



The UIA Institute for the Rule of Law

STATEMENT

Paris, 15 April 2025

UIA IROL Expresses Concerns over Further Attacks on Legal Professionals in the United States

The Institute for the Rule of Law of the Union Internationale des Avocats (UIA-IROL) has learnt with the greatest concern of another attack from the Trump administration against the legal profession.

Lawyer Amir Makled has been arbitrarily detained and questioned by federal agents at the Detroit Metro Airport on 6 April 2025.

According to the information received, Mr. Makled was returning from a spring break trip with his family when he was detained as he went through a passport screening. Mr. Makled was reportedly led by two federal agents to an interrogation room. The federal agents, who appeared to know that Mr. Makled was a lawyer dealing with “high-profile cases”, ordered him to hand over his phone. Mr. Makled refused to let them have it, despite the agents’ insistence, since it contained a considerable volume of privileged information from his clients. After nearly two hours, Mr. Makled was released without further incident, but the agents did view the contact list on his phone.

Amir Makled is a civil rights and criminal defense attorney from Dearborn, Michigan.

We understand that he was targeted for his representation of demonstrators arrested in 2024 at a pro-Palestinian protest on the campus of the University of Michigan.

This incident appears to be the latest attack on lawyers¹ in relation to their professional functions and, more specifically, the clients they represent, the legal positions they take on behalf of those clients, and/or their legal work on issues which may be contrary to the federal government’s position.

The use of intimidating tactics to unlawfully access electronic devices containing privileged information is especially concerning. UIA-IROL notes that any infringement upon the integrity of the client-lawyer relationship and confidentiality, expressly protected by the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (Principle 22), gravely undermines the Rule of Law.

These continuous attacks against the legal profession constitute a threat to its independence and undermine the right of lawyers to perform their professional functions without fear of harassment, intimidation, hindrance, or improper interference, as protected under the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (Principle 16). They give rise to a significant chilling effect on the legal profession and severely harm access to justice by depriving all citizens, and the most vulnerable ones in particular, of their right to effective legal representation.

¹ See previous statements signed or co-signed by UIA-IROL on this issue [here](#) and [here](#).

These attacks on lawyers constitute an unparalleled assault on the Rule of Law. UIA-IROL therefore calls upon the relevant US authorities to immediately cease all acts of intimidation, harassment or retaliation against lawyers, and, in accordance with constitutional and international standards, to guarantee that lawyers are permitted to effectively carry out their professional activities without fear of undue interference, regardless of the clients or positions they defend.

UIA-IROL will continue to follow developments with the utmost attention.

More about UIA-IROL

The Institute for the Rule of Law of the Union Internationale des Avocats (UIA-IROL) promotes the Rule of Law and supports and defends, in particular, (1) lawyers, judges and human rights defenders who are harassed, threatened and/or persecuted in the exercise of their professions, (2) the independence of the legal and judicial professions, and (3) the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, especially in defense of human rights.

For more information go to: www.uanet.org - uiacentre@uanet.org
Contact person: Julie ROSA, Communication & Digital Strategy Manager - jrosa@uanet.org