

PRESS RELEASE

Exceptional CCBE Human Rights Award for endangered lawyers in Afghanistan

20/10/2021

An exceptional Human Rights Award 2021 will be granted by the CCBE to endangered lawyers in Afghanistan to raise awareness of the urgent need to provide adequate protection to those lawyers who have been at the forefront of the defence of fundamental rights of the Afghan population before the change of the regime.

Many Afghan lawyers are being particularly targeted due to their active role in defending Afghan citizens' basic rights. The Afghanistan Independent Bar Association has been closed by the new Regime, making the independent exercise of the legal profession no longer possible. Lawyers are not only being targeted by the new regime, but also by prisoners who have been released following the Taliban takeover and who either hold accountable their former defence lawyers for their conviction or seek revenge against lawyers who represented victims in cases where they were convicted.

Female lawyers are particularly at risks and are being deprived of their basic rights, including the right to exercise their legitimate activities as lawyer, out of fear of serious reprisals.

The CCBE President, Margarete von Galen, said: "According to a reliable source on the ground, about 30 000 criminals were released from prisons, 10 000 of them being a direct threat for lawyers who have acted for them as defence lawyers or - especially female lawyers - who represented clients in cases where these prisoners were convicted. Currently, about 200 female lawyers are faced with life-threatening risks base on their legitimate activities."

The CCBE also wishes to emphasize the importance of the achievements made by the legal profession in Afghanistan for the protection

of fundamental rights, as well as it underlines the need for an independent legal profession and Bar in Afghanistan, in order to preserve the independence and integrity of the administration of justice and the rule of law.

For more information on the situation of the legal profession in Afghanistan, please consult the [CCBE background document](#).

The exceptional Award will be granted at the CCBE Plenary Session on 10 December in Berlin.

About the CCBE:

The Council of European Bars (CCBE) represents the Bars and Law Societies of 45 countries, and through them more than one million European lawyers. More information on the CCBE Human Rights Award and past recipients is available [here](#).

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