

## **A Statement to Demand Rwanda's Immediate Release of U.S. Attorney Peter Erlinder**

According to an article of New York Times on 28 May, 2010, a report from BBC at 18:47 on Friday 28 May, 2010, and other information sources, professor Peter Erlinder was arrested by the police of Rwanda in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda, on Friday 28 May, 2010. Prof. Peter Erlinder has been arrested on allegations of genocide denial in his statement at the International Tribunal and in his publications.

Prof. Peter Erlinder is a faculty member at William Mitchell College of Law in Minnesota, in the United States and a prominent criminal defense lawyer. In relation with the Japan Lawyers Association for Freedom, Erlinder as a post-chairman of the National Lawyers' Guild, an association of lawyers in the US, has been making great effort to develop friendly relationship between lawyers in Japan and the US. Also, Prof. Peter Erlinder taught us tradition and reality of the US legal system, especially focusing on a procedure of criminal trial in the US. He has been a friend with us for almost two decades.

According to the reports of mass media, Prof. Peter Erlinder is the one of the leading defence counsels for genocide suspects at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and entered Rwanda to represent the chairman of the United Democratic Forces of Rwanda, Victoire Ingabire Umuhoya who was charged for promoting genocide ideology.

Democratic nations of modern world must guarantee rights of a defense lawyer to represent his or her defendant. A defense lawyer shall not be arrested for representation of client or for speech in representation of client, whatever the client is suspected to have done. Authority of a nation to punish citizens can be legitimated only if the nation guarantees citizens due-process of law and freedom of speech.

The arrest of Peter Erlinder is nothing but a suppression of his activities as defendant lawyer. We, the Japan Lawyers Association for Freedom who is the oldest and one of the most influential lawyer's association in Japan and has been protecting democracy, due-process of law, right of defense lawyers to represent defendant and to speak for defendant, strongly demand the government of Rwanda to free Prof. Peter Erlinder, our honorable friend immediately.

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