



AN INITIATIVE OF
THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMISSION OF JURISTS

EMINENT JURISTS PANEL

on

Terrorism, Counter-Terrorism and Human Rights

15 March 2006

INVITATION TO PRESS CONFERENCE 17 MARCH, 10 am

INTERNATIONAL EMINENT JURISTS PANEL TO ANNOUNCE CONCLUSION ON ITS INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S COUNTER- TERRORISM POLICIES

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**Press conference at Parliament House, Canberra
Committee room IR2, 17 March, 10 am, House of Representatives entrance**

The Eminent Jurists Panel on Terrorism, Counter-terrorism and Human Rights invites to a press conference on 17 March at 10 am at the conclusion of its visit to Canberra.

For the last two days the eminent jurists have held an inquiry and received submissions from civil society, lawyers, academics and governmental agencies on Australia's counter-terrorism laws and policies. The hearings in Australia, hosted by the Australian Section of the ICJ, are part of an independent global inquiry by eight eminent jurists appointed by the ICJ to examine the impact of the fight against terrorism on human rights and the rule of law.

The eminent jurists will brief the press about their views on Australia's counter-terrorism laws, practices and policies following the conclusion of their consultations.

Australia is a key player in the global fight against terrorism. In response to the terrorist threat Australia has enacted counter-terrorism legislation that includes preventive detention, control orders and powers for the intelligence services to issue arrest and questioning warrants. Some of these new laws, policies and practices have raised widespread concerns about their impact on the enjoyment of human rights.

The panellists conducting the Australia hearing are:

Ms Hina Jilani – Lawyer of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Hina Jilani is also the founder and current Vice Chairperson of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, a prominent human rights NGO in that country. During her mandate as the first Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on human rights defenders, she had wide exposure to the impact of counter-terrorism measures on human rights defenders and their work.

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

33, rue des Bains, P.O. Box 91, 1211 Geneva 8, Switzerland
Tel: +41(0) 22 979 3800 – Fax: +41(0) 22 979 3801 – Website: <http://www.icj.org> - E-mail: info@icj.org

Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn - a renowned Professor of law at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok and a member of the Advisory Council of Jurists of the Asian Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions. Former expert of the UN Commission on Human Rights on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, he currently serves as Special Rapporteur on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights.

Background

The Panel is a high-level body of eminent jurists that 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 and Chief Justice 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 Australia is the third hearing, following hearings in Colombia and in East Africa. The next hearings will take place in Belfast and London in April 2006. The Panel will issue its global report based on the hearings and other information received in April 2007. In Australia the Panel is represented by:

For further information on the Eminent Jurists Panel, see www.icj.org and www.icj-aust.org.au/.

For further information on the Australia hearing, please contact Elizabeth Evatt (ICJ Australia) or Gerald Staberock (ICJ Geneva in Canberra) or Isabelle Heyer (ICJ in Geneva).