

# Elisa Massimino

President and Chief Executive Officer

Elisa Massimino was named President and Chief Executive Officer of Human Rights First in September 2008. Human Rights First is one of the nation's leading human rights advocacy organizations. Established in 1978, Human Rights First works in the United States and abroad to promote respect for human rights and the rule of law. Massimino joined Human Rights First as a staff attorney in 1991 to help establish the Washington office. From 1997 to 2008 she served as the organization's Washington Director. Previously, Massimino was a litigator in private practice at the Washington law firm of Hogan & Hartson, where she was *pro bono* counsel in many human rights cases. Before joining the legal profession, she taught philosophy at several universities in Michigan.

As Human Rights First's President and Chief Executive Officer, Massimino provides overall leadership and strategic direction for the organization and manages its 70 person staff in New York and Washington.

Massimino has a distinguished record of human rights advocacy in Washington. As a national authority on human rights law and policy, she has testified before Congress dozens of times and writes frequently for mainstream publications and specialized journals. For the last five years since 2008, the influential Washington newspaper *The Hill* named her one of the most effective public advocates in the country.

Massimino appears regularly in major media outlets and speaks to audiences around the country. She has been quoted in numerous print and online news sources, including: *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Times*, *USA Today*, and other global publications. She has also been featured on ABC News, NBC Dateline, The Newshour with Jim Lehrer, MSNBC, CNN, National Public Radio, BBC and many other news outlets.

The daughter of a nuclear submarine commander, Massimino was instrumental in the organization's recent effort to assemble a group of retired generals and admirals to speak out publicly against policies authorizing the torture of prisoners in U.S. custody. This coalition of military leaders has played a pivotal role in the effort to restore compliance with the Geneva Conventions standard for treatment of prisoners.

Massimino holds a law degree from the University of Michigan where she was an editor of the *Journal of Law Reform*. She holds a Master of Arts in philosophy from Johns Hopkins University, and is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas. Massimino serves as an adjunct professor at Georgetown University Law Center, where she teaches human rights advocacy, and has taught international human rights law at the University of Virginia and refugee law at the George Washington University School of Law. She is a member of the bar of the United States Supreme Court.