Albie Sachs to Address Torture and Terrorism in South Africa

Albie Sachs, Andrew D. White Professor-at-Large at Cornell University and South African Constitutional Court Justice (1994-2009), will give a talk entitled "Liberating the Mind and Liberating the Heart: South African Experience in Dealing with Terrorism and Torture" on Thursday, August 29, 2013 at 4:30pm in G10 Biotechnology Building. The talk will be given as part of the Einaudi Center's Foreign Policy Distinguished Speaker Series and followed by a reception in foyer.

Albie Sachs (A.D. White Professor-at-Large 2012-2018) is a distinguished lawyer, judge, activist, scholar, and author. He is a renowned former South African Constitutional Court Justice and anti-apartheid activist.

At a young age, Albie was inspired by his father’s wish that he grow up to be a soldier and fight for liberation. Albie Sachs was at the forefront of the struggle for justice and freedom in South Africa during apartheid. Even through a period of exile and losing an arm and the sight in one eye from a bomb planted in his car, he strove to make South Africa a better place for all.

As a second year law student, at the age of 17 Sachs began his career in human rights activism. He was a part of the Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign at the University of Cape Town. Upon graduation and passing the Cape bar, his practice involved defending people “charged under racist statutes and repressive security laws.” His involvement in this line of work landed him in trouble with the police on several occasions, as he was subjected to imprisonment, solitary confinement, detention, and banning orders.

In the 1980s, Sachs helped to draft the African National Congress’ (ANC) Code of Conduct (along with its statues) with Oliver Tambo, the leader of the organization. He also worked to prepare a new democratic constitution for South Africa during this time.

In the 1990s, Albie Sachs became the National Executive of the ANC and a member of the Constitutional Committee. He took part in the negotiations that made South Africa a constitutional democracy, and he was appointed by Nelson Mandela to serve in the
Constitutional Court. Through his time as judge, he earned a reputation as the conscience of the Court. He made landmark judgments, including one that made South Africa the fifth nation to recognize same-sex marriage.

Since his time in the Constitutional Court, Sachs has remained an active scholar. He has written many published works, lectured at universities throughout the world, and has obtained several honorary degrees.

Albie Sachs maintains his initiatives to make the world a more just place. In 2012, he was appointed by the Kenyan government to serve on a board to vet Kenyan judges and magistrates, and remove those with “doubtful conduct.” This followed the adoption of a new Constitution in Kenya in 2010.

Albie Sachs’ determination has helped to bring much change to South African society, and his initiatives and enthusiasm are recognized on a worldwide scale. He has authored numerous books on human rights, including *The Jail Diary of Albie Sachs* (1978), *Running to Maputo* (1990), *The Strange Alchemy of Life and Law* (2009), and *The Soft Vengeance of a Freedom Fighter* (2011).

The Foreign Policy Distinguished Speaker Series features prominent leaders in international affairs who can address topical issues from a variety of perspectives. The Speaker Series is part of the Foreign Policy Initiative at Cornell University led by the Einaudi Center to maximize the intellectual impact of Cornell’s outstanding resources in this area.