



Public Statement

The Law Society of Upper Canada expresses grave concerns about the murder of human rights lawyer Yuri Grabovski in Ukraine

Yuri Grabovski was a Ukrainian human rights lawyer defending Aleksandr A. Aleksandrov, an alleged Russian intelligence officer. Yuri Grabovski disappeared on 6 March 2016 while returning to Kiev from a business meeting in Odessa. On 20 March 2016, Anatoly V. Matios, Chief Military Prosecutor of Ukraine, informed the media that a suspect in Yuri Grabovski's disappearance had been apprehended. Yuri Grabovski's body was found on 25 March 2016 south of Kiev. Shortly thereafter, Anatoly Matios confirmed that the victim "was killed in a violent way and finished off with a firearm." Since then, another suspect has been detained by the police.

Yuri Grabovski's murder is the second killing of a lawyer in Ukraine this month and the fourth since January 2015.

The Law Society of Upper Canada wrote to His Excellency President Petro Poroshenko, urging the government of Ukraine to comply with Articles 16 and 23 of the United Nations' *Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers*.

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.

Moreover, Article 23 states:

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.

The Law Society urges the government of Ukraine to:

- a. ensure that a thorough, impartial, independent and fair investigation is conducted into the murder of Yuri Grabovski;
- b. ensure that all lawyers can carry out their peaceful and legitimate activities without fear of physical violence or other human rights violations; and

- c. 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.

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