



**SEMI-ANNUAL CONFERENCE
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA
JULY 13-14, 2009**

Military Justice: Promoting Human Rights And Accountability in War

Tuesday, July 14, 2009, 10:45 – 12:15pm

Facilitator :

Robert Goldman, Professor of Law, Louis C. James Scholar, Washington College of Law at American University

Panelists:

Eugene Fidell, President, National Institute of Military Justice; Sarah Holewinski, Director, Campaign for Innocent Victims in Conflict (CIVIC)

Session Organizer:

Merril Sovner, Program Officer (Office of the President), Open Society Institute; Sophia Conroy, Program Officer (U.S. Programs). Open Society Institute

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Since the U.S. entered wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and opened the Guantanamo Bay detention facility, human rights activists have begun to delve into questions of military tribunals, humanitarian law and civilian casualties. Two NGOs focus on this exclusively: NIMJ examines accountability systems inside the US military and how to improve them; and CIVIC, works with the US military, NATO, the UN and others to promote mechanisms for dealing with civilian casualties. Both groups utilize the Laws of War in their efforts to promote human rights within the military, which can be a first line of defense against gross abuses of power and civilian casualties. This session introduced key debates and challenges in advancing human rights and accountability within the military system.