



HUMAN RIGHTS AT HOME

Implications for U.S. Leadership

Witness Biographies

Ambassador (ret.) Ian Kelly

Former U.S. Permanent Representative to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

Ian Kelly is Ambassador (ret.) in Residence at Northwestern University. He is a retired senior foreign service officer who last served as the United States Ambassador to Georgia, from 2015 to 2018. He previously served as the U.S. Ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) from 2010 to 2013. In 2012-2013, he was also the Co-Chair of the OSCE Minsk Group, the diplomatic mechanism set up to resolve the conflict in the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region.

Prior to these ambassadorships, Kelly held a variety of high-level positions at the U.S. State Department, including serving as spokesman of the Department (2009-2010). He has extensive experience working on issues relating to NATO, Russia, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Balkans. He also has a PhD in Russian studies from Columbia University.

Malcolm Momodou Jallow

Member of Parliament (Sweden) and General Rapporteur on Combating Racism and Intolerance, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

Momodou Malcolm Jallow (Sweden) is currently a member of the Swedish Parliament and the committee of civil affairs. He has also served as a member of the standing committee on finance and taxation. As a member of the Council of Europe's parliamentary assembly, Mr. Jallow is currently the general rapporteur for combating racism and intolerance in Europe.

He has served as a city councilor in the city of Malmö, but also the as the vice chair of the European Network Against Racism (ENAR). Mr. Jallow is the founder and chair of the Pan African Movement for Justice (PMJ) (Afrosvenskarnas forum för rättvisa), an NGO advocating for the promotion of non-discrimination and protection of human and fundamental rights with specific focus on the rights of people of African descent.

Mr. Jallow was awarded by the civil rights leader Rev Jesse Jackson with the 2018 Global Leadership Award for his tireless efforts and outstanding leadership in advocating for a just and diverse global society freed from discrimination and intolerance.

He has led a landmark campaign against Afrophobia, hate speech, and hate crimes against people of African descent & Black Europeans (PAD & BE) leading to several successful court cases. As the former chair of the ENAR steering group on people of African descent in Europe, he has tirelessly advocated for an EU framework strategy on PAD and BE.

As a valuable alum of the Transatlantic Inclusion Leaders Network advancing diverse young leaders in Europe and the United States, Mr. Jallow has led several delegations of young leaders, activists, and politicians from Europe to the USA to build coalitions across the Atlantic. Mr. Jallow has also been awarded the prestigious 2016 Community Healer award for his outstanding contributions to the struggle for human rights of Europeans of African ancestry.

Nkechi Taifa

Founding Principal & CEO, The Taifa Group, LLC

Nkechi Taifa is founder and principal of The Taifa Group, LLC. She convenes and directs the Justice Roundtable, an advocacy coalition advancing progressive justice system reform, and serves as Senior Fellow for the Center for Justice at Columbia University. She was recently appointed to the board of the Corrections Information Council, which provides oversight over District residents imprisoned throughout the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Taifa served as Advocacy Director for Criminal Justice at the Open Society Foundations and Open Society Policy Center for 16 years, focusing on federal sentencing reform, law enforcement accountability, prison reform, reentry, executive clemency, and racial justice.

Over the course of her career she has also served as legislative and policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union and the Women's Legal Defense Fund; founding director of Howard University School of Law's award-winning Equal Justice Program; staff attorney for the National Prison Project; Office Manager and Network Organizer for the Washington Office on Africa; and as an elementary school teacher at NationHouse Watoto School. Taifa has spoken extensively across the country on justice reform and human rights issues, and has testified before the U.S. Congress, the U.S. Sentencing Commission, the Council of the District of Columbia and the American Bar Association Justice Kennedy Commission. She has served on the boards of numerous organizations, as consultant to various groups and projects, and as an appointed commissioner and chair of the District of Columbia Commission on Human Rights.

A native Washingtonian, Nkechi Taifa received her Juris Doctorate from George Washington University Law School and graduated magna cum laude from Howard University.