



The Lester and Sally Entin  
Faculty of Humanities  
Tel Aviv University

# The Irwin Cotler Institute for Democracy, Human Rights and Justice Review of Academic Year 2022-2023







**The Irwin Cotler Institute for  
Democracy, Human Rights and Justice**  
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Human Rights and Justice**

# **Review of Academic Year 2022-2023**

<https://cotler.tau.ac.il/>



**The Irwin Cotler Institute** is devoted to instruction, training, and policy-oriented research on human rights, democracy, justice, and the fight against antisemitism and racism at large. The Institute operates the annual Irwin Cotler Fellowship Program, which brings together 20 international students for weekly lectures and projects on human rights and democracy, engages them in discussions about Israeli society, its history, diversity and challenges, organizes field trips to historical sites and communities across the country, and trains participants how to advocate for righteous causes in their home countries in the face of shifting social landscapes.

The Institute also organizes instructional workshops for policymakers, law enforcement officials, media professionals, and educators around the world on the contemporary challenges to democracy, democratization and human rights, and the means to fight racism at large, and antisemitism specifically; convenes research seminars; and supports original policy-oriented research in diverse disciplines.

The Cotler Institute invites applications from governmental ministries, law enforcement agencies, local councils, NGOs, universities, high schools and media organizations to host two-day or one-day training workshops organized by the Institute and featuring leading experts and professionals in the following fields:

- Fighting antisemitism and racism at large
- The challenges to democracy in the 21st century
- The History of Israel

Cover images: Prof. Uriya Shavit; Dr. Carl Yonker; Mr. Moses Toshimasu; Mr. Paul Frankel

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July 2023

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# The Irwin Cotler Fellowship Program

## List of Fellows, 2022-2023

The first 18 Irwin Cotler Fellows were selected from a list of 80 candidates to join a year of inspiring lectures and training sessions, exciting educational trips across Israel, and, ultimately, giving workshops to students and members of the public in their home countries.



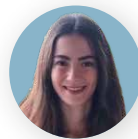
**Dheekhsi Arvind**  
(United States, MA)



**Binita Ghosh**  
(India, PhD)



**Gideon Belete**  
(Canada, MA)



**Nurgul Gokpinar**  
(Turkey, MA)



**Dr. Margarita Belichenko**  
(Ukraine, MA)



**Dr. Jonas Ludwig**  
(Germany, Post-doctoral Fellow)



**Aniruddha Berra**  
(India, PhD)



**Olivia Mbonu**  
(Nigeria, MA)



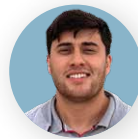
**Maia Bornshtein**  
(Argentina, MA)



**Carina Mihalachioiu**  
(Romania, MA)



**Aryo Brahmantyo**  
(Indonesia, MA)



**Rafael Nabizade**  
(Azerbaijan, MA)



**Daniel Canosa**  
(Colombia, MA)



**Shiven Nath**  
(India, MA)



**Gabriella Chernyak**  
(United States/Israel, MA)



**Moses Toshimasu**  
(Japan, MA)



**Paul Frenkel**  
(United States/Mexico, MA)



**Nathaniel Myking Udjus**  
(Norway, MA)

# Lectures

Weekly Fellowship meetings were focused on establishing a common understanding and a solid foundation of the essential definitions and debates concerning democracy and human rights as well as Jewish, Zionist, and Israeli history.

## ▶ Training in Oratory and Advocacy

### **Prof. Uriya Shavit**

- Giving an in-person lecture
- How to Meet the Press

### **Dr. Carl Yonker**

- Giving virtual presentations via Zoom and other platforms
- Creating effective audio-visual presentations

## ▶ Democracy and Democratization

### **Prof. Uriya Shavit**

- What is Democracy?
- Challenges to Democracy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- Transnationalism and Democracy
- The Rise of Conspiracy Theories

### **Dr. Carl Yonker**

- Radicalization and Extremism
- The Dangers of Misinformation and Disinformation

## ▶ Fighting Racism and Antisemitism

### **Prof. Irwin Cotler**

- The History and Legal Framework of Human Rights in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century
- Challenges in the Struggle against Racism and Antisemitism
- The Heroism of Raoul Wallenberg

### **Prof. Dina Porat**

- How to Effectively Fight Racism and Antisemitism

### **Dr. Carl Yonker**

- Contemporary Manifestations of Antisemitism in Europe and the United States

### **Prof. Uriya Shavit**

- Antisemitism in the Arab World
- The Challenges of Cultural Representations



## ▶ The Holocaust and Its Lessons

### **Prof. Dina Porat**

- The History of Antisemitism: From Early Christianity to the Present
- The Holocaust
- Jewish Resistance to the Holocaust

### **H.E. Mr. Radu Ioanid**

- The Holocaust in Romania and Jewish Life under Communist Rule after World War II

### **Mr. Zvi Gil**

- The Holocaust in Poland and Building a New Life in Israel

## ▶ Judaism, Zionism, and Israel

### **FMK Michal Cotler-Wunsch**

- Zionism and Israeli Society

### **Prof. Irwin Cotler**

- The Current Judicial Debate in Israel and the Effect on Democratic Governance

### **Mr. Gil Hovav**

- Eliezer Ben Yehuda and the Revival of the Hebrew Language

### **Mr. Danny Yatom, former Head of Mossad**

- Security and Democracy – The Case of Israel

### **Dr. Joerg Sonntag**

- Christian-Jewish Relations in Historical Perspective
- Bible and Archeology

### **Dr. Sara Zalberg**

- The ultra-Orthodox in Israel and women in ultra-Orthodox society

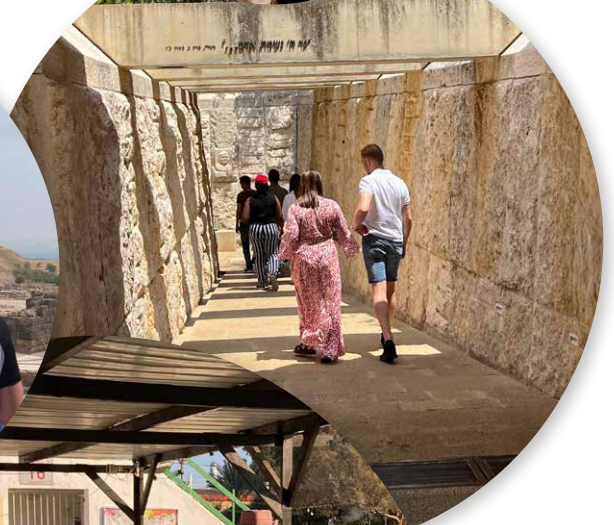
### **Prof. Uriya Shavit**

- Gender and Politics in Israel

# Field Trips

Throughout the year, the Program organized field trips to historical landmarks, diverse communities in Israel, and some of the country's most beautiful national parks and sites that are difficult to reach. We visited –

- ▶ Ben Gurion's Desert Home in Sde Boker
- ▶ The Ramon Crater in Mitzpe Ramon
- ▶ Black Hebrew Community - The Village of Peace in Dimona
- ▶ Kibbutz Ma'agen Michael
- ▶ Hof Dor - Israel's most beautiful beach
- ▶ The Aharonson House - NILI Museum in Zichron Ya'akov
- ▶ Kafr Qasim
- ▶ Beit Shean National Park (Archeological Site)
- ▶ Gan HaShlosha National Park
- ▶ Yad Vashem - guided tour
- ▶ Desert fortress Masada
- ▶ The Dead Sea



# Workshops

During the second half of the program, Fellows planned and delivered workshops to audiences around the world. They chose topics related to the focus of the institute – democracy, freedom, human rights, and Israeli society.

Several of the presentations were not recorded or published for reasons of privacy.

Workshops recorded include:

## ▶ Azerbaijan

- The Baku State University Faculty of Law  
<https://youtu.be/MCf6z6kE7jA>

## ▶ India

- The Jindal School of International Affairs  
<https://youtu.be/ihMZicneixo>
- The Dr. Shayama Prasad Mukherjee University  
<https://youtu.be/okUmBEq071g>
- The National Institute of Science Education and Research Bhubaneswar  
[https://youtu.be/wTL7Kc\\_tIQY](https://youtu.be/wTL7Kc_tIQY)

## ▶ United States

- The University of California – Los Angeles (UCLA)  
<https://youtu.be/YLuQpiSLITA>

## ▶ Indonesia

- Indonesian Santri and Ulama  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p4KkUkSOYORI>

## ▶ Romania/United Kingdom

- Earlscliffe College  
<https://youtu.be/C89jQ6nnd30>

## ▶ Turkey

- Group of Turkish Lawyers in Istanbul  
<https://youtu.be/rvB8QZvrsDE>

## ▶ Germany

- FAU Erlangen–Nürnberg  
<https://www.fau.tv/clip/id/48838>

## ▶ Norway

- TikTok  
<https://youtu.be/nPU-t-rFD7Y>  
<https://youtu.be/2PQR3Q4--kY>

## ▶ Japan

- Group of Japanese University Students  
<https://youtu.be/QL4Sy6IpGxM>

## ▶ Nigeria

- Law Student Association of Afe Babalola University  
<https://youtu.be/7wm457YoNik>

# International Workshops Delivered by the Institute's Staff

In the summer of 2023, the Institute, in cooperation with the Israeli Embassies in Finland, Latvia, and Bulgaria, organized and led three workshops for government officials, law enforcers and other senior officials on the roots of antisemitism and racism at large and the effective means to fight them.

## Helsinki

In June 2023, the Institute led a one-day seminar in Finland for public officials, law enforcers, diplomats and other officials on hate speech, racism, and antisemitism in Europe and the world and the means to fight them. The seminar was initiated and organized together with the Embassy of Israel in Finland and with Finland's Ministry of Justice.



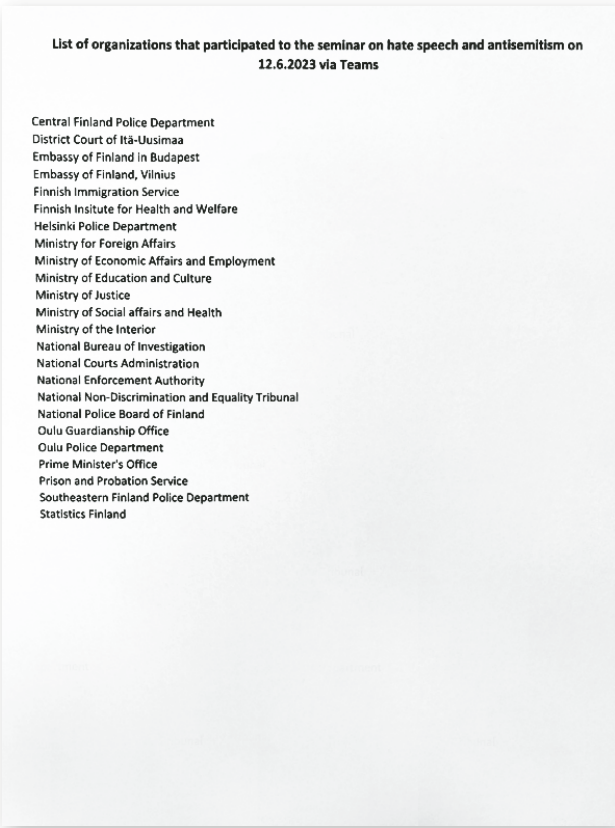
The seminar was attended by more than 80 senior officials from various Finnish government bodies including, among others: the Justice Ministry; the Central Finland Police Department; the Embassies of Finland in Budapest and in Vilnius; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Helsinki Police Department; the Ministry of Interior; the National Bureau of Investigation, and the Prime Minister's Office.

Prof. Uriya Shavit, the Head of the Institute, lectured on racism and antisemitism in contemporary Europe, while Dr. Carl Yonker, the Institute's Academic Director, spoke on online radicalization and the means of countering it, and Dr. Fabian Spengler addressed violent and racist sports fans, offering policy proposals for countering racism in stadiums. An additional lecture focusing on the history of antisemitism in Finland was given by University of Helsinki scholar Dr. Paavo Ahonen.

In the opening ceremony in Helsinki, Israel's Ambassador to Finland and Estonia, H.E Hagit Ben-Yaakov, noted the importance of learning to identify antisemitism, raising awareness about racism in general, and prosecuting antisemitic criminal acts. She mentioned an incident in which a sticker with a Nazi symbol was placed on the embassy gate in Helsinki and the subsequent investigation that did not result in an arrest or prosecution. The Finnish Ministry of Justice's Head of Department, Ms. Johanna Suurpää, emphasized racism and discrimination must be dealt with effectively.

The timing of the seminar and the topics it covered, ironically, were perfect. Just a week after the seminar, Finland's economy minister and member of the right-wing populist Finns Party, Vilhelm Junnila, was forced to resign over comments about Nazism and his connection to a far-right event linked to neo-Nazis. He had only been in office for ten days and the swift response – removing a minister from the country's second largest party – should be applauded.

In conversation with Ms. Suurpää, and Ms. Mia Luhtassari, Senior Specialist at the Ministry of Justice, following the seminar, both commented on the challenges faced by the Ministry and law enforcement in countering online radicalization and prosecuting hate crimes. Ms. Suurpää stated that while there was better cooperation between governments and tech companies, there remains much work to be done to close existing gaps.



## Riga

In Latvia, the Institute and the Israeli Embassy in cooperation with the Latvian Police held a one-day seminar similar to the one held in Helsinki for ranking law enforcers in Riga, including investigators, unit heads, and patrol officers. Topics covered included antisemitism, racism, the far-right in Europe, online radicalization, and racism among fan-support groups for sports teams.



## Sofia

In July 2023, the Institute led a two-day seminar in Bulgaria for 20 public prosecutors and investigators with Bulgaria's Ministry of Justice on hate speech, racism, antisemitism, online misinformation, and the means to fight them. The seminar was initiated and organized together with the Embassy of Israel in Bulgaria and with Bulgaria's Ministry of Justice.

Prof. Uriya Shavit, the Head of the Institute, lectured on racism, the roots of contemporary antisemitism and the history of early Zionism, while Dr. Carl Yonker, the Institute's Academic Director, spoke on the state of contemporary antisemitism and the radical right in Europe and the United States. In addition, Mr. Eran Vasker lectured on online antisemitism and hate speech and the means to monitor them, and Mr. Moses Toshimasu spoke about Japan as a case study that demonstrates that antisemitism does not require Jews or involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict to exist.





Dear Prof. Shavit,

The Embassy of Israel in Bulgaria would like to express its appreciation and gratitude to you and your colleagues for taking the time to come to Sofia in order to conduct an insightful seminar on Antisemitism and Counteraction, which took place in Sofia on 17-18 July, 2023. There is no doubt that the seminar was successful and will contribute tremendously to the work of the 18 senior members of the Office of the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Bulgaria who attended the seminar.

The Embassy of Israel in Bulgaria is thankful to The Irwin Cotler Institute, Tel Aviv University, and personally to you for the cooperation. We look forward to future opportunities to expand and deepen our cooperation.

Sincerely,

  
Naama Levy  
Deputy Chief of Mission



**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**


**Antisemitism and Counteraction Seminar**  
Sofia, Palace of Justice, 17-18 July 2023

1. Ivaylo Borisov Angelov – Prosecutor, Sofia Prosecutor’s Office of Appeal
2. Todor Ivanov Denkov - Prosecutor, Sofia City Prosecutor’s Office
3. Asya Borisova Nikolova - Prosecutor, Sofia City Prosecutor’s Office
4. Sabina Nencheva Hristova - Prosecutor, Sofia City Prosecutor’s Office
5. Georgi Iliev Obidimski - Prosecutor, Sofia City Prosecutor’s Office
6. Todor Ventsislavov Todorov - Prosecutor, Sofia City Prosecutor’s Office
7. Ahmed Hyusmenov Kokoev - Prosecutor, Sofia City Prosecutor’s Office
8. Rositsa Nikolova Tosheva - Ivanova — Prosecutor, Sofia City Prosecutor’s Office
9. Tanya Georgieva Aleksandrova - Prosecutor, Sofia Regional Prosecutor’s Office
10. Teodora Yonkova Yonova - Prosecutor, Sofia Regional Prosecutor’s Office
11. Stefan Nedyalkov Rachev - Prosecutor, Sofia Regional Prosecutor’s Office
12. Veronika Vladimirova Stefanova - Cholakova - Prosecutor, Sofia Regional Prosecutor’s Office
13. Maria Velizarova Zlatareva - Prosecutor, Sofia Regional Prosecutor’s Office
14. Nikolay Yordanov Popov - - Prosecutor, Sofia District Prosecutor’s Office
15. Plamen Ganchev Ivanov - Prosecutor, Sofia City Prosecutor’s Office
16. Vladimir Ivanov Deshev – Investigator, National Investigation Service
17. Plamen Ivanov Kitov – Investigator, National Investigation Service
18. Petya Simeonova Veleva-Matova – Investigator, National Investigation Service
19. Petar Nikolov Ganchev – Investigator, National Investigation Service
20. Simona Maksimova Konova – Investigator, National Investigation Service

# Seminar

## The Rise and Fall of Big Ideas

The Institute held its first seminar, “The Rise and Fall of Big Ideas,” in June 2023 to mark the paperback publication of the book *The Rise and Fall of Greater Syria*, authored by the Institute’s Academic Director, Dr. Carl Yonker. The seminar featured insightful lectures on the rise and fall of ideologies in the Middle East by TAU’s Prof. Eyal Zisser and on the fate of liberalism in Lebanon by Boston College’s Prof. Franck Salameh.



**TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY**

The Irwin Cotler Institute for Democracy,  
Human Rights and Justice  
The Lester and Sally Entin Faculty of Humanities

## The Rise and Fall of Big Ideas

A seminar marking the publication of Dr. Carl Yonker's book  
*The Rise and Fall of Greater Syria*

**Zoom | Thursday, June 1, 2023,  
19:00 (Israel Time)/12:00 (Eastern Time)**

**Moderator:**  
Dr. Joel D. Parker, Tel Aviv University

**Opening Remarks:**  
Big Ideas – Their Allure, Endurance, and Decline  
Prof. (Emeritus) Irwin Cotler, McGill University

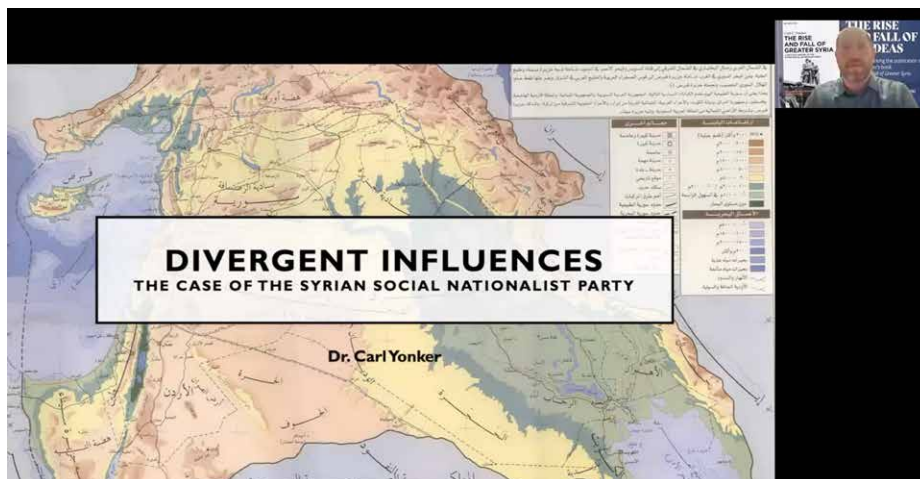
**Lectures:**  
The Rise and Fall of Ideologies in the Middle East  
Prof. Eyal Zisser, Tel Aviv University

The Fate of Liberalism in Lebanon  
Prof. Franck Salameh, Boston College

Divergent Influences – The Rise of Mixed Ideologies  
Dr. Carl Yonker, Tel Aviv University



••• To receive a link to the event, contact: [cotler@tauex.tau.ac.il](mailto:cotler@tauex.tau.ac.il)  
<https://cotler.tau.ac.il>





# Inauguration Ceremony

## The Memorable Launch of the Irwin Cotler Institute

**In May 2023, the Cotler Institute for Democracy, Human Rights and Justice was inaugurated in an official and memorable ceremony at the Senate's Conference Hall at Tel Aviv University (TAU). The hall was packed to the brim with some 200 enthusiastic participants.**



The ceremony opened with Tel Aviv University President Prof. Ariel Porat presenting a certificate inaugurating the Institute to Mr. Rick Dubrovsky, its founding donor. President Porat thanked Mr. Dubrovsky and his wife for their commitment to augmenting TAU's contribution to international democracy studies, human rights, and combating antisemitism and Holocaust denial through research, teaching, and professional training.

The ceremony was attended by the Honorable Irwin Cotler, his wife Ariela, President of the Friends of TAU Association in Canada, and their extended family, TAU Vice President Amos Elad, Canada's Ambassador to Israel, H.E Lisa Stadelbauer, former Deputy Prime Ministers Natan Sharansky and Dan Meridor, Former Chief Justice Dorit Beinisch, and dozens of other distinguished guests. It featured a touching speech by Michal Cotler-Wunsh on the legacy of Irwin Cotler, a speech by TAU President Porat on the importance of defending democracy and the importance of the Institute, a speech by Ambassador Stadelbauer on Irwin Cotler as a hero of human rights, and, finally, to a standing ovation, by Irwin Cotler himself.

Two of the Irwin Cotler Fellows also gave short speeches: Aryo Brahmantyo from Indonesia, who opened with an Islamic invocation and praised his Israeli experience, and advocate Nurgul Gokpinar from Turkey, who spoke about the valuable time she had as a Cotler Fellow. Binita Gosh from India, a PhD in biochemistry whose research focuses on the production of hearts, is also an amateur singer. She won great applause when singing a-cappella a portion from an Indian song about the importance of being guided by hope.

The ceremony concluded with a special screening of a new documentary on Prof. Cotler's life: First to Stand: The Cases and Causes of Irwin Cotler.

**Indeed, an evening to remember – and a great launch for a great and promising initiative!**



<https://cotler.tau.ac.il/events/inauguration-ceremony/>





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Human Rights and Justice**

Head, **Prof. Uriya Shavit**

Academic Director, **Dr. Carl Yonker**