

21 August 2013

Our ref 325/12/JR

H.E. Mr Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey
C/O Turkish Embassy in Canberra
6 Moonah Place
Yarralumla ACT 2600

By Post and email: embassy.canberra@mfa.gov.tr

Dear Prime Minister

Treatment of lawyers in Turkey

We write on the advice of the Queensland Law Society's International Law and Relations Committee and to lend support to our colleagues: the Law Council of Australia, LAWASIA and the Law Society of England and Wales in regard to your country's treatment of Turkish lawyers.

We are concerned by the media reports regarding the arrest of lawyers who were taking part in a peaceful protest at Çağlayan Courthouse near Taksim Square in Istanbul on June 11 2013. We are also troubled by reports that suggest lawyers may be identified with the causes of their clients.

We reiterate the comments of our colleagues and call for the Turkish Government to respect the rule of law and the important role of an independent legal profession. We refer to the internationally agreed United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers. This treaty was formulated to assist States in their task of promoting and preserving the proper role of lawyers. We note in particular several relevant sections which hold that:

- *Where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities;*
- *Lawyers shall not be identified with their clients or their clients' causes as a result of discharging their functions;*
- *Lawyers like other citizens are entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association and assembly. In particular, they shall have the right to take part in public discussion of matters concerning the law, the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights to join or form local, national or international organisations and attend their meetings without suffering professional restrictions by reason of these rights.*

We join with other organisations in calling on the authorities in Turkey to respect and uphold the rule of law and safeguard the role of lawyers.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of overlapping, fluid strokes that form a stylized, somewhat abstract representation of the name 'Annette Bradfield'.

Annette Bradfield
President