

Inaugural FDI Moot Spirit Award (2020)

Congratulations Olufolajimi Otitoolal

After carefully considering many nominations for the inaugural FDI Moot Spirit Award in consultation with our board members, we have narrowed the field down to one winner.

In previous years, this task might have been easier: the Spirit Award is awarded to an individual or team who stands out for their sacrifice, generosity, and/or fair play.

In 2020, however, the ongoing pandemic has meant that many have sacrificed. All of us have missed the opportunity to meet in person, to travel, to make new friends and socialize face to face in the same physical space. Many have had to study (generally), prepare and practice (for the FDI Moot) remotely in relative solitude. Some have seen their families' financial circumstances endangered by the pandemic's economic fall-out.

A few, themselves (e.g., Siddharth Pareek) or their family members or close friends, became ill with SARS-CoV-2, sometimes seriously so.

A few individuals have stood out as exceptional teammates (and leaders, confidantes, caregivers, and more), such as Haomiao Chen, Ulsbold Battulga, Clara Lewis, and Khululiwe Kheswa.

Several teams from China, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines had hearings that did not start until 10:00 pm local time. Teams Vinuesa (University of Miami), Palmer (Suffolk University Law School), Bastid (Universidad del Rosario), and Momtaz (Universidad Externado de Colombia) all had at least one hearing starting at 06:30 am local time. Team Vinuesa (University of Miami) had to start its Round of 16 elimination match at 04:00 am local time.

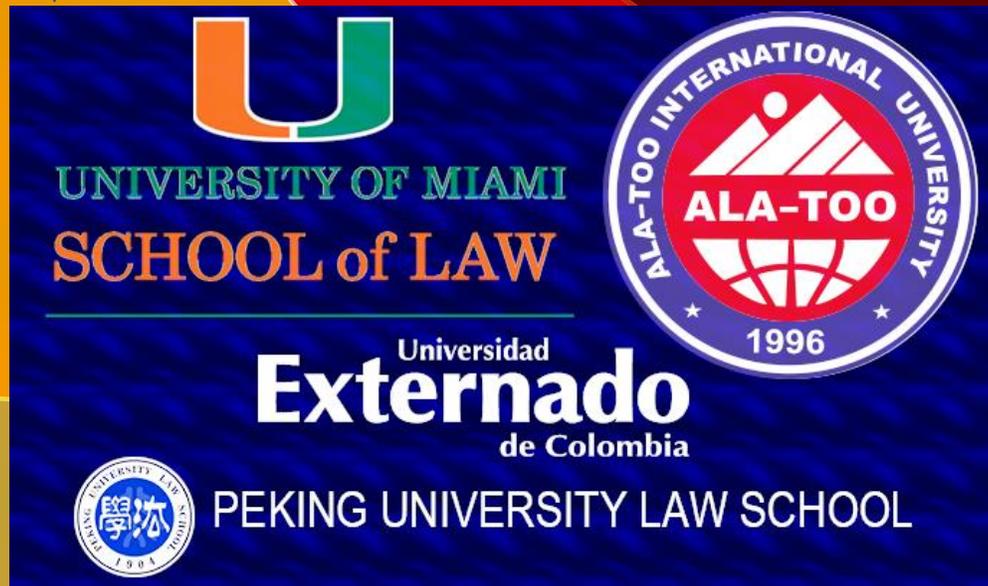
All of the teams in China had to work around the restrictions on Zoom accounts there. Teams Fabela (Nanjing University) and Goitein (Beijing Normal University) had to check into hotels when their own ISPs could not handle the load of the VPN that they used to deal with these Zoom restrictions.

Teams Franck (Cairo University, Faculty of Law - French Section), Vukas (ALSD, Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University), and Castro (Strathmore University Law School) competed notwithstanding their degree examinations during the Globals, in some cases only minutes before or after their hearings. Teams Gros (Charles University in Prague), Momtaz (Universidad Externado de Colombia), Fortier (Peking University Law School), and Pinto (Ala-Too International University) generously rescheduled their hearings so that their opponents could sit for exams.

Although all of these teams and individuals deserve to be honorably mentioned, we have chosen the following teams or individuals as representatives for the award.

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FDI Moot Spirit Award Honorable Mention Teams



Ala-Too International University | Peking University Law School | Universidad Externado de Colombia | University of Miami

FDI Moot Spirit Award Honorable Mention Individuals

Mr [Ulsbold Battulga](#) | Mr Haomiao Chen... | Ms [Khululiwe Kheswa](#) | Ms Clara Lewis | Mr [Siddharth Pareek](#)

FDI Moot Spirit Award 2020 Winner

A few FDI Moot participants have had to deal with a *different* “SARS” in preparing for the 2020 FDI Moot Globals. This was Nigeria’s “Special Anti-Robbery Squad”. In 2016, Amnesty International found the Nigerian SARS responsible for “widespread torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment” including “severe beating, hanging, starvation, shooting in the legs, mock executions and threats of execution.”¹ On 3 October 2020, a SARS officer shot a young Nigerian and took his vehicle; it emerged that another youth had been suspiciously killed a few days before by a SARS officer. These events unleashed a series of “End-SARS” protests in Lagos. The Government response culminated in the Lekki Toll Gate shootings of 20 October, where even the Government conceded two dead and 25 wounded (with other sources citing many more), and additional live-round incidents in the following days.

¹See <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr44/4868/2016/en/> [accessed 4 Dec 2020].

Olufolajimi Otitoola



Mr Olufolajimi Otitoola, of the University of Lagos (Team Evensen), assumed the responsibility for getting his team-mates safely to their practices and hearings and back home again during this imminently dangerous time. They had to run a gauntlet between angry protesters and police and military, who had shown little hesitation to use lethal force even with innocent bystanders in the line of fire. Olufolajimi organized team-members' travel times and routes to minimize exposure to hotspots and provided moral support to occasionally shaken team-mates during these stressful circumstances, keeping the team "together" and focused.

Congratulations, Olufolajimi. Well done!

You can find out more about Olufolajimi Otitoola here: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/olufolajimi-otitoola-337001192/>

Let us hope that 2021 allows us to return to more mundane acts of kindness and fair play that would have earned the Spirit Award in the past, such as granting a rematch to an opponent who had forfeited after misreading the schedule or (especially 😊) a team forgiving the organizer's calculation error that had impacted its advancement.

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