אוניברסיטת חיפה
UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA
جامعة حيفا

THE JOUBRAN CENTER FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Faculty of Law

Academic Year 2025–26

Justice Salim Joubran dedicated his life to peace and equality in Israeli society. [His passing] leaves Israelis with a duty to continue to act for the good of society.

-Member of Knesset, Yair Lapid

THE JOUBRAN CENTER FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

THE VISION

The University of Haifa seeks to establish a center for the research of democracy and human rights which will stand as a living memorial to the life and legacy of Israel's first Arab Israeli Supreme Court Justice, Salim Joubran. Justice Joubran, who retired as Deputy Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, served on the court from 2003 to 2017 and was renowned for his formidable commitment to democracy, human rights, and civil liberties.

The Joubran Center for Democracy and Human Rights will be part of the Faculty of Law at University of Haifa and will promote the protection of democratic principles and human rights in Israel, the Middle East, and beyond. With a focus on scholarly research and advocacy, the Center will serve as one of Israel's leading democracy and human rights policy institutions. Additionally, the Center will cultivate the next generation of legal scholars with the tools to craft an agenda for legal reform while addressing current and future challenges to liberal democracy. (See Appendix I for an Endorsement Letter signed by eleven former Chief Justices and Justices of the Supreme Court of Israel.)

SUPREME COURT JUSTICE SALIM JOUBRAN

Justice Joubran was born in Haifa. His contributions to the field of law and justice in Israel are unparalleled. An Arab citizen of Israel, Justice Joubran lived a life committed to the foundational values of the State's Declaration of Independence. His compelling and crystallized perspective on Israel's legal and judiciary challenges continue to resonate with clarity and conviction as the State continues to contend with ongoing debates on democracy and human rights. (See Appendix II for a brief bio on Justice Salim Joubran.)

Justice Salim Joubran (z"l), a former lecturer at the University's Faculty of Law and a devoted member of the Board of Governors.

NOW IS THE TIME

The need to safeguard democratic principles in Israel has become even more urgent in the wake of the October 7th attacks and the ensuing war. This crisis follows years of internal strife, including heated debates over legal reforms, restrictions on fundamental rights during the COVID pandemic, and a series of inconclusive elections, all of which have raised fears about the weakening of the rule of law and judicial independence. Within a society deeply divided and facing multiple threats, strong democratic institutions and processes are of paramount importance. The Joubran Center for Democracy and Human Rights will offer a dedicated space to research and address these complex legal issues.

THE CENTER'S ACTIVITY

The Center will promote interdisciplinary and comparative research on democracy and human rights, with a specific emphasis on the Israeli justice system. To advance this overarching goal, the Center will offer a number of high-impact initiatives, including:

- The International Judges Academy, designed specifically for working judges, is a two-year, part-time master's program offering a unique blend of theory and practice. Participants will engage in global dialogue about judicial systems and develop their skills in ethics, impartiality, and leadership – all essential for ensuring fair and effective justice. Program components will include:
  - International workshops, courses, and seminars
  - Collaboration with the UN and other institutions on judicial competence/ independence measures
  - Research on judicial performance and integrity
  - A global judicial eJournal
  - An annual conference and symposium
  - A fellowship exchange program
- Human rights focused research grants to PhD, postdoctoral, and tenure-track scholars (from Israel and abroad) in law and related disciplines (humanities, social sciences, and exact sciences). Fellows will be based at the University of Haifa for up to a year.
- An annual conference and yearly seminar to bring together leading theorists, empiricists, and practitioners. The events will facilitate the exchange of ideas, fostering crucial cross-pollination between theory and practical application.
- Special workshops and retreats for law students (LL.B., LL.M.), to deepen their understanding of democracy, human rights, and the intersection of sociological, economic, and technological processes.
- Support of research dissemination and idea exchange via local and international conferences and roundtables at the University of Haifa and partner institutions.

The Legal Clinics for Social Change kick off the 2024-25 academic year.

WHY UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA?

The University of Haifa is uniquely positioned to make a meaningful contribution to the field of democracy and human rights. Its location in the city of Haifa, known for its diverse population, commitment to shared society, pluralism, tolerance, and steadfast support for the rule of law (the District Court in Haifa was home to key Supreme Court Justices since the British Mandate), makes it an ideal setting for a center focused on these critical issues.

FUNDING REQUEST AND STRATEGY

The University of Haifa actively seeks to raise **$3,500,000 that will serve as an endowment for The Joubran Center for Democracy and Human Rights.** The endowment will support a significant portion of the Center's annual research and education programs, and will also subsidize costs for visiting scholars, internships, and other initiatives.

The Center's endowment will provide a sustainable source of funding, ensuring the Center's long-term viability and growth. Honoring Justice Joubran, his family has pledged to contribute significant funds to the Center and are committed to generating interest and support for this noble endeavor.

Additional funds will need to be secured annually in order to realize the full breadth of projected activity at the Center.

Projected Annual Operating Budget

Item	Details	Units	Total Cost (USD)
Research	PhD/Postdoc Scholarships/Research Grants	6	$150 K
	Short-term Visiting Fellows	8	$16 K
	Annual Conference and Yearly Seminar	1	$10 K
Teaching	The International Judges Academy (MA Program)	15	$140 K
	Global Law Program (GLP) Courses	2	$4 K
	Contemporary Legal Workshops	3	$12 K
	LLB Students Scholarships	20	$30 K
	The Salim Joubran Scholars Award	1	$3 K
Administration	Academic Head	1	$50 K
	Coordinator	1	$40 K
	Oversight, Audit, and Quality Control	-	$40 K
	Misc.	-	$10 K
Total			**$505 K**

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ABOUT UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA

The University of Haifa (UH) is one of seven public universities in Israel with over 17,000 students from a diverse tapestry of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. Jews, Arabs, Druze, Christians, Haredi, and secular students, immigrants, military, and security personnel all come together to study, teach, and learn at UH.

In addition to being the most pluralistic institution of higher education in the country, University of Haifa is also the largest research university in northern Israel with an international reputation in fields including, among others, public health, law, security studies, Holocaust research, cancer research, neurosciences, bioinformatics, marine sciences, and education.

Dedicated to promoting social mobility through higher education, UH fosters academic excellence in an atmosphere of tolerance and multiculturalism which helps the student body achieve great levels of understanding and preparedness for a global workforce.

APPENDIX I

Letter of Endorsement

November 19th 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

As former Chief Justices and Justices of the Supreme Court of Israel, we are writing to express our full and unqualified support for the establishment of the Joubran Center for Democracy and Human Rights at the Faculty of Law, University of Haifa.

Justice Salim Joubran, who served with distinction on the Israeli Supreme Court from 2003 to 2017, was a towering figure in our judiciary. His unwavering commitment to justice, equality, and the rule of law left an indelible mark on Israeli jurisprudence. Naming this center in his honor is a fitting tribute to his legacy and values.

The Joubran Center will be a vital institution for advancing scholarly research and advocacy in these crucial areas. It will provide invaluable resources and training for the next generation of legal scholars and practitioners, equipping them to address the pressing challenges facing liberal democracies today.

We believe that the University of Haifa, with its commitment to pluralism and tolerance, is the ideal location for this important initiative and more-so since Haifa was Justice Joubran's hometown.

We wholeheartedly endorse this proposal, and we believe this initiative will be a lasting tribute to Justice Joubran's legacy and a significant step toward strengthening democratic principles and human rights.

Sincerely,

Dorit Beinisch,
President (Ret.)

Asher Dan Grunis,
President (Ret.)

Ester Hayut,
President (Ret.)

Ekyakim Rubinstein,
Deputy President (Ret.)

Hanan Melcer,
Deputy President (Ret.)

Uzi Vogelman,
Acting President (Ret.)

Yoram Danziger,
Justice (Ret.)

Zvi Zylbertal,
Justice (Ret.)

Uri Shoham,
Justice (Ret.)

Menachem (Meni) Mazuz,
Justice (Ret.)

Anat Baron,
Justice (Ret.)

APPENDIX II

JUSTICE SALIM JOUBRAN

Israel's first Arab Supreme Court Justice, Justice Salim Joubran enjoyed a distinguished tenure on the Supreme Court from 2003 until his retirement in 2017 as Deputy Chief Justice. Born in Haifa in 1947, he was an expert on criminal and constitutional law. Justice Joubran died in March 2024 at the age of 76.

Joubran received his law degree from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and went on to practice law in Haifa and across Israel's Northern region. In 1982, he was appointed as a judge in the Haifa Magistrate court, and in 1993, he was appointed to the Haifa District Court.

A strong commitment to democracy, human rights, and civil liberties was evident from his involvement in high-profile cases throughout his career. A recently published book in his honor underscores the significant impact he had on the development of Israeli jurisprudence. In all fields of law, but especially in public law, Justice Joubran worked tirelessly to safeguard democratic principles and protect human rights. In matters pertaining to Israel's Arab minority, the right to equality and the commitment to the rule of law, he was a staunch defender of the basic principles of Israel as a Jewish Democracy.

Justice Joubran's appointment to the Israel Supreme Court, the first Arab to gain permanent appointment, was met with controversy. Some members of the Israeli political establishment opposed his promotion due to his Palestinian background. However, Joubran earned the respect of legal experts and the public alike for his integrity and impartiality as a judge.

Known for his legal expertise and ability to navigate complex legal issues, Justice Joubran authored notable rulings including the minority opinion in a 2008 case that denied a petition to invalidate a statute prohibiting the reunification of Palestinian families in Israel. In that opinion, Joubran argued that the law disproportionately infringed on the basic human rights of its citizens.

He also served on the panel of judges that upheld the convictions of former Israeli President Moshe Katsav in 2010.

Justice Joubran's legacy is felt by his colleagues at the Supreme Court and his many judicial rulings continue to inform Israeli law. The issues he wrestled with during his many years of service remain relevant today, such as human rights, political corruption, relations between Israel's Jewish majority and its many minority groups, and LGBTQ rights. In fact, the relationship between the Supreme Court, the Knesset, and the Executive Branch today is more complicated than ever, making Joubran's institutional approach and strong belief in judicial independence ever more pertinent. He was a vocal advocate for the rights of marginalized groups and played a significant role in the field of constitutional law.

Justice Joubran was awarded numerous honors, including an honorary doctorate from the University of Haifa in 2012, and Israel's Knight of Quality Government in the field of law.

Join us in safeguarding democracy, human rights, and civil liberties by empowering the next generation of legal professionals to uphold the rule of law and promote a more just Israeli society.

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