



AN INITIATIVE OF
THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMISSION OF JURISTS

EMINENT JURISTS PANEL

on

Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Eminent jurists hold sub-regional hearing on counter-terrorism measures in the Middle East

The Eminent Jurists Panel on Terrorism, Counter-terrorism and Human Rights, an independent group of experts appointed by the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) in October 2005, is holding a public hearing in Cairo on 4-5 June to examine and assess the impact of counter-terrorism laws, policies and practices on human rights in Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Yemen.

The Panel is represented in Cairo by Georges Abi-Saab (Egypt), former judge at the Appeals Chamber of the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda and at the International Court of Justice, and by Vitit Muntarbhorn (Thailand), a renowned Professor of Law at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok who currently serves as the UN expert on the situation of human rights in North Korea.

The hearing, co-organized by the ICJ and its affiliated organization, the Arab Centre for the Independence of the Judiciary & Legal Profession (ACIJLP), is the fourteenth in a series of hearings held around the world by the Panel as part of its global inquiry on the compatibility of counter-terrorism measures with international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

All countries examined at the hearing have faced and continue to face terrorist threats. To counter these threats, states have adopted measures which include prolonged states of emergency, and the use of special security courts and military courts. "We are here to listen to a wide range of perspectives on how long-standing emergency measures and other security policies have impacted human rights and the rule of law, and their justification in light of today's security threats." said the Panel.

At the hearing, the Panel will hear from national human rights institutions, national and international human rights organisations, individual judges, lawyers and academics in the four countries examined. While in Cairo, the Panel will also meet with senior representatives of the Egyptian Government, including the Minister for Legal Affairs and Parliamentary Councils.

The hearing will be held at the Hotel Nile Hilton and is public. On Thursday 7 June, the Panel will hold a press conference at the Hotel Nile Hilton to share preliminary conclusions on its visit in Cairo.

Background

The Panel is composed of eight judges, lawyers and academics from all regions of the world. In addition to Vitit Muntarbhorn and Georges Abi-Saab, the members are: former Chief Justice of South Africa Arthur Chaskalson, Chair of the Panel and first President of South Africa's Constitutional Court; Professor Robert K. Goldman (United States),

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

former President of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights; Hina Jilani (Pakistan), a lawyer before the Supreme Court of Pakistan and the UN Secretary General's Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders; Mary Robinson (Ireland), now Head of the Ethical Globalization Initiative, and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and former President of Ireland; Stefan Trechsel (Switzerland), former President of the European Commission on Human Rights, and judge at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia; and E. Raúl Zaffaroni (Argentina), a judge at the Supreme Court of Argentina. The Panel exercises its mandate independently, with the logistical support of the ICJ Secretariat and its network of organizations.

The Panel has held hearings in Australia, Colombia, East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda), the United Kingdom (in London on current counter-terrorism policies and in Belfast on lessons from the past), North Africa (Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia), the United States, the Southern Cone (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay), South-East Asia (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand), the Russian Federation and South Asia (India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Maldives). The Panel will conclude its inquiry with a hearing in Brussels on the EU counter-terrorism laws and policies and a mission to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. At the end of the hearings' process, the Panel will publish a global report in early 2008.

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For further information on the Panel, see <http://ejp.icj.org>