either extradite or prosecute". This was followed by a detailed lecture on the historical development of this principle, also with the use of decided cases, focusing on the international concerns raised on the use of the principle of Universal Jurisdiction.

To the delight of the students, Mr. Vergara Céspedes concluded his lecture by giving the students personal updates about the status and use of Universal Jurisdiction in each of their countries. They commended Mr. Vergara Céspedes for taking the time before his lecture to do such detailed research on their individual countries, as represented in the class.



*Mr. Manuel Miguel Vergara Céspedes delivering his lecture*

Mr. Vergara Céspedes earned his LL.B. and Diploma in Business Studies at Universidad Pontificia Comillas ICAI-ICADE (Madrid). He also earned a Master Degree in Economic Criminal Law at Universidad Internacional de La Rioja. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate at University Carlos III (Madrid). His research topic is Universal Jurisdiction and the principle of legality.

In August 2018, Mr. Vergara Céspedes was appointed a member of the Universal Jurisdiction Commission of Experts in the Ministry of Justice of Spain, with the mandate to prepare a draft on a new universal jurisdiction law. He is a lecturer of criminal law at IE University. After 3 years working as practicing lawyer at ILOCAD Law Firm he is currently an external collaborator.

Prior to this time, Mr. Manuel Vergara was the Director of the Legal Department of International Foundation Baltasar Garzón (FIBGAR), a Consultant at the Rule of Law Unit of the United Nation's Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR) in Phnom Penh (Cambodia) and for the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Jakarta (Indonesia). He has also worked as a lawyer at Martínez-Echavarría Law Firm in Istanbul and Bodrum (Turkey).

Mr. Vergara Céspedes has also collaborated with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda both in Arusha (Tanzania) and Kigali (Rwanda). Previously he conducted research and assisted diplomats at the Political Section of the Embassy of Spain in Washington DC and the Permanent Mission of Spain to the UN in New York.

He has conducted extensive research on comparative (criminal, labour and procedural) law. He complemented his academic background with courses and programs in The Hague Academy of International Law, Georgetown University, and the US Institute for Peace.

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