

## Selçuk Kozağaçlı

My dear colleagues and friends,

I regret that Turkey continues to be hottest topic of this special day dedicated to “the endangered lawyers”. It has always been the case that in Turkey the tradition of parliamentary democracy was weak, constitutional guarantees superficial and the judiciary under the influence of political power. Now, however, we are in a much more worse situation.

Keeping in mind the bad memories and concerns that this concept may evoke, especially in the mind of my European colleagues, I feel obliged to use it: Fascism reigns in Turkey now.

Particularly in terms of the political criminal procedures, we no longer have an institutional structure that we may define as “judiciary” in its classical sense. Criminal justice system has been completely assigned to the practical use of the political power. Not infrequently, we see the near-suspension of the supranational conventions on the fundamental rights that we are a party of, the constitution and the procedural laws.

In other words, the country has become “the weakest link” of the European judicial system of which she is a member. “The weakest link”, it is, in both senses of the phrase. On the one hand, we lost all our professional guarantees: we are suffering the violence, our freedom and even our lives are under threat. But on the other hand, we are facing a weak de facto political power that has no institutional presence or tradition nor a law. We witness the worldwide loss of the people’s fundamental gains and no field, not even a single country is immune to this looming disaster. A new ruthless world order is on the making. This chain, however, shall be broken from the weakest link.

Endless thanks for the solidarity. Trust us on this, we shall never surrender. We shall never stop struggling as the lawyers of the impoverished and of those who claim their rights. We do trust you and we now that you are not going to yield us to the ruinous strength of fascism.

If we can maintain a strong network of struggle together, our profession of attorneyship could continue to bring hope and safety for the people who are subjected to open violence and coercion.

I hope this year would be the last one that made us a topic of concern on another 24th of January.

My deepest regards and love to the entire solidarity network.

We will win.

Selçuk Kozağaçlı

Lawyer

Silivri High Security Prison

İstanbul / TURKEY