

CCBE statement in support of lawyers Ramazan Demir and Ayşe Acinikli (CCBE Human Rights Award 2016), and other endangered lawyers in Türkiye

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The Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE) represents the Bars and Law Societies of 46 countries and, through them, more than 1 million European lawyers.

The CCBE strongly condemns politically motivated attacks on the legal profession in Türkiye. On 28 January 2026, lawyers Ramazan Demir and Ayşe Acinikli, laureates of the [CCBE Human Rights Award](#) in 2016, together with another four lawyers and 28 other defendants, were convicted on charges related to alleged links to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and terrorism-related offences.

The CCBE was informed that lawyers Ayşe Acinikli, Raziye Öztürk, and Araziye Demir were each sentenced to six years and three months' imprisonment for alleged membership of a terrorist organisation, while lawyers Sinan Zincir and Hüseyin Boğatekin each received sentences of seven years and six months on the same charge. Lawyer Tamer Doğan was sentenced to four years and six months imprisonment. Lawyer Ramazan Demir was sentenced to a total of eleven years and three months' imprisonment, comprising seven years and six months for alleged membership of a terrorist organisation and an additional three years and nine months for alleged terrorist propaganda.

The CCBE is strongly alarmed by these convictions, which constitute a profound assault on the administration of justice and a grave violation of the right of defence, the independence of the legal profession, and the rule of law.

In particular, the CCBE is deeply concerned by the conviction against lawyers Ramazan Demir and Ayşe Acinikli who were [recipients of the 2016 CCBE Human Rights Award](#), an honour granted to lawyers who have demonstrated exceptional commitment to upholding human rights and the rule of law.

In view of the above, the CCBE:

- recalls Türkiye's obligations under international law to guarantee due process, fair trials, access to justice, and the independence of lawyers, including their rights to freedom of expression and association. These protections are recognised in international treaties and standards, including the ICCPR, ECHR, UDHR, and the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers. The CCBE urges Turkish authorities to fully respect them in practice. The CCBE also wishes to raise the attention to the newly adopted Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer and calls for its rapid signature and ratification by Türkiye;

- firmly condemns the convictions and disproportionate prison sentences imposed on Ramazan Demir and Ayşe Acinikli, laureates of the CCBE Human Rights Award in 2016, and the other lawyers in this case;
- calls for the immediate revocation of these convictions and the release of all lawyers imprisoned for the legitimate exercise of their professional duties;
- expresses its full solidarity with the convicted lawyers, their families, and more broadly to lawyers and the legal profession in Türkiye;
- encourages European institutions and the international community to closely monitor these cases and to take concrete measures to protect lawyers in Türkiye.

The CCBE reiterates that lawyers are a cornerstone of democracy, and they must be able to carry out their professional duties freely, without fear of reprisal, intimidation, harassment, or imprisonment. The systematic targeting of lawyers for the legitimate exercise of their work must cease immediately and with no exceptions.