

**Aleksandr Ivanovich Bastrykin, Chairman
Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation
Tekhnicheskii pereulok, d.2
105005 Moscow
Russian Federation**

Brussels, 24th of June 2013

Re: Concerns regarding death threats against Mr Sapiyat Magomedova and Ms Musa Suslanov, criminal defence lawyers

Dear Chairman,

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 twelve 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 you to express its serious concern over the situation of Mr Sapiyat Magomedova and Ms Musa Suslanov, two criminal defence lawyers who have received serious death threats in connection with their work on a high-profile case in which they are representing the families of five men killed by firearms in the city of Kizlyar, Dagestan, in March 2012.

The CCBE has been informed that since 19 May 2013, Mr Sapiyat Magomedova and Ms Musa Suslanov have been the targets of multiple acts of intimidation. According to trustworthy reports, it seems that the two lawyers received several threats of physical violence, arson attacks and bombing of their office building if they do not halt their work on behalf of the victims of the case.

The CCBE is alarmed by these facts, which indicate a threatening environment for lawyers in Russia.

In this context, the CCBE wishes to draw to your 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 you to take immediate and effective steps to guarantee the safety of Mr Sapiyat Magomedova and Ms Musa Suslanov and to ensure that the threats that they have received are impartially investigated and that the persons responsible are promptly identified and prosecuted. The CCBE also implores you to take all necessary measures to guarantee that lawyers in Russia are able to perform their professional duties without hindrance, intimidation and harassment or any improper interference.

Yours sincerely,

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

Evangelos TSOUROULIS
CCBE President