

### Public Statement

## **The Law Society of Ontario expresses grave concern about the murder of lawyer Yuniol Ramirez Ferreras**

Toronto, ON — The Law Society of Ontario expresses grave concern about the murder of lawyer Yuniol Ramirez Ferreras in the Dominican Republic

According to the information received, Yuniol Ramirez Ferreras was last seen on October 11, 2017 at the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo. His body was then found in a river several days later. The information suggests that his murder might be linked to his activity as a lawyer.

The Law Society is deeply concerned about this situation and urges the Dominican Republic to comply with its obligations under international human rights laws, including the United Nations' *Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers*.

Article 16 of the *Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers* states:

Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; (b) are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely both within their own country and abroad; and (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economics or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.

Article 17 states:

Where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities.

The Law Society urges the Government of the Dominican Republic to:

- a. thoroughly investigate the murder of Yuniol Ramirez Ferreras and bring the perpetrator(s) to justice;
- b. investigate whether the murder was tied to Yuniol Ramirez Ferreras' work as a lawyer;

- c. ensure that all lawyers and judges in the Dominican Republic are adequately safeguarded by the authorities such that they are able to carry out their professional duties and activities free from intimidation, hindrance, harassment, improper interference, the threat of criminalization, or other human rights violations; and
- d. ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments.