

International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute
Item 6: General Debate the Universal Periodic Review
Date: 28 March 2022

The International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute and the International Association of Judges reiterate that the separation of powers and the independence of the legal profession constitute the building blocks for the rule of law and democracy. Lawyers, prosecutors and judges, are at the forefront of the protection of human rights.

At the core of the independence of legal professionals is the recognition that judges, prosecutors, and lawyers must be able to carry out their professional duties without undue interference and must be protected, de jure and de facto, from attacks, harassment, and persecution.

We believe that the protection and independence of justice actors deserves dedicated attention by the UPR, as a key component to ensure the well-functioning of justice systems.

The UPR plays a central role in effectively promoting the rule of law and is therefore a critical entry point to contribute to SDG 16, aiming at promoting access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions.

States Under Review should use the UPR process as an opportunity to engage more strategically with the judiciary, prosecution services and lawyers, prior, during and after the review.

To move from UPR Recommendations to political commitments and from political commitments to legal implementation, we encourage Recommending States to focus on justice actors and refer to the UN Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary, the Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, and the Guidelines on the Role of Prosecutors.

Thank you.

This statement was delivered by:
Francesca Restifo, Senior Human Rights Lawyer – UN Representative
International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute
Francesca.Restifo@int-bar.org