

Juan E Méndez

Juan E. Méndez is a Visiting Professor of Law at the American University – Washington College of Law, and an advisor on crime prevention to the Prosecutor, International Criminal Court. He is also Co-Chair of the Human Rights Institute of the International Bar Association. Until May 2009 he was the President of the International Center for Transnational Justice (ICTJ) and in the summer of 2009 he was a Scholar-in-Residence at the Ford Foundation in New York. Concurrent with his duties at ICTJ, the Honorable Kofi Annan named Mr. Méndez his Special Advisor on the Prevention of Genocide, a task he performed from 2004 to 2007. A native of Argentina, Mr. Méndez has dedicated his legal career to the defense of human rights and has a long and distinguished record of advocacy throughout the Americas. As a result of his involvement in representing political prisoners, the Argentinean military dictatorship arrested him and subjected him to torture and administrative detention for more than a year. During this time, Amnesty International adopted him as a “Prisoner of Conscience.” After his expulsion from his country in 1977, Mr. Méndez moved to the United States. For 15 years, he worked with Human Rights Watch, concentrating his efforts on human rights issues in the western hemisphere. In 1994, he became general counsel of Human Rights Watch, with worldwide duties in support of the organization’s mission, including responsibility for litigation and standard-setting activities. From 1996 to 1999, Mr. Méndez was the Executive Director of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights in Costa Rica, and between October 1999 and May 2004 he was Professor of Law and Director of the Center for Civil and Human Rights at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana. Between 2000 and 2003 he was a member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States, and served as its President in 2002. He has taught International Human Rights Law at Georgetown Law School and at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, and he teaches regularly at the Oxford Masters Program in International Human Rights Law in the United Kingdom. He is the recipient of several human rights awards: the Goler T. Butcher Medal from the American Society of International Law (2010); a Doctorate *Honoris Causa* from the University of Quebec in Montreal (2006); the inaugural “Monsignor Oscar A. Romero Award for Leadership in Service to Human Rights,” by the University of Dayton (2000); and the “Jeanne and Joseph Sullivan Award” of the Heartland Alliance (2003). Mr. Méndez is a member of the bar of Mar del Plata and Buenos Aires, Argentina, and the District of Columbia, U.S., having earned a J.D. from Stella Maris University in Argentina and a certificate from the American University Washington College of Law.