

Siracusa, Italy, 24 February 2017

Dear President, dear Colleagues,

The *Siracusa International Institute for Criminal Justice and Human Rights* is launching, in partnership with international stakeholders, a globally-oriented training programme for the promotion of defence rights and protection of fundamental human rights. This programme is specifically designed for defence lawyers and jurists dealing with international crimes, including crimes of a transnational nature. The programme has a range of components for international and national lawyers, covering topics relating to defence rights in international courts, as well as international investigations into transnational crimes.

Thanks to the unrivaled expertise and international reputation of its Honorary President Prof. M. Cherif Bassiouni, the Siracusa Institute has always played a pivotal role in the promotion of International Criminal Law and Criminal Justice more broadly. For example, it was among the most active contributors to the foundation of the International Criminal Court (ICC), in respect of which the “Siracusa Draft” formed the basis for the diplomatic negotiations that led to the adoption of the ICC’s founding Rome Statute. The Siracusa Institute has consultative status with the United Nations (UN) and Council of Europe (CoE).

The Siracusa Institute is an advanced global research and training centre, with longstanding expertise in a range of criminal justice, rule of law and human rights matters. In the international criminal law field, the Institute is a leader in the normative development and articulation of core international crimes, as well as transnational crimes such as corruption, money laundering, drug and human trafficking, international and European Union (EU) level criminal investigations, and international legal cooperation in criminal matters. Furthermore, the Institute has particular expertise in criminal justice capacity-building with respect to post-conflict, developing and less developed countries. At present, the Institute is conducting large-scale technical assistance and capacity-building projects in the MENA Region and the Western Balkans.

I am pleased to underline that our global defence rights initiative – the *Siracusa Institute’s International Defence Counsel Training Programme* (the *Programme*) for defence lawyers and jurists – is organised in partnership with highly representative international lawyers’ and bar associations, and law societies. These are the *Association Internationale des Avocats* (UIA), the *Association Internationale de Droit Pénal* (AIDP), the International Criminal Justice Consortium (ICJC), and the Italian *Scuola Superiore dell’Avvocatura* (SSA). These strong partnerships are fundamental to the success and long-term sustainability of our global effort to give due regard and priority to upholding

defence rights as indispensable to the realisation of a truly international justice and culture of legality worldwide.

Furthermore, we are proud of our outstanding Academia of world-renowned practitioners and jurists, whose expertise, patronage and prestige ensures that this Programme is of the highest standards. Members of the Academia also serve as lecturers and academic advisers. Details on the *Programme*, its Academia and the calendar of Training Courses can be found at our website: <http://internationaldefencecounsel.siracusainstitute.org/cms/index.php>

Our first Training Course on ***Fundamentals on Defence Rights before International Courts***, will be held from 15-19 May 2017 at our headquarters in Siracusa, Italy (a UNESCO world heritage site). Due to limited available positions in the Course, early registration is highly recommended. The ***Fundamentals Course*** syllabus is attached, and we will be delighted if you would distribute it in your networks of lawyers and jurists.

In bringing the *Programme* to your attention, our Institute will be pleased to explore with you the possibility of your collaboration and partnership in this important *Programme*. Considering the importance of continuing legal education (CLE) for lawyers and legal practitioners across the world, we are particularly interested in the opportunity to have our Training Courses accredited within your CLE programme, to ensure that our Courses are of maximum benefit to all attendees.

We hope that your distinguished Institution, and your members, will be interested in our *Programme* and that we can cooperate in the accreditation of our Training Courses within your CLE programme. We look forward to your response at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,



Jean-François Thony  
President

The Siracusa International Institute for Criminal Justice and Human Rights