When he retired from the High Court of Australia on 2 February 2009, Michael Kirby was Australia’s longest serving judge. His appointment to the High Court of Australia came in 1996 and he served thirteen years. In later years, he was Acting Chief Justice of Australia twice.

In 2013, he was appointed Chair of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights Violations in North Korea. The Commission delivered its report in February this year, documenting wide-ranging and ongoing crimes against humanity and urging a referral to International Criminal Court.