



# INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

Commission internationale de juristes - Comisión Internacional de Juristas

*" dedicated since 1952 to the primacy, coherence and implementation of international law and principles that advance human rights "*

## COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE - COMUNICADO DE PRENSA

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Embargo: 19 October 2005, 11 a.m. (gmt+1)

### **ICJ: Eminent Jurists begin global inquiry into human rights and counter-terrorism**

The fight against terrorist acts has led to repeated allegations of torture, indefinite and secret detentions often without charge or trial, the reduction of defence rights and threats to freedom of expression around the world. Today the ICJ asked eight of the most respected international jurists from different regions of the world to lead a global inquiry into the impact of fighting terrorism on human rights and the rule of law.

“Governments are adopting ever-new counter-terrorism measures and claim that ‘the rules’ have changed”, said Nicholas Howen, ICJ Secretary-General. “The ICJ has set up an independent Eminent Jurists Panel on Terrorism, Counter-terrorism and human rights to investigate whether these often profound changes in law and practice can be justified.”

“It is important that there be more than the rhetorical acceptance by states that their fight against terrorism must not jeopardize democratic values. Well-established principles of human rights law must be respected in practise. The lessons of history tells us that this is essential,” said Arthur Chaskalson, ICJ President and the Chair of the Eminent Jurists Panel on the occasion of the launch of the Eminent Jurists Panel.

Over the next 18 months, the Panel will hold hearings in countries in all regions around the world to assess the implications of new laws and policies adopted to fight terrorism before preparing a final global report. It will evaluate whether current counter-terrorism measures are necessary and proportionate under international law or are excessive, undermining basic human rights and the rule of law.

“In the present security-dominated discourse the public is frightened and policy makers dismiss human rights as unrealistic. We should never forget that this is about people, about families. Terrorism creates victims. Counter-terrorism must not create new victims,” concluded Nicholas Howen, ICJ Secretary-General.

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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## Background information

The members of the Eminent Jurists Panel are:

- Justice Arthur Chaskalson, former Chief Justice and President of South Africa's Constitutional Court and Chair of the Eminent Jurists Panel
- Mary Robinson, Former President of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
- Justice Raul Zaffaroni, Judge of the Supreme Court of Argentina
- Professor Georges Abi-Saab, renowned scholar of international law and former judge at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia
- Hina Jilani, lawyer of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on Human Rights Defenders
- Professor Robert K. Goldman, Professor of Law at the American University in Washington DC and former expert of the United National Commission on Human Rights on counter-terrorism and human rights
- Professor Stefan Trechsel, former President of the European Commission on Human Rights and judge ad litem at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
- Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn, Professor of Law at Chulalongkorn University in Thailand and expert of the United Nations Human Rights Commission on North Korea

The Panel plans to hold hearings in the following countries and regions: Australia, Canada, Colombia, Eastern Africa, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Middle East, North Africa, Pakistan, Philippines, Russian Federation/CIS, Sri Lanka, South America, Thailand, United Kingdom and United States.

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