



INTERNATIONAL
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EMINENT JURISTS PANEL on Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EMINENT JURISTS EXAMINE IMPACT OF FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM IN COLOMBIA

The „Eminent Jurists Panel on Terrorism, Counter-terrorism and Human Rights“ holds its first national hearing in Bogotá today. The Eminent Jurists Panel is a group of eight jurists appointed by the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) to examine the impact of the fight against terrorism on human rights and the rule of law.

The Panel will hold hearings over the next 18 months in all regions of the world.

For more than four decades, the Colombian people have suffered from an internal armed conflict during which grave crimes have been committed by members of armed opposition groups, paramilitary groups and the security forces.

Over the last three years, a number of legal measures have been adopted in the framework of the „democratic security policy“, the antiterrorist policy promoted by the Colombian Government.

The three members of the Panel present in Colombia are: Raúl Zaffaroni (Argentina), Judge at the Supreme Court of Argentina and former Director of the United Nations Latino-American Institute on Crime Prevention (ILANUD), Robert K. Goldman (United States), former President of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and former expert of the United Nations on human rights and the fight against terrorism and Stefan Trechsel (Switzerland), former President of the European Commission on Human Rights and recently appointed judge ad litem at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

The experts will attend a public hearing today and tomorrow in Bogotá to which representatives of civil society, the Colombian authorities and the international community in Colombia, are invited. During their visit, the Panel members will also meet in private with the Colombian authorities.

„The Panel is not here to judge but to listen to the voices of the civil society and the Government on the justification for the „democratic security policy,“ and its impact on the rights guaranteed by international human rights law and international humanitarian law“ said Raúl Zaffaroni.

Background

The Panel is composed of eight judges and lawyers of all regions of the world. The Panel exercises its mandate independently, with the logistical support of the ICJ Secretariat and its network of organizations. Arthur Chaskalson, former President of the Constitutional Court of South Africa, chairs the Panel. The other members are Georges Abi-Saab (Egypt), Robert K. Goldman (United States), Hina Jilani (Pakistan), Vitit Muntarbhorn (Thailand), Mary Robinson (Ireland), Stefan Trechsel (Switzerland) and Raúl Zaffaroni (Argentina).

On the American continent, the Panel will also hold national hearings in Canada, the United States and a sub-regional hearing in South America.

For further information, please contact Isabelle Heyer at + 571 376 8200 (in Bogotá) or Gerald Staberock: + 41 22 979 38 00 (in Geneva).

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