

## Global Justice Center In Brief

### About Us

The Global Justice Center (GJC) is a unique non-governmental organization dedicated to enforcing the affirmative rights of women to political representation.

**Our mission:** to leverage the power of women to be the active makers and enforcers of public policy and law and equal partners in all government and judicial bodies.

**Our vision:** a world where the definition of democracy presumes that women are legally entitled to be partners in decision-making processes in government, parliament, cease-fire negotiations, peacekeeping forces, war crimes tribunals, constitution-drafting committees, judicial bodies and non-governmental organizations.

Women comprise more than half of the world's population. Yet when it comes to rule of law, they are nearly invisible. Women only comprise 16% of legislatures and parliaments worldwide.

This inequity represents a violation of international human rights law and is a root cause of the subjugation of and discrimination against women across the globe.

International laws mandate equal representation for women in government. Women across the globe must learn how they can use international law to secure their future. The GJC seeks to provide the legal tools and knowledge necessary to break the historically male stranglehold on national legislatures, cabinets, courts and other government entities and ensure women their rightful place in decision making bodies that affect their lives.

Global Justice Center activities include:

- Identifying activists, leaders and judges and training them in the human rights laws which mandate political rights and equality
- Using human rights laws as strategic tools to restructure national and international governance bodies
- Advocating for the enforcement of existing laws and treaties which give women rights to political power, including affirmative steps such as legislative quotas
- Making itself available to women and other leaders to serve as an "in-house legal counsel" on international rights, including on United Nations actions and reports, litigation options, model legislation, and strategic alliances at conferences or meetings
- Providing leaders with cutting-edge, hands-on, creative legal tools that advance the political rights of women and enforcement of human rights globally
- Producing documented research that supports advocacy of these concerns in the media, the parliaments, or the courts
- Creating model constitutions and agendas for training national judges on international law and women's rights

## About Our Logo

Our logo illustrates the inequality between the percentage of women in the world's population and their representation in government. The right side is 51% blue, matching the percentage of women in the world's population. The global average for women in government, however, is a mere 16%, illustrated by the percentage of blue on the left side. Our goal is to one day see these lines even, showing the amount of women represented in government accurately reflects the population of women in the world. Only then will women have taken their rightful place in national and international governance bodies and transformed democracy worldwide.

## Who We Are

### Janet Benshoof

#### Founder and President, Global Justice Center

Janet Benshoof is a human rights lawyer with extensive experience both internationally and in the United States. She has successfully defended people's rights to free expression, freedom of religion, freedom from discrimination, and for the reproductive/ privacy rights of women. Ms. Benshoof has litigated constitutional cases in over forty states and the United States Supreme Court. Currently, as Director of the Global Justice Center, she works with women leaders in transitional democracies to enforce the international legal guarantees for women's political and legal rights. The National Law Journal has repeatedly selected Ms. Benshoof as one of the "100 Most Influential Lawyers in America," and she has received numerous awards in the fields of constitutional law, reproductive and women's rights

Ms. Benshoof, originally from the mid-west, graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of Minnesota and received her Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School. She was the Director of the American Civil Liberties Reproductive Freedom Project from 1977-1992 spearheading all the national legal efforts to advance constitutional protections for gender equality and reproductive choice. She is the founder and past President of the first international human rights organization specializing in legal reform of reproductive/privacy laws, now the Center for Reproductive Rights (CRR). In the first ten years, from its founding in 1992, CRR obtained consultative status to the UN, established legal projects in over 40 countries, and won major constitutional cases in the United States Supreme Court.

Ms. Benshoof has taught international human rights law and gender at Bard College and Harvard Law School, as well as in Burma and Thailand. She is the senior legal advisor to WAFDI (Women's Alliance for a Democratic Iraq), and she has conducted legal trainings on international rights for women in Baghdad. She also advises the major Burmese exile groups and has taught international rights in Rangoon, and for exiled lawyers in Thailand. She is the chair of the Gender Justice Advisory Board, and a trustee of Women's Link Worldwide, an international legal organization focusing on women's international human rights litigation.

In 1992, Ms. Benshoof was selected as a recipient of the prestigious Macarthur Foundation fellowship in recognition of her unique contributions to advancing women's legal rights. She has published numerous articles in the Harvard Law Review, The Journal of the American Medical Association, The New York University Journal of International Law and Policy, among other respected publications. She has appeared on the BBC, the CBS evening news, Good Morning America, ABC evening news, Nightline, and McNeil/Lehr. Ms. Benshoof is a member of the Council of Foreign Relations, and served on the Burma taskforce in 2003.