

**His Excellency Almazbek Atambayev
President of the Kyrgyz Republic
205, Chui Prospect
720003, Bishkek
Kyrgyzstan**

Brussels, 25 September 2013

Re: Concerns regarding the physical assault of lawyers Dinara Medetova and Kubanychbek Zhoroyev

Your Excellency,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), which, through the national Bars and Law Societies of the Member States of the European Union and the European Economic Area, represents more than 1 million European lawyers. In addition to membership from EU bars, it also has observer representatives from a further eleven European countries' bars.

The CCBE, through its Human Rights Committee, places great emphasis on respect for human rights and the rule of law. The CCBE is particularly concerned by the situation of human rights defenders in the world.

The CCBE writes to express its serious concern over the physical assault of lawyers Ms Dinara Medetova and Mr Kubanychbek Zhoroyev, who are defending Mr Makhamatkir Bizurukov, an ethnic Uzbek, in a trial related to ethnic clashes that took place in the south of the country on 10 June 2010.

According to the information that we received, on 20 August 2013 Ms Medetova and Mr Kubanychbek Zhoroyev were repeatedly interrupted, insulted and threatened by members of the public during a hearing in the Osh Regional Court. There are reliable reports stating that, during the hearing, the two lawyers also received death threats - to which the judge did not respond. After the hearing, around ten female supporters of the victims in the case physically attacked Ms Medetova and Mr Zhoroyev.

The CCBE is alarmed by the threatening environment against lawyers in Kyrgyzstan, in which the legal profession has become the target of multiple acts of intimidation and harassment.

In this context the CCBE wishes to draw to your Excellency's attention the following Articles of the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (1990):

Article 16 states that:

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, economics or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.

Furthermore, Article 17 states that:

Where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities.

In view of the above, the CCBE respectfully urges your Excellency to take immediate and effective steps to ensure, in all circumstances, the protection of lawyers' physical and psychological integrity. The CCBE also implores you to take all the necessary measures to guarantee that lawyers in Kyrgyzstan are able to carry out their professional activities without fear of reprisal, intimidation and harassment in order to preserve the independence of the legal profession and the proper application of the rule of law.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'E. Tsouroulis', written in a cursive style.

EVANGELOS TSOUROULIS
CCBE President