

KOREA

About us

Name	Korean Bar Association (“KBA”)
Year of establishment	1952
Registration to the KBA	Mandatory by Attorney-at-Law Act
number of members	27,139 (As of 30 September 2019)
Current President	Mr. Chan Hee Lee (February 2019 – March 2021)

Contact information of the KBA Secretariat

KBA International Affairs Division

Address: 18F the KBA Hall, 124 Teheran-ro, Gangnam-gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea

ZIP: 06234

Tel: +82-2-2087-7781

Fax: +82-2-3476-2770

Email: international@koreanbar.or.kr

Web site: <http://www.koreanbar.or.kr/eng>

2018–19 Developments and Challenges

Protection of Fundamental Human Rights

1. According to Article 1(1) of the Attorneys-at-Law Act, the mission of attorney is to defend fundamental human rights and realise social justice. The KBA regards the realisation of social justice as the most important mission and goal and strives to achieve through the advocacy of the fundamental human rights of the people and the rule of law.

Legal Training and the Legal Aid Activities

2. The KBA has been providing legal education and actively developing the legal aid programs for not only citizens with weak financial status but also seniors, minors, handicapped, immigrants, North Korean refugees and other socially disadvantaged persons in Korea.
3. The KBA Legal Aid Foundation was founded in 2003 and continues to provide active legal aid to those in need. In addition, the KBA devotes its efforts to reduce human rights violations and blind spots in law enforcement through the encouragement and recommendation of local bar associations and attorneys in order to directly implement lawyer information systems for persons needing help because they have been suddenly taken to the judicial authorities, as well as lawyer referral systems, etc. for persons who want to appoint attorneys or persons having difficulty in doing so because they do not know the attorneys well.

Human Rights Report Publication

4. Since 1986, the KBA has been annually publishing the Human Rights Report based on research on human rights issues and situations in Korea. The KBA Human Rights Report has contributed greatly to the promotion of domestic and international human rights, including systematic construction of historical records of human rights and evaluation from international human rights organisations.

5. On February 21, 2019, the KBA published the 2018 Human Rights Report which systematically investigated and summarised the following human rights issues:
 - freedom of body and life and judicial human rights;
 - freedom of expression;
 - education and human rights;
 - environmental rights;
 - human rights of foreign migrants and refugees;
 - human rights of women, children and youth;
 - human rights of persons with disabilities;
 - objection to military service based on religious belief and Korean alternative military service.

Activities to Realise the Rule of Law

6. The KBA has submitted opinion statements on the requested opinion inquiry on the enactment and amendment of laws and regulations by the National Assembly Legislation and Judiciary Committee, the Ministry of Justice, and the Administrative Office of the Court. In order to establish an upright judicial system, the KBA suggests improvements to the Government for an advanced judicial system and statements on current issues so as to realise the rule of law and a society dominated by law.
7. In addition, on 9 September 2015 the KBA established 'the KBA Legislation Research Institute' to conduct professional and continuous research on the judicial system including the attorney system, the scope of service, and selection and training of legal professions. The research report published in 2018 includes
 - the Study on the substantiation of internal audit,
 - the Study on the remuneration of lawyers in the United States, and
 - the Study on the status and improvement of similar profession fields.

2019 IBA Annual Conference Seoul

8. The International Bar Association (IBA) Annual Conference was successfully held at the COEX Convention & Exhibition Centre in Seoul, South Korea, from 22 to 27 September, 2019. The IBA Seoul brought about 5,500 bar leaders and practitioners from across the world together to address contemporary legal issues, exchange knowledge and share opinions throughout over 200 sessions.
9. The Rule of Law Symposium, held on the last day of the Conference, mainly focused on the persecution of lawyers and judges in several countries and its consequent threats to access to justice and the rule of law. Speakers described their experiences of being intimidated by state and non-state actors and the effects of such persecution on their practice and professional

activities.

10. The KBA held the joint seminar with the IBA under the theme of ‘Bullying and Sexual Harassment in the Legal Profession’, the landmark research that the IBA has implemented over the past years. On September 24, the KBA hosted the Korean Night reception featured with Korean traditional performances and cuisine. This was a great success with more than 600 bar leaders and world-leading practitioners in attendance.
11. The 2019 IBA Seoul enhanced the status, and strengthened the international competitiveness, of Korean legal professions among the international legal communities and promoted human rights and rule of law along with lawyers around the world.

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November 2019