International Statement of Solidarity

4 October 2019 - We, the undersigned organizations, are deeply shocked by the brutal killing of our Dutch colleague Derk Wiersum. We extend our deepest condolences to Mr. Wiersum's family, friends, colleagues and all others affected by his death.

Mr. Wiersum, a well-respected lawyer and deputy judge, was shot in broad daylight right outside his house in Amsterdam in the early morning of 18 September 2019. He was representing a crown witness in the so-called Marengo-trial, a high-profile criminal case against members of an organization accused of several murders and attempted murders in the last couple of years. Although the events are still being investigated, it is assumed and highly likely that the death of Mr. Wiersum is related to his work as a lawyer.

This killing of a lawyer, apparently in connection with his work, raises serious concerns for the safety of lawyers and poses a threat to the proper functioning of the rule of law and the adequate protection of rights, including the right to remedies and fair trial.

Lawyers, as well as judges and prosecutors, should be able to do their work freely and independently. The UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers specify that "[w]here the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities" (principle 17).

We welcome the prompt and public condemnation of this crime and the immediate measures taken by the Dutch authorities to initiate an investigation, which should lead to the identification and prosecution of the perpetrators. We also welcome that measures were taken promptly and immediately to protect lawyers and all others who need protection in the Marengo-case. We expect that the Dutch authorities will do everything in their power to ensure that lawyers can do their work safely, freely, and independently in all circumstances.

We stand in solidarity with all colleague-lawyers, judges and prosecutors in the Netherlands, who are at risk for simply doing their job.

Organizations

(In alphabetic order)

Advocaten zonder Grenzen (Netherlands)

Agora International Human Rights Group (Russia)

Arrested Lawyers Initiative (Turkey)

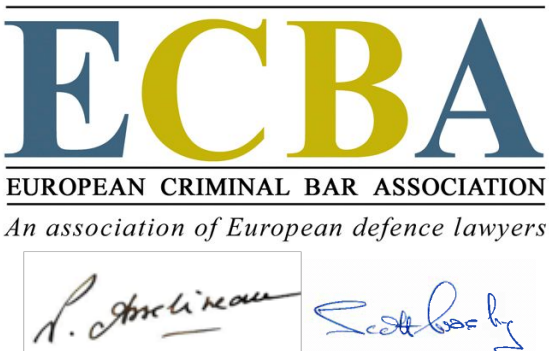
Asia Human Rights Commission (AHRC)

Conseil National des Barreaux (CNB) - French National Bar

Endangered Lawyers (Italy)

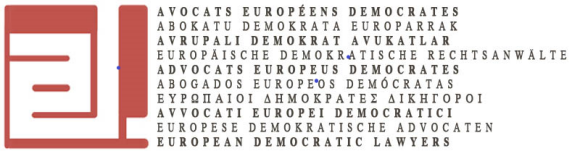
Défense sans Frontière - Avocats Solidaires (DSF AS)

European Association of Lawyers for Democracy and World Human Rights (ELDH)



European Criminal Bar Association (ECBA)

Vincent Asselineau, Chair
Scott Crosby, Human Rights Officer



European Democratic Lawyers (AED)

Fair Trial Watch (FTW) (Netherlands)

Forum Penal - Associação de Advogados Penalistas (Portugal)

Foundation Day of the Endangered Lawyer (Netherlands)

Geneva Bar Association - l'Ordre des avocats de Genève

Human Rights Embassy (Moldova)

Lela Metreveli, Executive Director

International Association of Lawyers (UIA)

International Association of Peoples' Lawyers (IAPL)

International Association of Young Lawyers (AIJA)

Paola Fudakowska, President

International Bar Associations' Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI)

International Commission of Jurists (ICJ)

International Observatory for Endangered Lawyers

Lawyers for Lawyers (Netherlands)

Lawyers Rights Watch Canada (LRWC)

Lithuanian Bar Association

Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA) (Turkey)

New Zealand Law Society

Philippines National Union of Peoples' Lawyers (NUPL)

Edre Olalia, Secretary General

Progressive Lawyers Association (PLA)

Solicitor's International Human Rights Group (SIHRG) (United Kingdom)

Southern Africa Human Rights Defenders Network

Southern Africa Litigation Centre

Swedish Bar Association

The Law Society of England and Wales

Warsaw Bar Association of Advocates

Mikolaj Pietrzak, Dean