The Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaims “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights,” regardless of “race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.” The Declaration forms the bedrock of international human rights law, which includes the rights to due process and a fair trial for anyone accused of a crime. Alas, many so accused are human rights defenders themselves—those who seek to vindicate the human rights of others and, in so doing, are targeted by hostile governments.

The American Bar Association (ABA) Center for Human Rights, through its Justice Defenders Program, which supports human rights defenders worldwide, has collaborated with the international law firm, Brown Rudnick LLP, to create this International Due Process and Fair Trial Manual as a quick and ready resource for use by human rights defenders anywhere in the world. The Manual is not intended to replace in-depth legal research or analysis tailored to a specific case, but provides a human-rights-law framework for use in any courtroom, police station, or prison.

The Manual is the result of hundreds of hours of excellent work donated pro bono by Brown Rudnick and its dedicated team of thirty lawyers and staff. The ABA Center for Human Rights thanks them all for this important contribution to the defense of human rights.

Deborah Enix-Ross, Chair
ABA Center for Human Rights
Spring 2014