

# INADR

InterNational Academy of Dispute Resolution

## PEACEMAKER ANNUAL

2025



Photo credit: Merab Galashvili

Building bridges of peace:  
ISLMT 2025, Tbilisi, Georgia

**Ana Khurtsidze**

Redefining peace by  
combining emotional  
storytelling and intellectual  
vigor

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Redefining  
justice: the  
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**Stunning view from Tbilisi, Georgia, home of ISLMT 2025!**

**Photo credit: Merab Galashvili**



**Volunteers eager to check in participants for the 13<sup>th</sup> NLIU-INADR Law School International Mediation Tournament 2025 in India.**

**Photo credit: John Lag**



**Participants seen getting ready for ISLMT 2025.**

**Photo credit: Merab Galashvili**

## Building bridges of peace – ISLMT 2025, Tbilisi, Georgia

**ANA KHURTSIDZE**

From March 4th to 8th, 2025, the Republic of Georgia and its beautiful capital became the first stop in the South Caucasus region for INADR and proudly hosted the 23rd International Law Student Mediation Tournament (ILSMT).

This year's event was significant for the University of Georgia and its organizing team. Back in 2021, the university hosted the 20th ILSMT virtually due to the constraints of the pandemic. While the transition to an online format was necessary, there was concern among the organizers if we could convey the true spirit through screens.

The feedback we received was both surprising and heartwarming. Participants from across the globe expressed how deeply they felt Georgia's warmth, generosity, and the spirit of the tournament—even virtually. Many shared a strong desire to experience this culture in person. That response became both a reward and a responsibility. The opportunity to host ILSMT 2025 in person felt like a second chance to show the world what Georgian hospitality truly means.

When INADR entrusted us with this role, we knew the task came with great expectations. We needed not only to uphold the tournament's competitive and collaborative spirit but also to infuse it with Georgia's culture—especially in these politically challenging times for Georgia and the whole world.



**Participants posing at the gala dinner.  
Photo credit: Merab Galashvili**

It is no surprise that the symbol chosen for this year's tournament—reflected in the logo—was Tbilisi's Bridge of Peace. It became more than just a visual element. It became a living representation of the tournament's ultimate goal—building bridges of peace—to connect peacemakers from around the globe in a shared mission to promote peace and cooperation.

Fittingly, just before the official rounds began, participants (above) visited the bridge, took a group photo, and entered the competition with that symbolism in mind. The spirit of unity and cooperation carried into the mediation rounds, greatly enhanced by insightful training sessions delivered by INADR's honored professionals: Mary Lou Frank, Elena Koltsaki, Dennis Favaro, John Lag, Kateryna Manetska, Liidia Vatituna, and the incredible duo from Poland, Agnieszka Majka-Gora and Jacek Czaja.



**“...[O]ne of the tournament’s most significant accomplishments was achieving its core mission: building lasting connections, learning from one another, and, ultimately, building bridges of peace between cultures, countries, and individuals.”**

Of course, none of this would have been possible without our distinguished judges, who generously took time from their busy schedules to contribute to this event. Their feedback and presence turned the tournament into a rich learning experience. Outside the mediation rooms, professionals also had the chance to discover Georgia’s traditional cuisine and dances during an unforgettable evening at a local winery.

The intense days of competition, networking, and cultural exchange concluded with a spectacular Gala Dinner—a night that united participants, organizers, volunteers, and everyone who laid even one brick in building this unforgettable experience.

The award ceremony, filled with applause and beaming smiles, revealed the toughest decisions: selecting the best among 22 incredibly talented teams.

- The Best Mediation Team award went to Loyola University Chicago School of Law, whose victory reflected their exceptional preparation and dedication to mediation.
- The Best Advocate/Client Team title was claimed by the Law Society of Ireland, whose collaborative and strategic approach captivated judges and peers alike.
- The Top A/C Pair award was presented to Dawn Edelman and Alex Karjeker from Fordham School of Law in recognition of their outstanding teamwork and advocacy.
- Finally, the title of Top Mediator was awarded to Jakub Hajčik from Charles University, whose clarity, calm, and insight stood out in an exceptionally competitive field.

Beyond the awards, one of the tournament’s most significant accomplishments was achieving its core mission: building lasting connections, learning from one another, and, ultimately, building bridges of peace between cultures, countries, and individuals.

We are profoundly grateful to INADR, the University of Georgia, our generous sponsors, the dedicated professionals, and every participant who helped bring this dream to life.

-Ana Khurtsidze



**Ana Khurtsidze addressing participants.**  
**Photo credit: Merab Galashvili**

## Redefining peace by combining emotional storytelling and intellectual rigor: INADR's groundbreaking 2025 conference in Tbilisi, Georgia

In today's turbulent world, achieving peace feels more urgent and complex than ever. Against this backdrop, the International Academy of Dispute Resolution (INADR) recently launched a groundbreaking annual tournament to reframe how mediators can think about peacebuilding.

Titled “Redefining Peace: The Art and Science of Conflict Resolution Today,” the event was not only the official kick-off of the INADR tournament but also a compelling demonstration of the evolving landscape of mediation and negotiation. What stood out at this conference was its innovative format— a hybrid event that combined emotional storytelling with the intellectual rigor of academic research.

### **A fresh take on peacebuilding: the power of storytelling**

For the first time ever, INADR integrated TED-style talks into the opening session. Between 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m., a curated lineup of practitioners took the virtual and in-person stage to share gripping personal stories and insights from the front lines of mediation. Each talk, limited to 5-to-10 minutes, delivered punchy, actionable ideas that could inspire and equip audiences to handle conflict more creatively and compassionately.

The result? A dynamic, fast-paced introduction to the conference that energized the crowd and laid a foundation of real-world experience and resilience. Rooted in negotiation breakthroughs, cultural understanding, and practical conflict resolution, these stories brought a refreshing humanity to a field often dominated by theory. By combining practical knowledge with story-driven presentations, the conference added a human face to complex legal and diplomatic issues. Attendees ranged from law students and mediators to international scholars who all left with not only a better understanding of conflict resolution, but a deeper appreciation for the personal stories that drive it.

This wasn't just a conference; it was a call to action. It became a reminder for mediators that peace isn't a static goal, but its an ongoing process that demands skill, compassion, and creativity.

### **Bridging Theory and Practice**

The afternoon shifted gears as the conference moved into its second stage— academic presentations that ran from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Here, scholars and conflict resolution experts stepped up to the podium to share their latest research and case studies.



Their presentations delved into the frameworks and methodologies shaping mediation today, enriching the conversation with data-driven insights and deep analysis.

The dual approach of blending storytelling with scholarship proved uniquely effective. It created a space where passion met precision, where live experience was amplified by academic rigor. Attendees left with a nuanced understanding of how peace can be crafted and sustained amid today's complex global challenges.

### **A Global Panel of Experts and Practitioners**

The conference featured an impressive and diverse roster of speakers, each contributing a unique lens to the conversation. Featured topics included:

1. "Redefining Peace: Moving from Coping to Connecting" – Mary Lou Frank
2. "Peaceful in Victory: Negotiating Peace in Post-Truth Era" – Zaza Bibilashvili
3. "Dia-Logos: The Transformative Power of Socratic Dialogue in Mediation" – Elena Koltsaki
4. "Using Mediation as a Tool to Advocate Rights and Claims for a Client" – Dennis Favaro
5. "The Value of Co-Mediation" – Sophie Tkemaladze and Sopio Chachava
6. "Organisational Conflict: To What Degree Is Mediation Inside Organisations About Making Peace?" – Greg Bond
7. "Negotiating with Oneself: The Inner Negotiator Approach to Professional Development" – Jaba Gvelebiani

8. "Psychology and Mediation Diplomacy: Working Together for a Better Future" – Mary Lou Frank
9. "Mediation as a Legal Process: Ensuring the Right to Legal Representation – Insights from Orde van Vlaamse Balies v. Ministerraad (C-667/18)" – Nata Sturua
10. "Standard of Care for Lawyer-Mediators: Is There a Different Threshold of Liability Applicable to Mediators Who Are Also Lawyers?" – Agnieszka Gora
11. "Negotiating in Bad Faith? Understanding the Legal Concept: A Comparative Study of Polish and Lithuanian Legal Systems" – Jacek Czaja
12. "Invisible Forces in Mediation: The Role of Geopolitics and Climate Risks in Conflict Resolution" – Kateryna Manetska and Lidiia Vatutina

Moderating this vibrant exchange of ideas were Dr. Kenneth Frank, president of INADR, and Ana Khurtsidze, president-elect of INADR and Dean of the Law School at the University of Georgia. Their expert guidance helped to weave together diverse perspectives into a coherent narrative on the future of peacebuilding.

### **Setting a New Standard**

The success of the TED-style talks format exceeded expectations, signaling a potential shift in how conferences within this field might be structured moving forward. By humanizing the science of conflict resolution, INADR has created a compelling blueprint for future events—one that appeals to practitioners eager for practical tools as well as academics seeking to influence real-world outcomes.



**INADR Board Members. Photo credit: Merab Galashvili**

# INADR

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## DICK CALKINS

### Redefining justice: the genius of mediation



In 1984, Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court Warren E. Burger made a statement of tectonic implications, the tsunami of which struck every courtroom in America. He said,

“Civil litigation is a mistake that must be corrected. For some disputes, trials will be the only means, but for many claims, trial by adversarial contest must go the way of ancient trial by battle and blood. Our system is too costly, too painful, too destructive, and too inefficient for a truly civilized people.”<sup>1</sup>

Chief Justice Burger’s primary concern was not just the high costs of litigation or its destructive nature and inefficiencies, but the fact the adversarial system comes into direct conflict with the fundamental obligation of the lawyer to the client to do justice. Chief Justice Burger said that justice requires lawyers to,

“Provide mechanisms that can produce an acceptable result in the shortest possible time, with the least possible expense, and with minimal stress on the participants.”<sup>2</sup>

This definition of “justice” defines mediation, and indeed, mediation is the hallmark of justice.

The reasons for the success of mediation are many, and many jurisdictions now require a case be mediated before the court will consider it.

First, mediation is not binding. If the parties cannot reach an agreement, they can always terminate the mediation and go to trial or arbitration. This is not true of arbitration. Once arbitration is agreed to, an award must be entered.

Second, the parties can use any format they wish—conference, caucus, trial, transformative, collaborative—even create a format to meet the exigencies of the parties. For example, when Southwest Airlines first came into the market, it used a trademark very similar to a southeastern regional airline, and the latter threatened to sue for trademark infringement.

<sup>1</sup> Warren E. Burger, *The State of Justice*, 70 A.B.A. J. 62, 66 (1984).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

The two CEOs met and realized each airline would spend over \$1 million to litigate the matter, whereas the losing party would spend no more than \$30,000 to develop a new trademark. The two CEOs agreed to arm wrestle to resolve their dispute. A wrestling ring was set up, cheerleaders selected, and the two CEOs met in combat. The matter received so much positive publicity that it was worth every penny spent.<sup>3</sup>

In another case, partners operated a repair shop that repaired lawn mowers, snow blowers, snow mobiles, etc. They then opened a second shop in another part of town, which was a big mistake. Problems arose, and things got so bad their attorneys advised them to mediate and separate the stores. A mediator was selected, and when he looked at the matter, he concluded the parties had become so angry they could not agree on anything. Added to this, they did not have the resources to go to trial, nor did they have the patience to wait two years while the matter worked its way through the courts.

The mediator, therefore, created a process to meet the exigencies of the parties. They allowed him to act as a mediator/arbitrator. If the parties could not agree on a particular issue, he would decide it as arbitrator and then would go to the next issue. Also, rather than mediating with parties, he would talk with their attorneys, who were not burdened with the albatross of anger their clients carried and could work out solutions in the best interest of their clients. As each issue was agreed to by counsel, it was the attorneys' responsibility to get their respective clients to agree. If they did not agree, then the mediator/arbitrator would decide the matter.

The parties and counsel agreed to the process and signed a document to that effect. The matter was then mediated, and the matter resolved in six hours. The mediator, acting as arbitrator, had to decide only one issue.

<sup>3</sup> To view the match on YouTube, see <https://youtu.be/51a5xuxxxZQ?feature=shared>



Third, because mediation is by contract, the parties can include anything they wish in the settlement—even noneconomic matters having nothing to do with the lawsuit itself, such as an apology, naming a conference room after a party, spreading out payments over several years—so long as the parties agree, and it does not violate the law or is not contrary to public policy.

In one case, decedent was terminated after 28 years of loyal service to a company as head of the accounting department. When new owners purchased the company, they installed a new computer system which, they said, decedent was unable to run at the level of sophistication required. They hired a younger person at a lower salary who installed the computers and then successfully ran them. The decedent claimed this was pretextual and he sued pursuant to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 for age discrimination.

After filing the lawsuit, decedent died from other causes, although his widow, who took over his case, felt he died of a broken heart. She demanded \$250,000, and the new owners offered \$50,000. She ultimately came down to \$120,000 and the new owners went to \$100,000 and said they could go no further.

She began packing her bags to terminate the mediation. The mediator just happened to ask if an apology would help. She said it would, and if the new owners took sensitivity training so they would not do this to other employees, this would also help. They agreed, and the case settled for \$100,000. As it turned out, she would have taken less because what she really wanted was recognition of her husband's 28 years of faithful service.

Fourth, in mediation, a third person—the mediator—is added to the settlement table, who at all times is impartial. This means the mediator can help both sides properly evaluate their cases and raise settlement possibilities. Because the mediator also builds rapport and trust with the parties, they are more likely to appreciate the difficulties of going to trial. Here is what top judges, trial lawyers, and scholars say about courtroom trials.

Judge Learned Hand, one of the most highly regarded judges ever to serve on the bench said, "I must say that as a litigant I should dread a lawsuit beyond almost anything in life short of sickness and death."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Digital history. (n.d.). [https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp\\_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=1199#:~:text=With%20his%20busy%20eyebrows%2C%20his,short%20of%20sickness%20and%20death.%22](https://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=1199#:~:text=With%20his%20busy%20eyebrows%2C%20his,short%20of%20sickness%20and%20death.%22)

Former Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia said, “Americans are too ready to seek vindication and vengeance through adversarial proceedings, rather than peace through mediation.”<sup>5</sup>

The great philosopher Voltaire said, “I was never ruined but twice; once when I lost a lawsuit, and once when I won.”<sup>6</sup>

The famous trial lawyer Clarence Darrow was reported to have said, “A courtroom is not a place where truth and innocence inevitably triumph; it is only an arena where contending lawyers fight, ‘not for justice, but to win.’”<sup>7</sup>

Fifth, lawyers also feel the lash of the courtroom contest. In the demanding world of legal practice, where the tasks often involve impeachment, discrediting, undermining, and defeating, lawyers frequently encounter significant stress, anxiety, and even depression. According to the American Bar Association, 28 percent of lawyers suffer from depression, 19 percent experience severe anxiety, and 11.4 percent have had suicidal thoughts in the past year.

At some point in their careers, 11.4 percent felt that suicide might be a solution to their issues. The adversarial nature of the profession can take a toll on mental well-being. However, the role of a mediator offers a refreshing contrast. Mediators focus on finding common ground, building rapport and trust, and fostering healing and conciliation. Their goal is to achieve a win/win outcome, where defeat is not in their lexicon. This approach not only aids in resolving conflicts but also promotes a healthier, more-balanced mindset, ultimately contributing to a more positive impact in the legal field. The genius of mediation lies in its ability to uphold the spirit of true justice—one that prioritizes understanding, conciliation, and healing over conflict and competition. It offers a path where parties can find common ground, preserve relationships, and achieve creative outcomes that touch their true needs and values. As we continue to embrace this transformative approach, mediation not only refines how we perceive justice but also brings us closer to peace.

<sup>5</sup> Antonin Scalia, Editorial, Teaching About the Law, CHRISTIAN LEGAL SOCIETY QUARTERLY, Fall 1987, at 6, 8.

<sup>6</sup> 1989, The Concise Columbia Dictionary of Quotations by Robert Andrews, Topic: Litigation, Quote Page 155, Columbia University Press, New York.

<sup>7</sup> 1965, Clarence Darrow by Miriam Gurko, Chapter 17: The Trial of Clarence Darrow, Quote Page 170, Thomas Y. Crowell, New York.

[8] New study on lawyer well-being reveals serious concerns for legal profession. (n.d.).

<https://www.americanbar.org/news/abanews/publications/youraba/2017/december-2017/secretcy-and-fear-of-stigma-among-the-barriers-to-lawyer-well-being/>



**JOHN LAG**

## 13th NLIU-INADR International Law School Mediation Tournament

The 13th NLIU-INADR International Law School Mediation Tournament was another wonderful success. Graciously hosted by National Law Institute University (NLIU) in Bhopal, India, 28 teams from India and southeast Asia participated for the training sessions and tournament on March 28-30, 2025.

INADR board member and past president, Dennis Favaro, presented an inciteful lecture on Advocacy in Mediation, and board member John Lag led a training session on The Art of Purposeful Mediation.

The school is now led by returning Vice Chancellor Dr. S. Surya Prakash, who has established a prestigious Centre for Alternative Dispute Resolution, headed by Dr. Manish Yadav.

Dick Calkins and H. Case Ellis from our INADR Board established our relationship with NLIU and brought the first Law School Mediation Tournament and Training to India and Asia.

This tournament is the most prestigious law school mediation tournament in India. We look forward to continuing this relationship for many years to come.

We are planning our 14th tournament to be held in February or March 2026, and look forward to another successful event.



**The 2024-25 NLIU student participants.**  
Photo credit: John Lag



**Students in a NLIU tournament round.**  
Photo credit: John Lag



The 2024-25 NLIU student ADR Convenor team.  
Photo credit: John Lag



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### NORTH AMERICA

**March 4-7, 2026:** Chicago, IL, USA: International Law School Mediation Tournament (ILSMT), Loyola Law School

### ASIA

**December 4-7, 2025:** Mumbai, India: DY Patil University Invitational Law School Mediation Tournament  
**February 2026,** Bhopal, India: Bhopal Invitational Law School Mediation Tournament

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**October 3-4, 2025:** Gainesville, GA, USA: Brenau Invitational Mediation Tournament, Brenau University

**October 24-25, 2025:** Fairfield, IA, USA: Peacemaker Invitational Mediation Tournament, Maharishi International University

**November 7-9, 2025:** Boston, MA, USA: International Intercollegiate Undergraduate Mediation Tournament (IIMT), Boston University

**February 5-7, 2026:** Orlando, FL, USA: Conciliator Mediation Tournament, University of Central Florida

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