

G7 Bars Meeting

Resolution on Lawyers at Risk and Recommendations to the G7 governments

We, the representatives of the bar associations in the G7 countries (the “G7 Bars”) and guests from Australia met on 17 May for the 2021 G7 Bars meeting;

1. *Recognising* that the rule of law and separation of powers are fundamental principles of all democratic nations and are essential to ensure accountability and access to justice for citizens worldwide, as well as economic stability;
2. *Recalling* that the independence of the legal profession is a prerequisite for upholding the rule of law and refers to judicial independence, as well as guarantees for lawyers to be able to practise their profession without undue interference;
3. *Expressing* grave concern that lawyers, as well as judges and prosecutors, in many jurisdictions are hindered in carrying out their professional duties through threats, intimidation, arrest and detention, prosecution, disciplinary measures other than for proven misconduct, and even disappearance or murder;
4. *Noting* that, in some jurisdictions, legislation and other standards are applied in ways that hinder lawyers in practising their profession and interfere with fair trial guarantees of lawyers’ clients;
5. *Emphasising* that the G7 Bars are committed to support members of the legal profession worldwide who are practising their profession under difficult circumstances, to express professional solidarity with our colleagues, and to promote the rule of law and independence of the legal profession worldwide and in our respective jurisdictions;
6. *Recalling* that the G7 Bars, individually and collectively, have taken several measures to support the rule of law before and since the adoption of the Paris Declaration in July 2019, such as carrying out advocacy, organising events to raise awareness, adopting resolutions and making submissions in international and regional fora, organising trainings for legal professionals, carrying out trial observations, and publishing information on the independence of the legal profession;
7. *Expressing* the desire for collaboration, where possible, between the G7 Bars to uphold the rule of law and promote the independence of the legal profession;

Make efforts to urge our respective governments to:

1. Advocate for the rule of law and independence of the legal profession - including as expressed in points 2 through 7 below – at national level and before international and

regional bodies, and give priority to them in their bilateral and multilateral engagement with other States, including in trade negotiations;

2. Ensure that no measures are taken that could undermine the rule of law or separation of powers;
3. Abstain from taking any measures that interfere with the independence of lawyers, association or society of lawyers, national bars and law societies, and in general with the independence of the legal profession, including judicial independence;
4. Guarantee that national authorities respect the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers and fair trial guarantees established in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other international instruments, including access to a counsel of one's own choosing, lawyer-client confidentiality, and the right to prepare an adequate defence;
5. Promote legislative and other measures that strengthen the independence of the legal profession and provide protection and adequate support to lawyers who are at risk because of the cases they work on or the clients they represent, to enable them to carry out their professional duties without undue interference;
6. Support international and regional initiatives that uphold the independence of the legal profession; and
7. Condemn attacks against members of the legal profession for carrying out their legitimate professional activities, whether such take place in their own or in other jurisdictions.

Signed on 10 June 2021

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Margarete von Galen
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