



Public Statement

The Law Society of Upper Canada expresses grave concern about the detention of Dr. İřtar Gzaydın in Turkey

Toronto, ON – The Law Society of Upper Canada expresses grave concern about the detention of Dr. İřtar Gzaydın in Turkey.

Dr. İřtar Gzaydın is a professor of law and politics and founder of the human rights NGO the Helsinki Citizens Assembly. She is known for her positions against capital punishment and mob violence in Turkey.

The Law Society recently learned that Dr. İřtar Gzaydın was taken into custody on December 20, 2016, and formally arrested on suspicion of “being a member of an armed terror organization” on December 28, 2016. The charge is based on the alleged testimony of a secret witness and an intelligence report. Reports indicate that she is currently being detained at řakran Prison in İzmir Province.

During her first days in detention, Dr. İřtar Gzaydın was denied proper access to her lawyer. Although her lawyer was eventually permitted to see her, he has been barred from accessing the investigation file on her case. Additionally, to date, her husband has been refused permission to visit her.

While the investigation into Dr. İřtar Gzaydın is based on allegations that she is connected to terrorist organizations, human rights groups believe that her detention is a form of retaliation for her human rights activities. As such, Dr. İřtar Gzaydın’s detention is arbitrary and constitutes harassment.

The Law Society of Upper Canada urges the Government of Turkey to comply with Turkey’s 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.

Article 18 states:

Lawyers shall not be identified with their clients or their clients' causes as a result of discharging their functions.

The Law Society urges the Government of Turkey to:

- a. immediately and unconditionally release Dr. İřtar Gözaydın;
- b. guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Dr. İřtar Gözaydın;
- c. ensure that any proceedings against Dr. İřtar Gözaydın are carried out in full compliance with her right to a fair trial, as protected under international law;
- d. put an end to all acts of harassment against Dr. İřtar Gözaydın and all other human rights lawyers and defenders in Turkey; and
- e. ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments.

The Law Society of Upper Canada is the governing body for more than 50,000 lawyers and 8,000 paralegals in the province of Ontario, Canada. The Treasurer is the head of the Law Society. The mandate of the Law Society is to govern the legal profession in the public interest by upholding the independence, integrity and honour of the legal profession for the purpose of advancing the cause of justice and the rule of law.

- 30 -

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