



## “War on terror” threatens global justice

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(Porto Alegre, January 28, 2005) - Three leading human rights groups today urged states not to undermine the rule of law or carry out repression in the fight against terrorism.

The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) and Human Rights Watch said at World Social Forum (WSF) that the “war on terror” is eroding human rights worldwide and posing a challenge to the international rule of law. In some countries the “war on terror” has given legitimacy to long-standing abuses in the name of national security and has led to repression of human rights defenders and social justice activists.

The three organizations are hosting an all-day panel today at the WSF (**Room J 113**). Speakers include **Nilmario Miranda**, Human Rights Minister of Brazil, and leading activists from Chile, Colombia, France, Palestine, Chechnya, Tunisia, the United States and Yemen,

“Our work as human rights defenders is made more difficult in the context of the fight against terrorism,” said **Luis Guillermo Perez**, Secretary General of the FIDH. “In some countries, those who advocate for the respect of human rights are called terrorists and suffer from increased repression. All over the world, restrictions of freedom of association and expression on the pretext of the fight against terror aim at silencing those who denounce the use of illegal and inhuman means to counter terrorism.”

“Governments must protect their people, but many counter-terrorism measures themselves are now a grave threat to human rights,” said **Nicholas Howen**, ICJ Secretary General. “We are alarmed by the effect of counter-terrorism on civil society activists and its impact on groups that are often marginalized, such as foreigners, asylum seekers or minorities and indigenous peoples.” “We have to challenge the security rhetoric, which allows states to set aside human rights. Global security without the rule of law is an empty shell,” he added.

“In the name of making us safe from terrorism, the United States has tortured and mistreated Muslim detainees in Afghanistan, Iraq and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba,” said **Reed Brody** of Human Rights Watch. “Far from making anyone safer, these atrocities breed resentment and are used to recruit people to jihad.”

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The three organizations are also pleased to announce that they will hold a Press Conference about this event, January 29<sup>th</sup> at 13:30 at the 209 Room, at the Gasometro.

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