



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 "

17 August 2004

IMMEDIATE

WORLD RENOWNED JURISTS MEET TO ACT ON COUNTER TERRORISM AND HUMAN RIGHTS

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The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) will conduct its Biennial Conference on the theme "Counter terrorism and Human Rights – Challenges and Responses" on the 27th – 29th August in Berlin, Germany. The conference will be hosted by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The ICJ will bring together 160 eminent international jurists and human rights activists from more than 60 countries to reaffirm that terrorism can and should be fought without abusing human rights and to mobilise the global legal community to take action.

International Law and Human Rights are facing new threats in a climate of global insecurity and concerns over terrorism. Some counter terrorism measures adopted since 2001 unacceptably violate well established human rights guarantees such as the prohibition of torture. In some countries the "war against terrorism" has given greater legitimacy to long-standing human rights violations carried out in the name of national security.

"Governments must protect their people, but counter-terrorism measures themselves are now one of the gravest threats to the rule of law and human rights in more than 50 years," says Nicholas Howen, Secretary General of the ICJ.

"We are bringing together 160 deeply experienced judges, lawyers and human rights experts who have seen cycles of terrorism and counter-terrorism in their own countries. They will charter a path through the confusion and set acceptable limits of counter-terrorism measures," he added.

The newly appointed United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, will be a keynote speaker at the conference and this will be the first time since taking office that she will make clear her stance on the issue of human rights and terrorism. Justice Arthur Chaskalson, ICJ President and Chief Justice of the South African Constitutional Court, and Hina Jilani, UN Special Representative on human rights defenders will be amongst the speakers.

Ms. Kerstin Müller, Minister of State, German Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs will speak at the opening session of the conference and Ms. Brigitte Zypries, Minister of Justice will address a dinner reception on Friday.

The ICJ is an international non-governmental organisation comprising sixty of the world's most eminent jurists and has a worldwide network of national sections and affiliated organisations

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The International Commission of Jurists is a network of judges and lawyers united in affirming international law and rule of law principles that advance human rights. The Geneva based organisation was founded in Berlin in 1952 and comprise 60 international jurists from all parts of the world.

“The ICJ is returning to its birthplace half a century later to defend the basic principles it was founded upon in an international climate of abuse and violations that is increasingly worrying the world human rights community,” Mr Howen added.

VENUE

Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

Berlin, Germany.

Werderscher Markt 1 (Main entrance)

Unterwasserstrasse 10 (Special entrance for ICJ conference)

CONFIRMATION

For security reasons the ICJ must provide the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a list participants. Please confirm your participation by Tuesday 24th August, 2004.

REGISTRATION

Media cards will be given to all journalists attending the conference at the Registration desk.

INTERVIEWS

Special interviews can be arranged with any of the ICJ members or speakers at the Plenary sessions and Working Groups. These interviews can be pre-arranged or confirmed at the venue.

For any further information or interview requests please contact

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Further details on the conference and a full agenda are available on the ICJ website www.icj.org