



LAWASIA STATEMENT

CONCERN FOR ARREST OF LAWYERS IN TURKEY

LAWASIA, the Law Association for Asia and the Pacific, has noted reports of arrests and beatings of lawyers in Turkey, related to the protests that have occurred in Taksim Square in Istanbul.

It is especially concerned to learn that more than 50 lawyers were arrested during a protest at Caglayan Justice Palace on 11 June 2013 where they sought to express their concern for mass detention of clients by authorities. It is further concerned at reports indicating that current circumstances in Turkey see a climate where lawyers may be identified with the causes of their clients.

LAWASIA notes that the functioning of an independent legal profession is an essential element in supporting the rule of law and refers to the *United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers* which indicate at Articles 17 and 18 and 23, respectively that:

- *Where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities.*
- *Lawyers shall not be identified with their clients or their clients' causes as a result of discharging their functions.*
- *Lawyers like other citizens are entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association and assembly. In particular, they shall have the right to take part in public discussion of matters concerning the law, the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights and to join or form local, national or international organizations and attend their meetings, without suffering professional restrictions by reason of their lawful action or their membership in a lawful organization. In exercising these rights, lawyers shall always conduct themselves in accordance with the law and the recognized standards and ethics of the legal profession.*

It joins other organisations in the legal and human rights communities in calling on the authorities in Turkey to respect and abide by these *Principles*.

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PRESIDENT

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