

LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR LAWYERS IN SYRIA

March 14, 2012

Hon. Ban Ki-moon
United Nations Secretary General
760 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017

Dear Secretary General Ban:

As you have outlined in several recent messages, the actions taken in the past several months by the government of Syria in response to the peaceful protests by its people are unacceptable. Violence, abuse and violations of human rights are apparent and widespread.

In such situations, the United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers recognizes the importance of the effective access to legal services provided by an independent legal profession. Investigations by a number of respected international organizations provide strong evidence that the Syrian government has ignored its obligation to permit and protect such activities by Syrian lawyers. These investigations further found strong evidence that the Syrian government, either directly or through surrogates, has engaged in widespread harassment, imprisonment and abuse of Syrian legal professionals involved either in acts of peaceful dissent or in representing persons involved in such activities.

We, as representatives of the international community of lawyers, strongly condemn these actions by the Syrian government. Further, on behalf of the lawyers whom we represent throughout the world, we express our strong support for those Syrian lawyers who are engaged in peaceful dissent or in representing persons peacefully pursuing change in their country. Such peaceful actions by Syrian lawyers fulfill the best and highest aspirations expressed in the Basic Principles, and have the support of their colleagues from throughout the world.


Signed:

International Legal Assistance Consortium



William D. Meyer
Chair

International Bar Association



Akira Kawamura
President

Union Internationale des Avocats



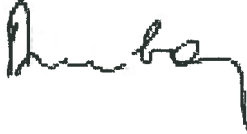
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Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe



Marcella Prunbauer-Glaser
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The Swedish Bar Association



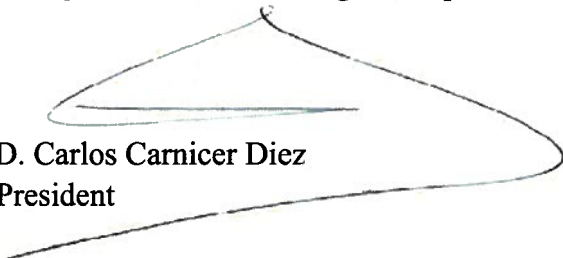
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