

Elise Groulx Diggs practices international human rights law and international criminal law from a base in Washington DC. She advises corporations on human rights risks in their strategic projects and supply chains. A recognized expert in international criminal law, she also assists businesses in assessing the legal risks of operating in fragile states and conflict zones. She advises corporations, law firms and organisations in the United States, Canada, France, United Kingdom and in Spanish-speaking countries.

She is [associate tenant at Doughty Street Chambers](#) in London and “Of Counsel” to the Endo et Associés, based in Montreal, Quebec.

She is also Principal of the international consulting group, BI for Business Integrity & Partners LLC, based in Washington with partners in Kinshasa (DRC), Dakar (Senegal) and France as well as partners in England. She also joined the Advisory Board of Lawyers for Better Business ([L4BB.org](#)).

Elise offers legal advisory and training services to support corporations conducting human rights due diligence, audits and social risk assessments. She is an expert at helping businesses and financial institutions to assess their legal exposures related to business operations and supply chains in conflict-affected regions. She has advised multinational corporations on a variety of issues including: due diligence assessments for investments in conflict-prone countries; business complicity in war crimes; corporate criminal liability; and remediation programs for victims of human rights violations occurring near mining projects.

Elise convenes the Advisory Board of the Business and Human Rights project of the American Bar Association Center for Human Rights and has spoken on these issues for the last 10 years. She organized a major conference, held in Paris in March 2013, on International Corporate Liability in Conflict Zones jointly with the leaders of the French National Bar Council (Conseil National des Barreaux/CNB), the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Quai d'Orsay) and the American Bar Association (ABA).

She has a track record of convening and mobilizing the international legal profession, dating from 1996 when she first entered the field of International Criminal Law (ICL). She has been a respected voice for the defence and an advocate for the international legal profession at the International Criminal Court (ICC), leading the creation of the International Criminal Bar (ICB) in 2002.

A precursor organization led by Elise, the International Criminal Defence Attorneys Association (ICDAA), was responsible for proposing essential provisions on the rights of the defense that were entrenched in the Rules of Procedure and Evidence of the ICC in

1999-2000. The ICDA participated in the establishment of a legal aid system in Afghanistan from 2005 until 2011 and did planning work for a similar legal aid project in Haiti.

Elise spent much of her career as a criminal defence attorney in Montréal, litigating complex court cases and engaging in plea-bargaining and negotiations. As a public defender for nine years, she represented thousands of indigent clients. She then started her own practice and handled cases dealing with complex legal policy issues, notably police brutality and a "self defence review" of the cases of women who claimed to have killed their partners in legitimate self-defence. She also sat on a Military Justice Panel advising the Judge Advocate General of Canada for three years.

Elise is licensed to practice law as a barrister and solicitor in Québec (Canada), Paris (France) and European legal institutions including the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. She is also a licensed legal consultant in the State of New York.

She was educated in Montréal and has a BA in Political Science from the Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) and a law degree, with distinction, from the Université de Montréal. She has a certificate in criminology and comparative criminal law from the Université of Paris II (Panthéon-Assas) and an L.L.M. in criminology and comparative criminal law from the London School of Economics (LSE).

In 2009, she was selected to participate in a workshop in the Advanced Study of Nonviolent Conflict at the Tufts University Fletcher Summer Institute in Boston, Mass. She trained to become an accredited mediator in 2010.

Current Professional Activities:

- Associate Tenant, [Doughty Street Chambers](#), London
- Listed in the international [Directory of business & human rights lawyers](#)
- Sits the editorial board for [Lawyers for Better Business \(L4BB.org\)](#), 2014)
- Principal, [BI for Business Integrity & Partners LLC](#), Washington DC
- Convenor of the Advisory Board of the Business and Human Rights Project, American Bar Association (ABA) Washington DC
- Officer of the Corporate Social Responsibility Committee of the International Bar Association (IBA)
- Founding Member and member of the Ethics Committee of the think tank on issues of security and development [Cercle K2](#) (2014) Paris, France

Professional Distinctions:

- Recipient of the Walter S Tarnopolsky Human Rights Award (Vancouver, 2012), recognizing her outstanding contributions to domestic and international human rights
- Canadian Civil Liberties Association (CCLA) advocacy award (June 2012) for her contribution to the rule of law and the defence of civil liberties
- Champion of Justice Award, National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (NACDL), USA (2004)
- Medal of the Paris Bar (2002)
- Medal of the Québec Bar (2003)
- Medal of Université de Montréal's law faculty (2003)
- Received the title Advocatus Emeritus (Ad.E) from the Québec Bar Association in 2007; this distinction is the equivalent of Queen's Counsel (QC) in Québec, Canada
- Founding President and now Honorary President of the International Criminal Bar (ICB)
- Board of Directors, Montreal Council on Foreign Relations (CORIM) (2005-2012)
- Founded (1997) and presided the International Criminal Defence Attorneys Association (ICDAA) for over 15 years
- Honorary member, Bar of Draguignan (France)
- Honorary professor, University Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (Lima, Peru)