



**KEEP YOUR HANDS
OFF THE LAWYERS**

Joint Statement

22 January 2024

Rising systemic persecution of lawyers in Iran

Lawyers continue to face systemic persecution for defending human rights in Iran, the Coalition for the Endangered Lawyer warns.

The Coalition, a network of legal organisations and bar associations from various cities, countries and continents around the world, each year organises the International Day of the Endangered Lawyer.

Since its creation in 2010, the International Day of the Endangered Lawyer has been observed on 24 January in cities, countries, and continents around the globe.

The purpose of this International Day is to draw the attention of government officials, international institutions, civil society, the media and the general public to the plight faced by lawyers in a particular focus country in the exercise of their profession.

This year, for the second time since the creation of this International Day, the Coalition draws attention to the plight of Iranian lawyers as the 14th edition of the International Day of the Endangered Lawyer approaches.

The Coalition has issued a report to demonstrate the dire state of the legal profession in Iran and highlight the regime's violation of human rights.*

The report concludes among others:

"The widespread mistreatment of lawyers and the erosion of an independent legal profession in Iran is deeply concerning.

"Iranian lawyers face continual intimidation, hinderance, and harassment. They are threatened with sanctions for fulfilling their professional duties if the government disapproves of the nature of their work. When these lawyers practice against the regime's wishes, they face conviction and imprisonment.

"Furthermore, the government is conducting an investigation into the Iranian Bar Association and will evaluate the judicial credentials of lawyers affiliated with the Bar. This intervention allows the state to designate which lawyers are entitled to practice in Iran.

“The use of intimidation tactics by the Iranian government undermines the independence of the legal profession and target lawyers simply due to the nature of their legal work.

“The Iranian regime has also obstructed access to justice and the effective exercise of human rights in the country.

“After the death of Jina Mahsa Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian woman arrested by the morality police allegedly for “improperly wearing the hijab”, anti-government protestors were arrested and denied legal counsel of their choice. Human rights lawyers representing the protestors have been targeted at an unprecedented rate.**

“The Iranian regime’s mistreatment of legal professionals has a chilling effect on human rights. It fosters a climate of fear and insecurity for lawyers carrying out crucial work to speak out against the severe abuse of human rights taking place throughout the country.

“We demand the Iranian government halt all acts of intimidation and harassment targeting lawyers and respect the independence of the legal profession.

“It is critical the Iranian regime ensures the safety, independence and human rights of lawyers in order to comply with international law, including the U.N. Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers.”

Notes to journalists:

- * Day of the Endangered Lawyer 24th January 2024 14th edition – Iran Report
- ** From 16 September 2022 to 10 January 2023, a total of 44 lawyers were arrested for their work defending anti-government protestors; 27 of those have reportedly been released while the rest remain in detention.
- The Coalition for the Endangered Lawyer organises the International Day of Endangered Lawyer every year. See the logos below.



