

## Petition to the International Association of Prosecutors

The Hague, 5 September 2017

Dear members of the IAP Executive Committee and the Senate,  
dear members of the IAP,

In the run-up to the annual conference and general meeting of the International Association of Prosecutors (IAP) in Beijing, China, the undersigned civil society organisations urge the IAP to live up to its vision and bolster its efforts to preserve the integrity of the profession.

Increasingly, in many regions of the world, in clear breach of professional integrity and fair trial standards, public prosecutors use their powers to suppress critical voices.

In China, over the last two years, dozens of prominent lawyers, labour rights advocates and activists have been targeted by the prosecution service<sup>1</sup>. Many remain behind bars, convicted or in prolonged detention for legal and peaceful activities protected by international human rights standards, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Azerbaijan is in the midst of a major crackdown on civil rights defenders, bloggers and journalists, imposing hefty sentences on fabricated charges in trials that make a mockery of justice<sup>2</sup>. In Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkey many prosecutors play an active role in the repression of human rights defenders, and in committing, covering up or condoning other grave human rights abuses<sup>3</sup>.

Patterns of abusive practices by prosecutors in these and other countries ought to be of grave concern to the professional associations they belong to, such as the IAP. Upholding the rule of law and human rights is a key aspect of the profession of a prosecutor, as is certified by the IAP's *Standards of Professional Responsibility and Statement of the Essential Duties and Rights of Prosecutors*, that explicitly refer to the importance of observing and protecting the right to a fair trial and other human rights at all stages of work<sup>4</sup>.

Maintaining the credibility of the profession should be a key concern for the IAP. This requires explicit steps by the IAP to introduce a meaningful human rights policy. Such steps will help to counter devaluation of ethical standards in the profession, revamp public trust in justice professionals and protect the organisation and its members from damaging reputational impact and allegations of whitewashing or complicity in human rights abuses.

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<sup>1</sup> As documented by a number of internationally renowned human rights organisations, including Human Rights Watch and the ICJ. See, for example, *the HRW World Report 2017, China and Tibet*, available at: <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/china-and-tibet>; *China: call for action at UN on lawyers and other human rights defenders*, available at: <https://www.icj.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/UN-HRC34-China-JointLetter-Advocacy-2017.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> *The Functioning of the Judicial System in Azerbaijan and its Impact on the Fair Trial of Human Rights Defenders*, Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights and Netherlands Helsinki Committee 2016, available at: <http://www.defendersorviolators.info/judiciary-in-azerbaijan>.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example: *Human Rights and the Professional Responsibility of Judges and Prosecutors in the Work of CCJE and CCPE. Observations to the CCJE-CCPE Joint Report on "Challenges for Judicial Independence and Impartiality in the Member States of the Council of Europe"*, Netherlands Helsinki Committee and Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights 2017, available at: <https://www.nhc.nl/assets/uploads/2017/06/20170331-Observations-to-CCJE-CCPE-Report.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> *Standards of Professional Responsibility and Statement of the Essential Duties and Rights of Prosecutors* adopted by the International Association of Prosecutors on 23 April 1999.

For the [second](#) year in a row, civil society appeals to the IAP to honour its human rights responsibilities by introducing a tangible human rights policy. In particular:

We urge the IAP Executive Committee and the Senate to:

- introduce human rights due diligence and compliance procedures for new and current members, including scope for complaint mechanisms with respect to institutional and individual members, making information public about its institutional members and creating openings for stakeholder engagement from the side of civil society and victims of human rights abuses<sup>5</sup>.

We call on individual members of the IAP to:

- raise the problem of a lack of human rights compliance mechanisms at the IAP and thoroughly discuss the human rights implications before making decisions about hosting IAP meetings;
- identify relevant human rights concerns before travelling to IAP conferences and meetings and raise these issues with their counterparts from countries where politically-motivated prosecution and human rights abuses by prosecution authorities are reported by intergovernmental organisations and internationally renowned human rights groups.

**Supporting organisations:**

[Amnesty International](#)

[Africa Network for Environment and Economic Justice](#), Benin

[Anti-Corruption Trust of Southern Africa](#), Kwekwe

[Article 19](#), London

[Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development](#) (FORUM-ASIA)

[Asia Justice and Rights](#), Jakarta

[Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact](#), Chiang Mai

[Asian Human Rights Commission](#), Hong Kong SAR

[Asia Monitor Resource Centre](#), Hong Kong SAR

[Association for Legal Intervention](#), Warsaw

[Association Humanrights.ch](#), Bern

[Association Malienne des Droits de l'Homme](#), Bamako

[Association of Ukrainian Human Rights Monitors on Law Enforcement](#), Kyiv

[Associazione Antigone](#), Rome

[Barys Zvozhkau Belarusian Human Rights House in exile](#), Vilnius

[Belarusian Helsinki Committee](#), Minsk

[Bir-Duino Kyrgyzstan](#), Bishkek

[Bulgarian Helsinki Committee](#), Sofia

[Canadian Human Rights International Organisation](#), Toronto

[Center for Civil Liberties](#), Kyiv

[Centre for Development and Democratization of Institutions](#), Tirana

[Centre for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights](#), Moscow

[Center for the Judiciary Watch of the People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy](#) (PSPD), Seoul

[China Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group](#), Hong Kong SAR

[Civil Rights Defenders](#), Stockholm

[Civil Society Institute](#), Yerevan

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<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Options for Promoting Human Rights Compliance by the International Association of Prosecutors, policy brief, October 2016.

[Citizen Watch](#), St. Petersburg  
[Collective Human Rights Defenders "Laura Acosta" International Organization COHURIDELA](#), Toronto  
[Comunidad de Derechos Humanos](#), La Paz  
[Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos](#), Lima  
[Destination Justice](#), Phnom Penh  
[East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project](#), Kampala  
[Equality Myanmar](#), Yangon  
[Faculty of Law - University of Indonesia](#), Depok  
[Fair Trials](#), London  
[Federation of Equal Journalists](#), Almaty  
[Former Vietnamese Prisoners of Conscience](#), Hanoi  
[Free Press Unlimited](#), Amsterdam  
[Front Line Defenders](#), Dublin  
[Foundation ADRA Poland](#), Wroclaw  
[German-Russian Exchange](#), Berlin  
[Gram Bharati Samiti](#), Jaipur  
[Helsinki Citizens' Assembly Vanadzor](#), Yerevan  
[Helsinki Association of Armenia](#), Yerevan  
[Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights](#), Warsaw  
[Human Rights Center Azerbaijan](#), Baku  
[Human Rights Center Georgia](#), Tbilisi  
[Human Rights Club](#), Baku  
[Human Rights Embassy](#), Chisinau  
[Human Rights House Foundation](#), Oslo  
[Human Rights Information Center](#), Kyiv  
[Human Rights Matter](#), Berlin  
[Human Rights Monitoring Institute](#), Vilnius  
[Human Rights Now](#), Tokyo  
[Human Rights Without Frontiers International](#), Brussels  
[Hungarian Civil Liberties Union](#), Budapest  
[IDP Women Association "Consent"](#), Tbilisi  
[IMPARSIAL, the Indonesian Human Rights Monitor](#), Jakarta  
[Index on Censorship](#), London  
[Indonesian Legal Roundtable](#), Jakarta  
[Institute for Criminal Justice Reform](#), Jakarta  
[Institute for Democracy and Mediation](#), Tirana  
[Institute for Development of Freedom of Information](#), Tbilisi  
[International Federation for Human Rights \(FIDH\)](#)  
[International Partnership for Human Rights](#), Brussels  
[International Service for Human Rights](#), Geneva  
[International Youth Human Rights Movement](#)  
[Jerusalem Institute of Justice](#), Jerusalem  
[Jordan Transparency Center](#), Amman  
[Justiça Global](#), Rio de Janeiro  
[Justice and Peace Netherlands](#), The Hague  
[Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and Rule of Law](#), Almaty  
[Kharkiv Regional Foundation Public Alternative](#), Kharkiv  
[Kosovo Center for Transparency, Accountability and Anti-Corruption - KUND 16](#), Prishtina  
[Kosova Rehabilitation Center for Torture Victims](#), Prishtina  
[Lawyers for Lawyers](#), Amsterdam  
[Lawyers for Liberty](#), Kuala Lumpur  
[League of Human Rights](#), Brno  
[Macedonian Helsinki Committee](#), Skopje  
[Masyarakat Pemantau Peradilan Indonesia \(Mappi FH-UI\)](#), Depok

[Moscow Helsinki Group](#), Moscow  
[National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders](#), Kampala  
[Netherlands Helsinki Committee](#), The Hague  
[Netherlands Institute of Human Rights \(SIM\)](#), [Utrecht University](#), Utrecht  
NGO "Aru ana", Aktobe  
[Pakistan Rural Workers Social Welfare Organization \(PRWSWO\)](#), Bahawalpur  
[Pen International](#), London  
[Philippine Human Rights Advocates \(PAHRA\)](#), Manila  
[Promo-LEX Association](#), Chisinau  
[Protection International](#), Brussels  
[Protection of Rights Without Borders](#), Yerevan  
[Public Association Dignity](#), Astana  
Public Association "Our Right", Kokshetau  
[Public Fund "Ar.Ruh.Hak"](#), Almaty  
Public Fund "Ulagatty Zhanaya", Almaty  
[Public Verdict Foundation](#), Moscow  
Regional Center for Strategic Studies, Baku/ Tbilisi  
[Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project \(SERAP\)](#), Lagos  
[Stefan Batory Foundation](#), Warsaw  
[Suara Rakyat Malaysia \(SUARAM\)](#), Petaling Jaya  
[Swiss Helsinki Association](#), Lenzburg  
[Transparency International Anti-corruption Center](#), Yerevan  
[Transparency International Austrian chapter](#), Vienna  
[Transparency International Česká republika](#), Prague  
[Transparency International Deutschland](#), Berlin  
[Transparency International EU Office](#), Brussels  
[Transparency International France](#), Paris  
[Transparency International Greece](#), Athens  
[Transparency International Greenland](#), Nuuk  
[Transparency International Hungary](#), Budapest  
[Transparency International Ireland](#), Dublin  
[Transparency International Italia](#), Milan  
[Transparency International Moldova](#), Chisinau  
[Transparency International Nederland](#), Amsterdam  
[Transparency International Norway](#), Oslo  
[Transparency International Portugal](#), Lisbon  
[Transparency International Romania](#), Bucharest  
[Transparency International Secretariat](#), Berlin  
[Transparency International Slovenia](#), Ljubljana  
[Transparency International España](#), Madrid  
[Transparency International Sverige](#), Stockholm  
[Transparency International Switzerland](#), Bern  
[Transparency International UK](#), London  
[UNITED for Intercultural Action](#) the European network against nationalism, racism, fascism and in support of migrants, refugees and minorities, Budapest  
[United Nations Convention against Corruption Civil Society Coalition](#)  
[Villa Decius Association](#), Krakow  
[Vietnam's Defend the Defenders](#), Hanoi  
[Vietnamese Women for Human Rights](#), Saigon  
[World Organisation Against Torture \(OMCT\)](#)  
[Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights](#), Harare