

Turkey: Joint Statement ahead of the hearings of Betül Vangölü Kozağaçlı and Seda Şaraldı (ÇHD)

Tuesday 11 February 2025

Ahead of the upcoming judicial hearings in the cases of Betül Vangölü Kozağaçlı and Seda Şaraldı, lawyers and members of the Progressive Lawyers' Association (Çağdaş Hukukçular Derneği - ÇHD), the undersigned organisations, including the Observatory for the protection of human right defenders (FIDH-OMCT), urge for the dismissal of all charges against them and call for their immediate release. Detained as reprisal for their legitimate human rights work, the cases of the ÇHD lawyers reflect the Turkish authorities' alarming pattern of increasing repression against civil society.

11 February 2025. We, the undersigned organisations, express solidarity with lawyers and members of the Progressive Lawyers' Association (ÇHD) who are currently facing unjust judicial persecution, criminalisation and arbitrary detention. Ahead of the upcoming judicial hearings in the cases of **Betül Vangölü Kozağaçlı** and **Seda Şaraldı**, scheduled for 12 February and 20 February 2025, respectively, we call on Turkish authorities to secure their right to a fair trial, to drop all charges against them, and to immediately and unconditionally release them.

On 6 February 2024, an armed attack took place at the Çağlayan Courthouse, in Istanbul. Two attackers were shot by police, who later identified them as alleged members of the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C). In the aftermath of the attack, several offices of various organisations were raided and ransacked by police forces across Istanbul. Among them was the People's Law Office, where [four lawyers, members of the ÇHD - Didem Baydar Ünsal, Berrak Çağlar, Seda Şaraldı, and Betül Vangölü Kozağaçlı - were detained.](#)

Despite the lack of any evidence linking them to any criminal activity and based solely on their work as lawyers, they have been accused of "membership in an illegal organisation", a charge frequently used by authorities in Turkey to target lawyers, journalists and human rights defenders. Since then, Betül and Seda have been in pre-trial detention, and in Seda's case, her detention has not been reviewed since it began.

These cases evidence Turkish authorities' systematic practice of threatening and harassing lawyers as a tactic to silence dissent. By cracking down on members of ÇHD, an organisation known for defending individuals facing state repression and human rights violations, Turkish authorities are both targeting the lawyers' legitimate human rights work, and their clients' right to defence.

Ahead of the new hearings in the cases of Betül Vangölü Kozağaçlı and Seda Şaraldı, we urge authorities in Turkey to drop all charges and immediately and unconditionally release them, as well as all members of ÇHD and human rights defenders imprisoned in the country.

The listed organisations remind the Court and the authorities in Turkey that the world is watching.

P.S.

1. Avocats européens démocrates - European Democratic Lawyers (AED-EDL)
2. Berlin Bar Association - Rechtsanwaltskammer Berlin
3. Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE)
4. Demokratische Jurist*innen Schweiz (DJS)
5. Défense Sans Frontière-Avocats Solidaires (DSF-AS)
6. European Association of Lawyers for Democracy and World Human Rights (ELDH)
7. Human Rights Association (İnsan Hakları Derneği - IHD)
8. Italian Association Democratic Jurists
9. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders
10. International Foundation Day of the Endangered Lawyer
11. International Observatory for Lawyers in Danger (OIAD)
12. Legal Centre Lesbos
13. Legal Team Italia
14. New York City Bar Association
15. The Center for Research and Elaboration on Democracy (CRED)
16. The Defence Commission of the Barcelona Bar Association
17. The Law Society of England and Wales
18. UIA - Institute for the Rule of Law (UIA-IROL)
19. World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders