



Graduation 2007

Oration given for Justice Erik Møse

Vice-Chancellor, the Senate has resolved that the degree of Doctor of the University be conferred upon Justice Erik Møse, judge of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.

Judge Møse is a lawyer and judge of great distinction. A graduate of the University of Oslo, Norway and the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, Erik Møse's career has been motivated by the conviction that justice and the rule of law are essential values in the search for lasting peace in our world. His career has combined working for these ideals in his native Norway, at European level and through the United Nations.

After serving as Head of Division in the Ministry of Justice he worked as a barrister of the Supreme Court before becoming a judge in 1985. In 1993, he was appointed to the Oslo Court of Appeal. Prior to his judicial appointment Erik Møse represented Norway as a human rights expert in the Council of Europe and the United Nations on a regular basis. He appeared before the former European Commission and the European Court of Human Rights, the United Nations Racial Discrimination Committee and the United Nations Human Rights Committee. He participated in the drafting process of a number of additions to the European Convention on Human Rights and was Chairman also of the Committee of Experts that drafted the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture. And Chancellor, somehow, alongside these demanding roles he found time to be a lecturer in human rights law at the University of Oslo and to conduct research and to publish. He wrote a leading textbook on human rights, which, I am happy to say he completed at Essex in 2002 while a visiting Fellow at our Human Rights Centre.

But Justice Møse's greatest achievements, without doubt, followed his election to serve as a judge of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in 1999. At a time when we watch with horror and frustration the ongoing killing and suffering in Darfur that the world seems powerless to stop, or with equal horror we watch the daily toll in human lives from the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, we might be forgiven for forgetting what happened in Rwanda a little over a decade ago. But we should not forget. In 1994 the world witnessed genocide when some 800,000 Rwandans were killed, during a horrific campaign of extermination directed against Tutsis and moderate Hutus. The United Nations Security Council, which shamefully proved incapable of preventing the slaughter, in its aftermath created a Tribunal to prosecute those who were responsible for that genocide, and to punish those guilty of crimes against humanity, and war crimes. The Rwanda International Criminal Tribunal was established in the neighbouring country of Tanzania at Arusha. Judge Møse, over his nine years service on secondment from Norway, has twice served as President of that Tribunal. His latest term ended in May of this year although he continues to act as a trial judge. His re-election as a President for a second term by his fellow judges was clear recognition both of his exceptional legal and people skills, as well as his dedication and leadership.

The Rwanda Tribunal, in parallel with the similar tribunal established in 1995 to try and punish the ethnic cleansing and genocide nearer to home in Bosnia Herzegovina, is carrying out ground breaking work. Since the first trial in 1997 until March of this year, the tribunal in Rwanda has tried some 33 suspects – including the first ever conviction of a Head of Government for genocide. Twenty-seven people are currently on trial and 9 are awaiting trial.

Time allows mention of only two very important cases in which Judge Møse was the presiding judge. The first was in fact the first acquittal of a suspect by the Tribunal due to lack of evidence. This important case refuted any criticism that the Tribunal could only deliver barrack room justice and established its standing as an impartial and true institution of law.

The second important case presided over by Erik Møse is known as the Media Case. For the first time since the Second World War, the role of the media in the context of mass criminality and war crimes came before an international court. The accused were not warlords or government officials, but three media executives - owners of a radio station and a newspaper. The media were accused not only of broadcasting murderous incitement in anti-Tutsi propaganda but actually directing Hutu militia to where Tutsi were hiding, and thus playing an active role in their deaths. The Court held the accused guilty. The media had committed genocide through their instigation of the mass killings and these media executives were accountable for those broadcasts. This ruling addressed both freedom of expression and responsibility for fomenting mass murder and it reverberated around the world.

In addition to setting new global standards, Erik Møse has proved himself a remarkable manager of the Tribunal itself. With many different international judges and administrators from around the world gathered in Arusha in a court that was a completely new experience for all, there was inevitable space for misunderstandings and clashes of personalities. Through his calm but firm leadership Eric Møse succeeded in overcoming such challenges faced by such a unique court. One voice from inside the Tribunal tells of how other judges accustomed to rather more hierarchy and status were astonished that the President's door was always open, even to the lowliest of staff servicing the Tribunal. It would be difficult to over state the regard in which he is held by all those working in the Court.

The other test Erik Møse faced during his presidency was the pressing deadline imposed by the Security Council by which the Tribunal is required to finish- 2008 for trials and 2010 for all appeals. He has addressed the many challenges this deadline presents with dedication and skill. He saw the dominant aim of the Tribunal as delivering justice to the accused, to the victims and to the international community by ensuring fair trials without undue delay. Measures introduced under his presidency to accelerate the pace of trials underline his personal determination to conclude the Tribunal's work on time. Erik Møse's stewardship of the Rwanda Tribunal has been recognised by the United Nations Security Council and praised in its reports.

When he completes his work next year he will have done immense service to the victims of the Rwanda genocide. Survivors of these indescribable events will have had some comfort from his efforts, along with those of his fellow judges, to bring the leading perpetrators to justice. The international community, but also all of us, who hope for a future world of peace and justice for our children, will be in his debt.

It is for these achievements that the Senate has resolved to confer upon Judge Erik Møse the degree of Doctor of the University.

Chancellor, I present to you, Judge Erik Møse.

Orator: Kevin Boyle