

INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) is a non-governmental organization which works to promote the rule of law and the legal protection of human rights throughout the world. The ICJ Secretary-General is Louise Doswald-Beck of Great Britain.

The ICJ consists of up to 45 jurists who are representative of the different legal systems of the world. It has 78 national sections. The ICJ carries out research, holds seminars and international conferences of jurists, undertakes missions to various countries, and publishes reports on what it regards as breaches of human rights and other legal rights in countries around the world. The ICJ is concerned about the abuse of emergency regulations, the arrests of opposition leaders, the harassment and persecution of judges and lawyers, and the crushing of pro-democracy movements. It calls on military regimes to hand over power when democratic parties win elections. It criticizes the lack of implementation of national constitutions and the provisions of the constitutions themselves, urges ways to strengthen the independence of the judiciary, and calls on governments to uphold basic rights such as freedom of the press, of movement and of religion, and social, economic and trade union rights. The ICJ carries out programs of technical assistance in the legal and human rights fields in over 30 countries.

The Center for the Independence of Judges and Lawyers (CIJL) was formed by the ICJ in 1978 to counter serious inroads into the independence of the judiciary and the legal profession in all parts of the world; the CIJL presents reports to the UN human rights bodies, listing cases of judges and lawyers who have been killed, detained or harassed in the course of their professional activities.

The ICJ has been a driving force behind the adoption of numerous international declarations and standards including the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, the European Convention Against Torture, the UN Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary and the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights.

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