



New York, Barcelona, Düsseldorf, 31 October 2020

**Another lawyer from Turkey has been arrested!
Free Seda Saraldi**

**LAWYERS' ASSOCIATIONS PROTEST
ARREST OF TURKISH LAWYER SEDA SARALDI**

We, the undersigned international lawyers' associations, have for many years condemned the Turkish government's systematic attacks on lawyers and bar associations for representing people allegedly opposed to government policies.

Ten lawyers from the Peoples' Law Office and other members of the Progressive Lawyers Association have been in prison for more than three years. Eighteen lawyers from the Progressive Lawyers Association were sentenced to a total of 159 years and 2 months imprisonment following an unjust trial. Their right to defense and right to a fair trial were violated from the beginning to the end. The Turkish Supreme Court recently affirmed the unlawful convictions for fifteen of the accused lawyers.

During their incarceration, lawyers Ebru Timtik and Aytac Ünsal mounted a hunger strike to protest the unlawfulness of their convictions and demanded a fair trial for themselves and for every other person arrested. Tragically, Ebru Timtik died on the 238th of the day of her hunger strike.

Seda Saraldi, another lawyer who is a member of Progressive Lawyers Association and worked in the Peoples' Law Office as the intern of Ebru Timtik, was detained on 28 October, together with 101 clients of her office. Saraldi was arrested at her family's home at midnight. According to her defense lawyers, the police broke the door of the house and Saraldi was subjected to violence during her arrest.

After finishing her internship, Saraldi began working as an attorney in the Peoples' Law Office. She was one of the lawyers campaigning for the freedom of Ebru Timtik and Aytac Ünsal. During the one year she has practiced law, Saraldi has represented hundreds of vulnerable people, including the imprisoned lawyers.

The Turkish government does not follow its domestic law, and it also systematically violates the [*Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers*](#) (known as the *Havana Principles*). Under these principles, "Governments shall ensure that lawyers are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference." In addition, "Where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities." But it is the Turkish government that is threatening the security of these lawyers for discharging their functions. And, the principles provide, "Lawyers shall not be identified with their clients or their clients' causes as a result of discharging their functions."

Governments are obliged to remove the obstacles to the professional activity of lawyers and they should prevent any kind of harassment or unlawful interference against lawyers. However, in Turkey the harassment of the legal profession has become the policy of the government itself.

We demand again that the Turkish government live up to its obligations under the law. We also demand the immediate release of Seda Saraldi and all the other detained lawyers. Turkey must stop harassing lawyers and bar associations who are on the front lines of providing the right to defense.

- **International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL)**
- **European Democratic Lawyers (EDL – AED)**
- **European Association of Lawyers for Democracy & World Human Rights (ELDH)**