



UIA Union Internationale des Avocats
International Association of Lawyers
Unión Internacional de Abogados

« Rassembler les avocats du monde • Bringing Together the World's Lawyers • Reunir a los abogados del mundo »

STATEMENT

Bilbao, January 26, 2019

2019 DAY OF THE ENDANGERED LAWYER

TURKISH AUTHORITIES MUST IMMEDIATELY CEASE PERSECUTION AGAINST LAWYERS

Upon the occasion of the Executive Committee meeting of the Union Internationale des Avocats (UIA – International Association of Lawyers), convened in Bilbao, Spain, on January 26, 2019 and in solidarity with the 9th Day of the Endangered Lawyer, we express our serious concern about the recurrent persecution, prosecution, interrogation, detention and torture of our Turkish lawyers simply in the course of the exercise of their profession.

We deplore that, over the course of several recent years, hundreds of lawyers in Turkey have been particularly targeted by the misapplication of counter-terrorism legislation, and, more recently, in response to the emergency decrees enacted following the failed coup of July 2016. We note with regret, the existence of an alarming pattern of identification of lawyers with their clients and/or their clients' interests or causes, and consequent prosecution of lawyers for the same or related crimes attributed to their clients.

According to reports, in 2017 alone, approximately 570 lawyers were arrested, 1480 were prosecuted and 79 were sentenced to long prison terms. Nearly 34 bar associations have been closed on the ground of alleged affiliation with a terrorist organization¹. Some of these organisations often represented victims of torture and other forms of abuse.

Today, we join our voice to the international legal community's movement to show our Turkish colleagues that we stand with them in solidarity. We will not remain silent!

We also express our support to all bar associations in Turkey that embrace their role as guardian of the core values of the legal profession and that, despite the extremely difficult circumstances they often face, fight for their own independence and fiercely defend lawyers who struggle for justice and the rule of law.

The mission of lawyers is crucial in every State in order to ensure the rule of law, the good administration of justice and adequate protection of rights for all. According to the UN Principles on the Role of Lawyers, it is the task of States to ensure that lawyers can adequately carry out this mission.

¹ OHCHR Report on the impact of the state of emergency on human rights in Turkey, including an update on the South-East, March 2018.

It is clear that the widespread and systematic unfair and harsh attacks against Turkish lawyers is aimed at preventing lawyers from freely and independently performing their professional activities; creating an atmosphere of fear among the legal community; jeopardizing the representation of clients; and endangering the human and due process rights of all Turkish citizens.

In order to ensure justice and the rule in law in Turkey, we therefore call upon Turkish authorities to fully comply with the principles enshrined in the UN Principles on the Role of Lawyers and

- **cease all persecution, prosecution, harassment or intimidation against lawyers based only on the exercise of their professional activities;**
- **ensure that all those lawyers who have been arbitrarily detained are immediately released;**
- **take all necessary steps, including at the legislative level, to ensure that lawyers can practise their profession independently and without actual or threatened harm, prosecution or retaliation.**

More about the UIA

UIA is the global and multi-cultural organisation for the legal profession, established in 1927 and now with members in 110 countries, which provides professional development, learning, promotes the rule of law, defends the independence and freedom of lawyers worldwide, and emphasizes friendship, collegiality and networking among members.

For more information go to: www.uianet.org - uiacentre@uianet.org
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