



The Law Society
of England and Wales



United Nations Human Rights Council – 60th Session

Item 6: UPR Outcome of the 4th cycle of Türkiye

25 September 2025

Joint oral statement

Mr. President,

We welcome Türkiye's support for some of the recommendations on judicial independence, the protection of human rights defenders, and facilitating favourable conditions for lawyers and human rights defenders to carry out their legitimate professional duties.

However, Türkiye's assertion that these recommendations have already been implemented stands in stark contrast with reality. Structural reforms have weakened the separation of powers, allowing executive interference with the Council of Judges and Prosecutors. Judicial appointments and promotions remain subject to undue political influence. Bar associations face increasing politicisation, with reforms distorting proportional representation within the Union of Turkish Bars, thereby weakening critical voices. Interference with admissions disproportionately affects lawyers working on human rights or politically sensitive cases, undermining clients' right to choose legal counsel.

In addition, restrictions on lawyer-client confidentiality, denial of access to case files, and limitations on defence rights — particularly in terrorism-related cases — continue to undermine fair trial and due process guarantees, in violation of Article 14 of the ICCPR and the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers.

We remain deeply concerned about the systematic targeting of lawyers for performing their professional duties. Lawyers are frequently associated with their clients' causes, facing arbitrary arrest, criminal prosecution, and harassment. The ongoing criminal and civil proceedings against the Istanbul Bar Association's leadership for issuing statements within its professional mandate exemplify this pattern. The proceedings, which rely on overly broad anti-terrorism and "disinformation" laws, constitute a direct assault on the independence of the legal profession and generate a chilling effect that restricts access to justice for all.

We urge Türkiye to implement the recommendations pertaining to the rights of lawyers in practice: repeal vague anti-terrorism provisions, guarantee due process and the right to an effective defence, and enable lawyers and bar associations to perform their duties freely, independently, and without fear of reprisal.

Finally, we call on Türkiye to promptly sign and ratify the Council of Europe Convention on the Profession of Lawyer and encourage it to submit a mid-term report on progress toward implementation.

Thank you.

This statement was delivered by:

Tara Fiechter
Program officer, Lawyers for Lawyers
t.fiechter@lawyersforlawyers.nl