



## INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL DEFENCE LAWYERS GERMANY E.V.

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Dortmund, June 2nd, 2010

Dear Madam, dear Sir,

It was with great dismay that the ICDL-Germany (International Criminal Defence Lawyers) learned about the arrest of Professor Peter Erlinder in Kigali, Rwanda, on 28 May 2010.

Based on the information available, Peter Erlinder's arrest was prompted solely because Prof. Erlinder was performing his duties as defence counsel for the Rwandan opposition politician, Victoire Ingabire Umuhoza.

Prof. Peter Erlinder is a recognized American law professor and criminal defence lawyer. In the so-called "Military I" case at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, Tanzania, he acted as defence counsel for Major Aloys Ntabakuze.

It cannot be accepted by the international community of jurists that a member of that community is arrested while exercising his or her professional function for reasons based exclusively on the grounds that the defence counsel has been discharging his professional obligation.

The rights of suspects and accused persons and their defence are cornerstones and indispensable requirements for the rule of law. These rights are enshrined in various international conventions, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Convention of Human Rights and the African Charta on Human and Peoples' Rights, as well as in the statutes of the International Criminal Tribunals, i.e. ICTY and ICTR, and the permanent International Criminal Court.

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Governmental institutions that interfere with the right to defence, depart from the internationally recognized principles of justice and procedural fairness.

The Government of Rwanda will be held accountable by the international community for the measures taken.

We strongly condemn the arrest of Prof. Peter Erlinder and call for his immediate release.

ICDL – Germany is an association of German criminal defence lawyers taking a particular interest in the role of the defence before international criminal tribunals. Several members have already gained practical experience in this field and/or are admitted to the International Criminal Court and ad hoc and hybrid tribunals.

Yours sincerely

Jens G. Cordes  
President IC DL Germany

