



Public Statement

The Law Society of Upper Canada expresses grave concern about the arrest of lawyer Levent Piskin in Turkey

Toronto, ON — The Law Society of Upper Canada expresses grave concern about the arrest of lawyer Levent Piskin in Turkey.

It has come to our attention that Levent Piskin, a human rights lawyer, was arrested by the Turkish police on November 14, 2016. He is alleged to have conveyed messages from his client, Selahattin Demirtas, to the German publication *Der Spiegel*.

Although reports indicate that Levent Piskin was, on November 16, 2016, provisionally released pending the end of the investigation, we are concerned that the basis for his arrest remains unclear as no formal charges have been brought against him.

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 1 of the *Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers* states:

All persons are entitled to call upon the assistance of a lawyer of their choice to protect and establish their rights and to defend them in all stages of criminal proceedings.

Article 16 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, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.

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. ensure that Levent Piskin is able to perform his professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference;

- b. put an end to all acts of harassment against Levent Piskin;
- c. guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Levent Piskin; and
- d. ensure 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.

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