



# 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 "*

## COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE - COMUNICADO DE PRENSA

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### **Human rights NGOs call on UK Law Lords to rule against anti-terror law**

On the eve of a major legal challenge in the House of Lords, JUSTICE and the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) call for the Law Lords to rule against the government's 9/11 law permitting the indefinite detention of suspected terrorists.

A special panel of 9 Law Lords will today hear a legal challenge against the indefinite detention of 11 foreign nationals detained under the Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001, which was passed shortly after the September 11 attacks. In order to pass the 2001 law, the government derogated from the European Convention on Human Rights.

In December 2003, a committee of Privy Counsellors recommended that Part 4 of the Security Act should be repealed as 'a matter of urgency'. One of the Privy Counsellors, the former Law Lord Lord Browne-Wilkinson, later said in Parliament that indefinite detention under Part 4 'was not a tolerable system in a civilised community'.

Roger Smith, Director of JUSTICE, the UK-based human rights organization and the British section of the ICJ, said:

"Indefinite detention without charge is an unnecessary, draconian and, ultimately unsustainable measure in the fight against terrorism. We trust that the House of Lords will recognise the need to protect fundamental rights even in times of crisis."

Nicholas Howen, Secretary General of the International Commission of Jurists, said:

"We are alarmed that in more and more countries government ministers are able to put terror suspects in administrative detention for long periods without charge or trial. History has shown us that such detention opens the door to abuse and arbitrary exercise of power. Even in exceptional circumstances and even if supervised by courts, it is not acceptable to hold anyone in open-ended detention without trial. They should thus be charged and tried within a reasonable time, or released."

For further information, contact Eric Metcalfe (JUSTICE): work 0044 (0) 20 7762 6415, mobile 07939 119 369 or Gerald Staberock (ICJ), 0041 (0) 22 979 3803.

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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