



**For Release: September 21, 2022**

**Contact: James Steiner**

[jsteiner@asil.org](mailto:jsteiner@asil.org)

## **ASIL NAMES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Washington, DC—The American Society of International Law announces the appointment of Michael D. Cooper to serve as the Society’s ninth executive director beginning October 20, 2022. Cooper succeeds Mark D. Agrast, who announced his intention to step down last spring and will conclude his service with the Society after eight years in office.

“We are extremely grateful for the spectacular service Mark has provided to the Society over the last eight years and thrilled that Michael Cooper will be joining us,” said ASIL President Gregory Shaffer.

Since 2017, Cooper has served as Associate Vice-President of the University of Oxford, North America, where he has been central to articulating strategic vision and advancing major initiatives, such as Oxford’s new Chair in Women’s History, the first chair of its kind in the world, and its new Centre for the Humanities, supported by the largest philanthropic gift in the university’s history.

From 2010 to 2016, Cooper served as Managing Director of The Ploughshare Group in New York, a consultancy that has delivered critical advisory services to UN agencies, non-profits, think tanks, law firms, and universities, with a particular specialization in human rights and humanitarian work. Before that, he held positions with several organizations providing human rights and humanitarian relief, including Mercy Corps (Director-at-Large 2003-2009), Médecins du Monde (Director of Development and Communications 2002), Human Rights Watch (Director, Human Rights Watch Council/Deputy Director of Development 2001-2002), UNHCR (Protection Officer 1999) and the Roosevelt Institute (Director, Human Rights Office 1996-1999).

Cooper received a B.F.A. from New York University’s Tisch School of Arts and then a Master of Arts in Global Policy and Conflict Resolution, also at NYU. After a decade of

-MORE-

human rights and humanitarian work, he earned a J.D. from Georgetown University Law Center, where he was a Public Interest Law Scholar focused on refugees and humanitarian emergencies. Mr. Cooper was admitted to the New York bar in 2012.

Cooper has held a number of leadership positions in the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, where he chaired the Council on International Affairs, the United Nations Committee, and a very active sub-committee on the Right to Counsel and Due Process for Migrants. He has also served on City Bar's Immigration and Nationality Law Committee as well as various task forces and working groups focused on issues such as the rule of law, business and human rights, and climate change adaptation.

ASIL President Shaffer states, "In distilling Michael's many outstanding qualities, our Search Committee and Executive Committee highlight his passion for the Society and its mission, his impressive abilities in working with other people, his organizational skills, fundraising prowess, and intellectual acumen. We expect Michael to be in an excellent position to forge new and stronger linkages with our Society's diverse constituencies and other groups, as we work to expand the Society's scope and impact."

Cooper commented on his appointment saying, "International law provides the foundation for peace, prosperity, and justice in the world. No institution embodies this conviction more fully than the American Society for International Law, and it is my great privilege to help advance the Society's mission in the years ahead, which hold the potential for real peril, but also great promise."

A photo of Cooper is available on request. His full bio is available [here](#).

ASIL is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, educational membership organization founded in 1906 and chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1950. ASIL's mission is to foster the study of international law and to promote the establishment and maintenance of international relations on the basis of law and justice. ASIL has held Category II Consultative Status to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations since 1993. The Society's nearly 4,000 members from more than 100 countries comprise practicing attorneys, academics, corporate counsel, judges, representatives of governments and nongovernmental organizations, international civil servants, students, and others interested in international law. For more information, visit [www.asil.org](http://www.asil.org).

###