



The Law Society  
of England and Wales



Human Rights  
Institute

## UN Human Rights Council, 53<sup>rd</sup> session

### Agenda Item 3

### Interactive Dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers 26 June 2023

*Joint Statement of the International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute, The Law Society, Lawyers for Lawyers, Lawyers Rights Watch Canada*

We welcome the report of the Special Rapporteur on compelling priorities relating to the independence of the judiciary and protection of lawyers. In particular, we appreciate reference to the use of artificial intelligence in decision making as a real challenge to the independence and impartiality of the judiciary.

Lawyers are increasingly targeted for performing their duties, with states often the source of these threats. Legislation, including national security and counter-terror laws, is systematically misused to silence lawyers, preventing effective legal defense and access to justice for victims.

In the Philippines attacks against lawyers have increased significantly in recent years, in particular, those working on terrorism and drug-related cases.

In China, there has been a new wave of attacks on lawyers, known as 709 crackdown 2.0.

Since 2021, in Guatemala there has been a 70% increase of justice officials facing intimidation and criminal charges for their work on corruption or human rights violations.

Turkey is notorious for prosecuting and convicting lawyers simply for defending their clients.

All persons exercising legal functions are fundamental to the defense and consolidation of the rule of law.

Therefore these concerns require urgent consideration and a comprehensive response. We urge this Council to act swiftly to address these issues in a dedicated resolution.

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