



BONN UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR LECTURES AT IMLI

Professor Stefan Talmon (Co-Director of the Public International Law Institute at the University of Bonn) visited IMLI and delivered a lecture on “The Legal Regime of Islands in International Law”.

The lecture explored the meaning of the various insular features dealt with in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Starting out from the overarching term “insular land territory”, Professor Talmon discussed the terms “regime of islands”, “status of islands” and “islands”, as used in the Convention. Using Okinotorishima, Aves Island and Rockall as examples, he illustrated the importance of the legal status of islands that can sustain human habitation or economic life of their own (as distinct from rocks which cannot do so) for the acquisition of insular territory, the existence and extent of maritime areas (i.e., territorial sea, contiguous zone, exclusive economic zone) and of a continental shelf, and maritime boundary delimitations. He gave a detailed analysis of the various elements of Article 121 of UNCLOS. He argued, *inter alia*, whether an area of land could still be considered “naturally formed” if it was preserved by artificial means, whether a naturally formed rock could be “upgraded” by artificial means to make it an island that can sustain human habitation or economic life of its own, and whether it would make any difference if such an “upgrade” in legal status came about by quasi-natural means such as coral-growing or sand-creating by way of the electrodeposition method. He also explained that the word “or” in “human habitation or economic life of their own” could actually mean “and”, being used in Article 121(3) UNCLOS in a conjunctive rather than disjunctive way, thus limiting the number of insular features that enjoy exclusive economic zones and a continental shelf.



Professor Stefan Talmon (Co-Director of the Public International Law Institute at the University of Bonn) meeting students of the Class of 2011/2012

Professor Dr. Stefan Talmon, LL.M., MA, is Professor of Public Law, Public International Law and European Law, and Co-Director of the Institute of Public International Law at the University of Bonn. He is also a Supernumerary Fellow of St. Anne's College, Oxford. From 2003 to 2011 he was Lecturer, Reader and Professor of Public International Law in the University of Oxford, and a Tutorial Fellow of St. Anne's College, Oxford. He is practicing as a barrister in the area of public international law from 20 Essex Street, London. He regularly advises clients on matters of international and European law and has appeared before the International Court of Justice and the European Court of Human Rights.

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