



INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION OF JURISTS

Commission internationale de juristes - Comisión Internacional de Juristas

" dedicated since 1952 to the primacy, coherence and implementation of international law and principles that advance human rights "

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LEBANON: ICJ to observe trial of Dr Mugraby before a military court

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) said today it will send an observer to monitor the trial of Dr Muhamad Mugraby, a well-known human rights lawyer prosecuted by a military tribunal for having criticized the Lebanese judiciary.

Dr Mugraby was charged with "slandering the military establishment and its officers" following a speech he made before the European Parliament's Mashrek Delegation in Brussels in November 2003, in which he criticized the justice system in Lebanon.

On behalf of the ICJ, the observer will monitor the trial that will take place on 17 April at the Military Court of Beirut. In a press release issued on 16 March 2006, the ICJ already said that "criticism is part and parcel of the right to freedom of opinion and expression and cannot be penalized." It noted that the charges constitute a violation of Lebanon's international obligations regarding the right to freedom of opinion and expression contained in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that Lebanon has ratified and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

In addition, the ICJ expressed its deep concerns at the fact that a civilian was being tried before a military court, in contravention of international law principles, and in particular of the recommendations of the UN Human Rights Committee after it examined the implementation of Lebanon's international obligations. .

The organisation called for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the charges against Dr Mugraby.

On 20 March 2006, the Military Court dismissed the procedural exceptions filed by Dr. Mugraby and decided to proceed with the case.

The ICJ has been following the case of Dr Mugraby closely for years, as he has been the subject of numerous proceedings against him. In particular, the organisation monitored an earlier trial in October 2003./

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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

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