



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

Commission internationale de juristes - Comisión Internacional de Juristas

"dedicated since 1952 to the primacy, coherence and implementation of international law and principles that advance human rights"

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INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS ADOPTS DECLARATION ON THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN COMBATTING TERRORISM

Today, 150 international lawyers from around the world adopted a **Declaration on Upholding Human Rights and the Rule of Law in Combatting Terrorism**. The Declaration, adopted at the close of the ICJ's biennial conference, highlights the grave challenge to the rule of law brought about by recent excessive counter-terrorism measures and many old counter-terrorism laws that have been a problem for decades.

"The most fundamental human rights principles have come under attack," says Nicholas Howen, Secretary General of the ICJ, "The Declaration marks the beginning of global action by judges, lawyers and human rights defenders, working together and speaking out with one voice". It will serve as a guiding principle for the future work of the ICJ network around the world.

The Declaration reaffirms the most fundamental human rights that are being violated through abusive counter-terrorism measures, and clearly recalls that some human rights may never be suspended, such as the absolute prohibition of torture or other inhuman treatment and of secret detention.

"We have to be vigilant from the very beginning", says Arthur Chaskalson, President of the ICJ and Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court of South Africa, remembering the experience in his own country, in which the most flagrant human rights violations were disguised as counter-terrorism measures for decades, "if you concede the first step, every next step will lead to the further erosion of the rule of law and disregard of human dignity".

The Declaration also defines areas and methods of action for the worldwide ICJ network. Its jurists will monitor and challenge counter-terrorism legislation around the world, will advocate for an efficient international supervision mechanism and ensure that the special responsibility of judges and lawyers to protect the human rights of all persons and to uphold the rule of law is taken seriously and applied vigorously.

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