



The Law Society  
of England and Wales



## Latest Arrests Reveal a Disturbing Pattern of Harassment in Türkiye

6 July 2026

The Law Society of England and Wales (the Law Society) and Lawyers for Lawyers are gravely concerned about the escalating pattern of arrests, detentions and restrictions targeting lawyers in Türkiye. Recent actions against members of the Progressive Lawyers Association (Çağdaş Hukukçular Derneği, ÇHD) appear to form part of a broader crackdown on lawyers and human rights defenders during a period of heightened sensitivity in the lead-up to the 36th NATO Summit in Ankara to be held on 7 and 8 July 2026.

Our organisations previously expressed [concern](#) about the arrest of lawyers **Semra Demir, Kürşat Bafra** and **Doğa İncesu** on 23 June 2026, during coordinated police operations in Ankara and İstanbul. The authorities reportedly imposed confidentiality orders on the investigation files and restrictions on access to legal counsel during the initial stages of detention, raising serious concerns regarding due process and fair trial rights.

These arrests were followed by the detention of **Veysi Çetin**, Secretary of the İzmir Branch of ÇHD, on 1 July 2026, while attending an international youth event in his professional capacity. Our organisations [condemned](#) this action as part of an alarming pattern of arrests that was emerging. We note that Mr Çetin has now been released from detention, but remains subject to a travel ban, which continues to interfere with his freedom of movement and professional activities, contrary to international standards.

On 5 July 2026, further coordinated operations across several cities resulted in the detention of lawyers **Ezgi Önal** and **Yunus Emre Işık**, together with law students and trainee lawyers associated with ÇHD, including **Boran Işıldak, Burhan Can** and **Halil Arbağ**. Reports indicate that confidentiality orders and restrictions on access to legal counsel were again imposed. On 6 July 2026, lawyer **Özge Usanmaz** was arrested after visiting her detained clients at a police station in Ankara.

Taken together, these incidents raise serious concerns that lawyers are being targeted because of their professional activities and their association with clients, causes or organisations that are viewed critically by the authorities. The use of criminal investigations and restrictive measures against lawyers carrying out legitimate professional work is a matter of grave concern.

In accordance with its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), Türkiye must respect the rights to liberty and security, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and association, and the right to a fair trial.

Additionally, the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers provide that lawyers must be able to perform their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference, and must not be identified with their clients or their clients' causes as a result of discharging their professional duties. These standards are reaffirmed in the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer and the Committee of Ministers Recommendation (2000)21 on the freedom of exercise of the profession of lawyer.

In light of the above, we urge the relevant authorities in Türkiye to:

- Lift the travel ban imposed on Veysi Çetin and ensure that he can carry out his professional activities without restriction;
- Immediately release all lawyers, law students and trainee lawyers who remain arbitrarily detained, including Semra Demir, Kürşat Bafra, Doğa İncesu, Ezgi Önal, Yunus Emre Işık, Boran Işıldak, Burhan Can, Halil Arbağ and Özge Usanmaz;

- Lift the confidentiality orders and restrictions on access to legal counsel, and ensure that all detainees, including lawyers, have full and prompt access to legal counsel of their choosing;
- Ensure that lawyers can perform their professional functions without intimidation, harassment, surveillance, detention or other forms of improper interference;
- Refrain from using detention powers and criminal proceedings to restrict legitimate civil society activity, peaceful assembly and public participation ahead of the NATO Summit and other major public events;
- Promptly sign, ratify and implement the Council of Europe Convention for the Protection of the Profession of Lawyer.

The Law Society and Lawyers for Lawyers will continue to monitor developments closely and urge the authorities of the Republic of Türkiye to end all forms of harassment and interference against lawyers and human rights defenders and ensure that they can carry out their work without fear of reprisals.