



AN INITIATIVE OF
THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMISSION OF JURISTS

EMINENT JURISTS PANEL

on

Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EMINENT JURISTS SEEK TO IDENTIFY LESSONS FROM NORTHERN IRELAND

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The Eminent Jurists Panel begins its Northern Ireland hearing in Belfast today. The hearing will focus on the legal and policy lessons the experience in Northern Ireland can offer to the international debate on terrorism, counter-terrorism and human rights.

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The hearing, hosted by the Committee for the Administration of Justice (CAJ), is part of an ongoing global inquiry into terrorism, counter-terrorism and human rights by an independent group of eight eminent jurists appointed by the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) in Geneva.

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The Panel members visiting Northern Ireland are Justice Arthur Chaskalson, former Chief Justice of South Africa and first President of the South African Constitutional Court, and Justice Raúl Zaffaroni, Judge of the Supreme Court of Argentina. The judges will take part in a series of meetings in Belfast over the next two days. The Panel will hold a further hearing in London in the following week, examining recent measures in the United Kingdom.

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In Northern Ireland the Panel is particularly interested in hearing from key actors about the use of laws and special powers over an extended period. It will meet with a wide range of persons, including lawyers, academics, representatives of the Administration, including the Police and the judiciary, civil society organisations and the public.

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“Northern Ireland has a long and troubled history of conflict, including extended use of emergency powers and their impact on human rights,” said Justice Chaskalson. “The experience of members of Northern Irish society, the security forces and the Administration should be given due attention in current international debates on terrorism, counter-terrorism and human rights.”

Background

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The Panel is a high-level panel of eminent jurists that exercises its mandate independently, with the logistical support of the ICJ Secretariat and its network of organizations. Arthur Chaskalson, former Chief Justice of South Africa and first President of the South African Constitutional Court, chairs the Panel. The other members are Georges Abi-Saab (Egypt),

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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Robert K. Goldman (United States), Hina Jilani (Pakistan), Vitit Muntarbhorn (Thailand), Mary Robinson (Ireland), Stefan Trechsel (Switzerland) and Raúl Zaffaroni (Argentina).

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For further information on the Eminent Jurists Panel please also see www.icj.org or www.caj.org.uk