

International day of the endangered lawyer (January 24th)

The International day of the endangered lawyer is an initiative of the National Council of Bars (CNB, France), the World observatory for defence rights and attacks against lawyers (IDHAE), European democrat lawyers (AED), Lawyers Without Borders (ASF), Defence Without Borders – Solidarity Lawyers (DSF-AS) and the International Observatory for Endangered Lawyers (OIAD).

This year, the 9th International day of the endangered lawyer was dedicated to Turkish lawyers. It is the second time (after 2012) that the focus of this international day is on Turkish lawyers, who have been in a very difficult situation for years.

Since the assassination of many lawyers in the 1990s, the situation did not improve for Turkish lawyers. In 2011, almost 50 of them were arrested because they had defended Abdullah Öcalan, founder of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), who was arrested in 1999 and condemned (in 2002) to lifelong imprisonment. Some of his lawyers were detained for more than 2,5 years; their trial is still ongoing. In January 2013, another mass arrest was launched against the Progressive Lawyers Association (ÇHD): 22 lawyers were detained from 9 to 14 months. These two mass arrests were followed by other operations against 12 lawyers in 2016. Two lawyers of the Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD) were imprisoned for more than 6 months; other members of this association are still under investigation.

The 2016 failed coup d'état initiated a toughening of the repression against lawyers. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 570 lawyers had been arrested in 2017; 1470 were facing prosecution, and 79 had been condemned to long-term prison sentences. These lawyers are generally accused of belonging or supporting the Gülen movement. The state of emergency allowed the government to take decrees dissolving lawyers associations such as the Progressive Lawyers Association (ÇHD), the Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD) and the Mesopotamian Lawyers Association (MHD). Prosecutions against these lawyers have heavy consequences: prohibition to represent their clients in some political cases, judicial control, prohibition to travel... In 2018 only, more than 100 lawyers were condemned.

For this 2019 edition of the International Day, demonstrations were organized in several French cities. In Paris, it was held in front of the Turkish embassy; Marie-Aimée Peyron (President of the bar) and Basile Ader (Vice-president) were present. The Bar association of Lyon did the same in front of the Turkish consulate. Protests were organized in Istanbul, Antalya, Bordeaux, Montpellier, Brussels, Madrid, Barcelona, London, Aberdeen, Roma, Venice, Vienna, Berlin, Hamburg, Amsterdam, The Hague, New York, Vancouver, Athens, and Manilla.

The OIAD warmly thanks all the lawyers who took action for this International day; it reaffirms its full solidarity with lawyers who are victim of state repression in Turkey.

For more information on the situation of lawyers in Turkey: on our website you will find the report of an observation mission (organized by the OIAD and the Italian Association of Democrat Lawyers) to the trial of 18 Turkish lawyers accused of terrorist propaganda; this trial was held

in Istanbul on November 28th, 2018: <http://www.protect-lawyers.com/oiad-content/uploads/2019/02/report-doc-ohp-8-nov.pdf>

Conference of the Consiglio Nazionale Forense on endangered lawyers

On the occasion of the International day of the endangered lawyer (January 24th), the Consiglio Nazionale Forense organized in its headquarters (Roma) a conference during which Benan Molu, a Turkish lawyer specialized in international law, exposed the situation of lawyers in her country. This conference, to which the OIAD participated, was inaugurated by a speech by Mr Andrea Mascherin, President of the CNF.

Mr Roberto giovane di Girasole (member of the CNF Commission of international relations and the Mediterranean) and Ms Barbara Spinelli, from the Italian Association of Democrat lawyers (ANGD), presented a handbook on international trial observation missions, such as the one that was held during the trial of 18 Turkish lawyers in Istanbul (November 8th 2018).

The conference can be watched [here](#).

Alerts of the OIAD

The OIAD recently spoke on behalf of four lawyers whose situation is of serious concern.

➤ **Egypt : Mr Massoum Marzouk**

Mr Massoum Marzouk is an Egyptian lawyer defending human rights, and an opponent to President Abdel Fatah al-Sissi, whom he criticized several times for his policy of arbitrary arrests and enforced disappearances. He was arrested without a warrant, and put in jail on August 23rd, 2018, after having proposed on Facebook that a referendum be held on the regime's policies; no trial was held and no date was communicated for a future hearing. Mr Marzouk's life is seriously threatened, as he is very ill and needs an urgent surgery, which authorities purposely refuse.

More information on our website: <https://www.protect-lawyers.com/en/lawyer/massoum-marzouk-2/>

➤ **Crimea : Mr Emil Kurbedinov**

Mr Emil Kurbedinov is a Crimean lawyer who defended human rights in many sensitive cases; he notably defended Crimean Tatars. On December 18th, 2018, he was targeted by a directive from the Crimean branch of the Russian Federation's Ministry of Justice. This directive excludes Mr Kurbedinov from the Central Bar of Crimea. It constitutes a serious interference of the Russian executive, and has heavy consequences as it will lead to the deprivation of Mr Kurbedinov's lawyer status.

More details on his situation: <https://www.protect-lawyers.com/en/lawyer/emil-kurbedinov/>

➤ **France : Mr William Bourdon**

Mr William Bourdon is an anti-corruption lawyer who founded the association Sherpa in 2001. He represented the NGO Transparency International in the “ill-gotten wealth case”, which led in 2017 to the conviction of Equatorial Guinea’s President’s eldest son, Teodorin Obiang Nguema.

On January 23rd 2019, M. Bourdon was targeted by an arrest warrant issued by the Malabo Court, alongside with M. Daniel Lebègue, former president of Transparency International. The warrant relies on charges of money laundering and financing of terrorism. It is considered by 10 anti-corruption organizations as retaliation against persons who contributed to M. Obiang Nguema’s conviction.

For more information: <https://www.protect-lawyers.com/en/french-anti-corruption-lawyer-targeted-by-an-arrest-warrant-in-equatorial-guinea/>

➤ **Iran : Mr Amir Salar Davoodi**

Mr Amir Salar Davoodi is an Iranian lawyer who defended several political prisoners and members of religious or ethnic minorities in his country. On November 20th, 2018, he was arrested in his office by intelligence officers. His arrest, as well as the search of both his office and home, was conducted without any warrant. Some of his work documents were confiscated.

Mr Davoodi’s conditions of detention are deeply worrisome, as he is kept in isolation since his arrest. He was not allowed to consult either his lawyer or the prison doctor. Local human rights organizations evoke credible evidence of acts of torture.

His case is part of a large offensive of the Iranian regime against lawyers. More information on our website: <https://www.protect-lawyers.com/en/lawyer/amir-salar-davoodi/>

Signature of a statement demanding acquittal of lawyer Wang Quanzhang (China)

Mr Wang Quanzhang is a Chinese lawyer and human rights defender. He defended Falun Gong practitioners, who are targeted by the regime since 1999. On January 28th, 2019, he was condemned by a Tianjin Court to 4,5 years of imprisonment and 5 years of deprivation of his political rights. He was accused of “subversion of state power”, notably for having written investigation reports on the human rights situation in China, and for having organized demonstrations in Jiansanjiang in 2013.

Mr Wang Quanzhang was arrested in August 2015; he was detained *incommunicado* until his trial, which was held *in camera*. The China Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group (CHRLCG), which published the Statement, reported acts of torture and ill-treatment during his detention.

The common statement is available on our website: <https://www.protect-lawyers.com/en/statement-demanding-an-acquittal-of-lawyer-wang-quanzhang/>

Participation of the OIAD to the public hearing of the European parliament's Subcommittee on human rights about "attacks on the legal profession and lawyers defending human rights"

On February 19th, 2019, the European Parliament (Brussels) organized a public hearing on the risks faced by lawyers who defend human rights. The hearing was directed by Mr Pier Antonio Panzeri, Head of the Subcommittee on human rights.

The OIAD, as well as delegations from the German and Spanish Bar Associations, the European Bar Associations Council (CCBE), and the NGO The Rights Practice, took part in this event.

Mr Richard Sédillot, Head of the Human rights committee of the National Council of Bars (France), and representative of the OIAD during this hearing, exposed the situation of lawyers in Turkey. Ms Botagoz Jardemalie, a Kazakh lawyer who fled to Belgium and whose brother is in prison, denounced the harassment faced by Kazakh lawyers and the widespread use of torture in the regime's prisons. Mr Fuad Agayev, Azerbaijani lawyer who was disbarred in his country, explained how authorities make a political use of disciplinary proceedings against lawyers. The situation of Chinese lawyers was evoked by Ms Nicola Macbean, director of the NGO The Rights Practice.