



## Helena Kennedy

Helena Kennedy is a leading barrister and an expert in human rights law, civil liberties and constitutional issues. She is a member of the House of Lords and chair of Justice – the British arm of the International Commission of Jurists. She is a bencher of Gray's Inn and President of the School of Oriental and African studies, University of London. She was the chair of Charter 88, the Human Genetics Commission, and the British Council. She also chaired the Power Inquiry, which reported on the state of British democracy and produced the Power Report in 2006. She has received honours for her work on human rights from the governments of France and Italy and has been awarded more than thirty honorary doctorates.

In Helena's practice of law as a barrister – she is a member of the Doughty Street Chambers in London – she has acted in many of the most prominent cases of the last 30 years including the Brighton Bombing, the Michael Bettany espionage trial, the Guildford Four appeal and the bombing of the Israeli embassy. She has also acted in many homicide trials with a domestic setting. She was the British member of the recent International Bar Association Task Force on Terrorism. As a life peer she also participates in the House of Lords on issues concerned with human rights, civil liberties, social justice and culture. She has led the opposition to encroachments on the right to jury trial and for her courageous stand against the government was awarded the Spectator's Parliamentary Campaigner of the Year Award in 2000.

Helena was a seminal force in promoting equal opportunities for women at the Bar. Ahead of her time, she was a singular voice in the seventies and eighties, writing and broadcasting on the discrimination experienced by women in the law, as lawyers but also as users of the law - victims and defendants. She became a member of the Bar Council to champion women in the profession and called for research into the experience of women lawyers and particularly their absence on the Bench. This led to changes in policy in the Lord Chancellor's Department and codes of practice at the Bar. For her work for women she received the Times Newspaper's Lifetime Achievement award in 1999.

Helena was a commissioner on the National Commission for Education 1991 – 1993 and then chaired the Further Education Commission into Widening Participation which produced the seminal report Learning Works 1997. As a result the sector created a trust in her name - the Helena Kennedy Foundation - which provides bursaries to help the most disadvantaged in society move into Higher Education.

She is currently on the board of the Independent newspaper, a member of the Media Standards Trust, a trustee of the British Museum and of the Booker Trust. She is a patron of many charities, including Poets in the City, Safe Hands (a charity which supports maternal and infant health in Ethiopia), MAP (Medical Aid for Palestinians of which she is President) the Civil Liberties Trust and the Patients Association.

### Contact

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