



**LEGAL
CENTRE
LESVOS**



**ELDH European Association of Lawyers
for Democracy & World Human Rights**

EJDM Europäische Vereinigung von Juristinnen & Juristen für Demokratie und Menschenrechte in der Welt
EJDH Asociación Europea de los Juristas por la Democracia y los Derechos Humanos en el Mundo
EJDH Association Européenne des Juristes pour la Démocratie & les Droits de l'Homme
EGDU Associazione Europea delle Giuriste e dei Giuristi per la Democrazia e i diritti dell'Uomo nel Mondo

The Legal Centre Lesvos and European Association of Lawyers for Democracy and World Human Rights (ELDH) invite you to join the following panel—held in person and streamed online:

Under Attack for Defending Rights: The Criminalization of Lawyers in Turkey

When: Friday, 12 September 2025 at 7 pm EEST

Where: in person in Mytilene/Lesvos and online (details will be announced soon)

With: Ceren Uysal (ÇHD and ELDH), Davut Arslan (İHD Istanbul Branch), Irma van den Berg (Lawyers for Lawyers) and Vasilis Psomos (Legal Centre Lesvos)

For many years, Turkey has seen a systematic attack on the legal profession as part of a broader strategy to suppress political dissent. Lawyers—especially those defending politically persecuted individuals, collectives or organizations and advocating for human rights—are themselves continuously becoming targets of criminal prosecution.

Often charged under anti-terror laws, these prosecutions follow a clear pattern: Actions tied to the legal profession—such as consulting clients or visiting them in prison, attending protests in a professional capacity, or making public statements grounded in international human rights law—are reinterpreted as evidence of alleged links to terrorist organizations. Lawyers are arrested, held in lengthy pre-trial detention, and put on trial, often based on scant evidence—if any.

This practice violates international standards such as the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers and the recently adopted Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer, which hopefully will enter into force soon. Both state that lawyers must not be identified with their clients or face reprisals for their work. Yet in Turkey, simply fulfilling one's professional duties can be construed as a criminal act. The result is a chilling effect on the independence of the legal profession and a direct threat to the right to a fair trial.

In response and in solidarity with colleagues in Turkey, international legal organizations are monitoring these trials, participating in fact finding missions and visiting detained colleagues in prison. The Legal Centre Lesvos and ELDH, jointly organizing this event, have been present at numerous hearings in and visits to Turkey as part of ongoing trial observation efforts. Their work aims to document and denounce the erosion of fair trial standards and to support colleagues facing persecution.

Join us as we examine the criminalization of lawyers and detention conditions in Turkey, hear from legal experts and observers, and discuss how international solidarity can support lawyers under threat.

Speakers: **Ceren Uysal** (member of executive board of the Progressive Lawyers Association ÇHD and co-secretary general of ELDH) will give an overview over the politicized persecution of lawyers in Turkey.

Davut Arslan (lawyer and board member of the Human Rights Association İHD Istanbul Branch) will examine prison conditions in Turkey.

Irma van den Berg (lawyer in Amsterdam, volunteer and former chair of the board of Lawyers for Lawyers) will share her experiences with trial monitoring of persecuted lawyers in Turkey.

Vasilis Psomos (lawyer with Legal Centre Lesvos) will share his experience after observing hearings in Turkey and visiting detained lawyers in prison.