

# The Endangered Lawyers List

The first global initiative to build a collaborative, central database to serve as a single source for statistics about endangered lawyers worldwide.

## A Collaboration Between Founding Organizations

The International Bar Association, Human Rights Initiative and Rule of Law Forum

The American Association for the International Commission of Jurists

The American Bar Association, Center for Human Rights

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, New York Office

Lawyers for Lawyers

Wilson Williams LLC

## Statement of Need

Persecuted by governments, non-state actors, militias, and private individuals, lawyers around the world endure suspension and disbarment, threats to their lives and the lives of their families, violence, arbitrary detention, wrongful prosecution and sentencing, disappearances, and even death, in retaliation for the cases they take. These attorneys are targeted because of their willingness to represent marginalized or unpopular clients and causes that would otherwise remain voiceless.

Advocates already working hard to ensure lawyers' safety agree this global issue is grave, but the field is constricted by a knowledge gap: **no one person or organization knows the total number of lawyers around the world who endure these threats and attacks.** No group is tracking this global number to analyze the nature of the attacks, attack responses from governments, and remediation efforts. This knowledge gap keeps this issue too quiet, which has serious consequences for individuals and society. Notably among them:

### Lawyers at risk do not receive all the help they need

Aid for persecuted lawyers comes in the form of finding shelter and safe harbor, defense and supportive litigation, and new employment.

### Minorities, vulnerable groups, and civil and human rights values will go unrepresented, and consequently un-enforced, in litigation

When lawyers fear reprisal, most will be deterred from taking the case. Client communities will be left without recourse, and already vulnerable issues and individuals will be further repressed without equal protection under the law.

### Democracy and the rule of law are imperiled

A strong rule of law has been linked to overall economic and social prosperity. With inadequate access to justice, public confidence in the legal process will diminish, and civil and human rights values are suppressed by authoritarian governance.

## Goals and Value Added

Understanding the scope and scale of an issue is a precursor to combatting it, because society cannot change what it is not aware of.

With more information, allied stakeholders will work together more effectively. As a result, more funding, attention, and aid will be made available to individual lawyers who put their lives at risk to serve their clients, protect vulnerable voices and communities, and strengthen the rule of law.

## The Project

Two years ago, six different entities agreed to partner in building a secure, central database, to amalgamate attacks against lawyers around the world and supply publicly available statistics.

Founding organizations are forming a new tax-exempt foundation in the Netherlands to serve as the eventual project seat. Operating from that base, we will expand to form a global coalition of partner organizations engaged in research and advocacy on behalf of persecuted lawyers. Aspects of partner organizations' work will be added securely to the central database, increasing opportunities for communication and support. To best protect the lawyers at risk, the database will remain private, but statistics and analyses will be publicly available. Many standout organizations have already agreed to join us.

## To best respond to a global need for enhanced collaboration, we will:

01. Build an alliance of all veritable entities committed to protecting lawyers to optimize communication and secure information-sharing.
02. Track steps taken by partner organizations to assist attorneys at risk, to support better outcomes.
03. Refrain from advocacy as a new entity, and focus on supplying statistics and strengthening stakeholder's voices who are already doing essential and excellent work.

## We aim to comprehensively aggregate and map attacks on legal professionals worldwide by:

01. Analyzing all existing data to determine its reliability and ascertain areas of the world where information is limited.
02. Conducting research and outreach to fill geographic gaps and achieve a fully monitored globe.
03. Generating useful metrics for comparisons by country to highlight areas in particular need of attention and relief.