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The International Center for Transitional Justice Announces New President

Alex Boraine to Step Down and Juan E. Méndez to Assume the Presidency

NEW YORK, March 10, 2004—The International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) today announced that President Alex Boraine will resign from his position at the end of May 2004 to return to South Africa. Juan E. Méndez, a lawyer, advocate, and academic who has dedicated his long and distinguished career to defending human rights, will assume the presidency as of June 1, 2004.

“We are absolutely delighted to have the privilege of announcing that such an eminent and devoted human rights professional will be leading the Center and continuing our transitional justice work worldwide,” said Dr. Boraine.

Mr. Méndez has more than 30 years of human rights experience. He comes to the ICTJ from his position as professor of law and director of the Center for Civil and Human Rights at the University of Notre Dame Law School. A native of Argentina, Mr. Mendez started his legal career there by representing political prisoners—work for which he was imprisoned and tortured by the military dictatorship and adopted as a “prisoner of conscience” by Amnesty International. After his release in the late 1970s, he moved to the U.S. and spent 15 years at Human Rights Watch working on human rights issues in the Americas and, in 1994, assuming the post of general counsel. From 1996 to 1999, Mr. Mendez was executive director of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights in Costa Rica. He has also served as president and vice president of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

At the request of the ICTJ Board of Directors, Dr. Boraine will be assuming the position of chairman of the Board on June 1, 2004. He will be returning to Cape Town, South Africa, where the Center’s Transitional Justice Fellowship Program is based, to establish an ICTJ office. In his new position, Dr. Boraine will continue to play an active role in the Center’s future direction and development. Vincent Mai, the current chairman, will continue on as vice chair.

About the ICTJ

The ICTJ assists countries pursuing accountability for mass atrocity or human rights abuse. The Center works in societies emerging from repressive rule or armed conflict, as well as in established democracies where historical injustices or systemic abuse remain unresolved. It provides comparative information, legal and policy analysis, documentation, and strategic research to justice and truth-seeking institutions, nongovernmental organizations, governments, and others. The ICTJ assists in the development of strategies for transitional justice comprising five key elements: prosecuting perpetrators, documenting violations through nonjudicial means such as truth commissions, reforming abusive institutions, providing reparations to victims, and advancing reconciliation. The Center is committed to building local capacity and generally strengthening the emerging field of transitional justice, and works closely with organizations and experts around the world to do so.

For more information on the ICTJ, please refer to our website at www.ictj.org.

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