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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Defending Human Rights: The Day of the Endangered Lawyer

On 24 January 2017 the International legal community marked the Day of the Endangered Lawyer. This annual [initiative](#), held for the seventh time, highlights the challenges faced by lawyers around the world who risk on a daily basis harassment, persecution, injury and death to protect and support clients whose human rights are at stake.

This year the focus was on **China**, where the absence of an independent judicial system and close supervision and monitoring of lawyers' activities by governmental authorities often obstruct the practice of law, especially in cases where human rights and/or the rule of law may be at stake. Lawyers have encountered harassment and intimidation by the police and by the courts, and since the summer of 2015 many lawyers have been detained, harassed, interrogated or banned from travelling out of the country, with several lawyers being sentenced and imprisoned for political reasons.

In 2016 the Day of the Endangered Lawyer drew attention to the worrying condition of lawyers in **Honduras**. According to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, [Honduras](#) is one of the most dangerous countries for lawyers. Since 2010 more than 100 lawyers have been murdered. 94% of lawyer murders remain unpunished, with only 5 cases having been brought to court. Lawyers specializing in human rights, reporting corruption, opposing organized crime or representing police officers have been killed and harassed, and lawyers in cases concerning land and territorial rights face particularly high risks.

Lawyers defending their clients also face significant obstructions, harassment and persecution in many other countries, such as [Turkey](#), the [Philippines](#), [Venezuela](#) or [Zambia](#).

As an association dedicated to the practice of the European Convention for the Protection on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the UAE stands in solidarity with endangered lawyers around the world. We would like in particular to acknowledge the courage and determination of lawyers who work daily to uphold and protect the fundamental rights of their clients.

Together with the International legal community, the UAE will continue to advocate for the protection and independence of legal professionals in Europe and everywhere, which are essential to ensuring access to justice and the rule of law.

Málaga, 10 February 2017

Agustín CRUZ NUÑEZ
President