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FOCUS ON CRIMINALIZATION

***Public lecture by HIV-positive judge from South Africa's top court
kicks off sold-out Toronto symposium on HIV, Law and Human Rights***

TORONTO, June 9, 2009 — Judges are used to handing down decisions from the bench on sensitive, complex issues, but this Friday, at Osgoode Hall in Toronto, a world-renowned judge will address a particularly controversial topic that has made headlines in recent months: the criminalization of people who have exposed others to HIV.

The public lecture by Justice Edwin Cameron of South Africa's Constitutional Court launches the 1st Annual Symposium on HIV, Law and Human Rights, hosted by the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network. More than 160 researchers, lawyers and community activists are registered to attend.

The issue strikes a personal chord for Justice Cameron, who made headlines himself in 1999 when he came out publicly as HIV-positive, a courageous gesture that especially resonated in his home country and across Africa, which has borne the brunt of the global epidemic and its twin shadows, denial and shame. To date, he remains the only government official in Africa to declare his or her HIV-positive status.

The next day following his public lecture, Justice Cameron will chair a panel at the Symposium titled "Challenging criminal charges for HIV transmission and exposure." Participants include leading criminal defence lawyers Marllys Edwardh and Lucie Joncas, advocate Michaela Clayton from Namibia, Angel Parks from the AIDS Committee of Toronto, as well as Professor Barry Adam from the University of Windsor, who is leading the first Canadian study on the impact of these criminal prosecutions.

"We are so pleased that Justice Cameron will be our keynote speaker," says the Legal Network's Executive Director, Richard Elliott. "He is a thoughtful and passionate speaker. His address will go beyond the headlines and examine more carefully the serious legal and public health policy considerations of criminalization."

Under Canadian criminal law, a person living with HIV may be guilty of a crime for not disclosing his or her HIV-positive status before engaging in activities that risk exposing another person to HIV. In Canada alone, charges have been laid against more than 90 people living with HIV. In recent years, the Legal Network has tracked an increase in the

criminalization of HIV exposure and has publicly expressed its concerns about the negative consequences of the ever-widening use of the criminal law with respect to HIV.

About the 1st Annual Symposium on HIV, Law and Human Rights

In response to the need for more information and debate, the Legal Network launched this annual forum for policy-makers, legal professionals, health researchers, activists, and people living with or vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. The day-long event features panel discussions and training workshops on advancing Canadian law and policy, based on scientific evidence and human rights principles (www.aidslaw.ca/symposium). Topics include: prisoners' right to HIV prevention, treatment and care; Canada's law on global access to affordable medicines; challenging criminal charges for HIV transmission and exposure; and emerging issues in Canada's drug policy.

About the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network

The Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network (www.aidslaw.ca) promotes the human rights of people living with and vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, in Canada and internationally, through research, legal and policy analysis, education, and community mobilization. The Legal Network is Canada's leading advocacy organization working on the legal and human rights issues raised by HIV/AIDS.

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Details for Justice Cameron's Public Lecture:

Friday, June 12, 2009 — 6:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Osgoode Hall

130 Queen St. West, Toronto

Justice Edwin Cameron of the Constitutional Court of South Africa will present a public lecture on "Criminalization of HIV Transmission and Human Rights"

Notes: Prior to Justice Cameron's public lecture, the Legal Network and Human Rights Watch will be presenting Awards for Action to two distinguished winners. Also, following Justice Cameron's presentation, there will be a cocktail reception.

Details for the 1st Annual Symposium on HIV, Law and Human Rights:

Saturday, June 13, 2009 — 9:00 a.m. to 5:15 p.m.

Courtyard by Marriott Hotel

475 Yonge St. (between Wood St. and Alexander St.), Toronto

Full schedule and list of presenters: www.aidslaw.ca/symposium

For further information, including a detailed biography and interviews:

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