



AN INITIATIVE OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL  
COMMISSION OF JURISTS

# EMINENT JURISTS PANEL

on

## Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights

24 April 2006

### EMINENT JURISTS BEGIN INQUIRY INTO UK TERRORISM LAWS

The Eminent Jurists Panel began its national hearing on terrorism, counter-terrorism and human rights in London today. The public hearing is part of an of an independent global inquiry by eight eminent jurists appointed by the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) to examine the impact of terrorism and counter-terrorism measures on human rights and the rule of law.

"In many countries around the world there is a highly polarized debate about terrorism and human rights. We need to examine new laws and policies carefully so that they guarantee both our security and human rights," said Justice Arthur Chaskalson, former Chief Justice of South Africa and first President of the South African Constitutional Court, the chair of the Panel.

The United Kingdom is a key actor in the global fight against terrorism. It has recently experienced acts of terrorism in London and has lived through past cycles of terrorist violence. Since 2001, the United Kingdom has enacted new counter-terrorism legislation, which has the potential to significantly impact on the rule of law and human rights. Measures, such as the introduction of control orders, the criminalization of glorifying terrorism and the deportation of terror suspects on the basis of diplomatic assurances to countries where they may face torture have been met with particular concern.

The Panel will hear evidence from a wide range of people, including state officials, the independent reviewer of counter-terrorism legislation, leading legal practitioners, national and international human rights organizations, community representatives and members of the public. The eminent jurists will also meet with members of the judiciary and members of parliament in the course of their visit. The Home Secretary Charles Clarke MP will attend the public hearings and make a presentation on behalf of the Government.

"We want to hear directly from key actors in the United Kingdom. The government has a duty to protect people from terrorist acts and we wish to hear the justifications for new laws and policies it has introduced. At the same time measures taken to counter terrorism must respect rights guaranteed under international human rights and humanitarian law both in law and in practice," said Justice Chaskalson.

The public hearings in London are hosted by JUSTICE, the British Section of the ICJ in collaboration with international law firm Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer.

#### Background

The Panel is composed of eight judges, lawyers and academics from all regions of the world. The Panel exercises its mandate independently, with the logistical support of the ICJ

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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Secretariat and its network of organizations. Arthur Chaskalson, former Chief Justice and first 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).

The eminent jurists will hold hearings around the world over a period of 18 months. The hearing in London follows similar hearings in Colombia, East Africa and Australia. The panel conducted hearings on the lessons to be learned from Northern Ireland in Belfast on 18-21 April 2006. Further hearings will include North Africa, South-East Asia, the Russian Federation, the United States of America, Canada, the Middle East and South Asia.

The Panel will issue a global report on terrorism, counter-terrorism and human rights based on the hearings and other information received in 2007.

For further information on the Eminent Jurists Panel and the hearings in the United Kingdom, see [www.icj.org](http://www.icj.org) and [www.justice.org.uk](http://www.justice.org.uk).

*For more information on the hearings in London, please contact Barbara Grill-Caçaõ (Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer) at 020 742 73367 or 07747767312 or Isabelle Heyer (ICJ) at 0041 786800118 or 0041 22 9793800 and Eric Metcalfe (JUSTICE) at 07939119369*