



The Law Society
of England and Wales



Call for immediate release of lawyer Veysi Çetin and an end to attacks on the legal profession in Türkiye

3 July 2026

Lawyers for Lawyers and the Law Society of England and Wales are deeply concerned by the detention of lawyer Veysi Çetin on 1 July 2026 in Çanakkale. Based on information received, we have reasons to believe that this detention is linked to his legitimate professional activities and forms part of a broader pattern of arbitrary detentions targeting lawyers, civil society actors, students and political activists ahead of the upcoming 36th NATO Summit in Ankara. We call on the authorities in Türkiye to immediately and unconditionally release Mr Çetin and ensure his full access to legal counsel and the information necessary to exercise his right of defence.

Mr Çetin is a lawyer and Secretary of the İzmir Branch of the Progressive Lawyers Association (Çağdaş Hukukçular Derneği, ÇHD), an organisation whose members regularly represent political opponents, trade unionists and human rights defenders. ÇHD and its members have long been subject to judicial harassment, criminal prosecution and imprisonment in connection with their professional activities.

According to information received, in the early hours of 1 July 2026, Mr Çetin was taken into police custody during a law enforcement operation in Çanakkale while attending an international youth event in his professional capacity. At the invitation of his clients, Mr Çetin was asked to provide training on the exercise of fundamental rights in the context of the right to peaceful assembly and association. During the operation, Mr Çetin and other attendees were reportedly subjected to rear-handcuffing despite the absence of any apparent security justification for such a measure. Reports further indicate that the authorities imposed a confidentiality order on the investigation file, preventing Mr Çetin and his legal representatives from accessing information concerning the allegations against him and the evidence relied upon by the authorities.

This detention follows closely the arrest and [detention](#) on 23 June 2026 of fellow ÇHD lawyers Semra Demir, Kürşat Bafra and Doğa İncesu during large-scale operations in Ankara and Istanbul. Together, these incidents raise serious concerns regarding an emerging pattern of arbitrary deprivation of liberty and restrictions on fundamental rights ahead of the NATO Summit scheduled to take place in Ankara on 7–8 July 2026. Civil society organisations have strongly [criticised](#) these measures, along with the [ban](#) on all public demonstrations, distribution of leaflets and display of banners, as attempts to restrict civic space, suppress peaceful dissent and deter participation in public discussion and assembly.

We recall Türkiye's obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), including the rights to liberty and security, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and association, and the right to a fair trial. We further note that allegations concerning the disproportionate use of restraints during detention engage Türkiye's obligations to prevent and investigate ill-treatment as a party to the Convention against Torture.

Furthermore, 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 reflected 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.

A lawyer's attendance at meetings, events or activities in the course of representing clients or protecting their rights falls within the legitimate exercise of the legal profession and should never constitute grounds for criminal suspicion or detention.

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

- Immediately and unconditionally release lawyer Veysi Çetin, as well as fellow ÇHD lawyers Semra Demir, Kürşat Bafra and Doğa İncesu, who remain in pre-trial detention;
- Lift the confidentiality order imposed on the investigation file and ensure that Mr Çetin and his legal representatives have full and prompt access to all case materials and evidence;
- Ensure that Mr Çetin has access to legal counsel of his choosing and that all procedural safeguards are fully respected;
- Investigate the reported use of rear-handcuffing and ensure that all law enforcement measures comply with the principles of legality, necessity and proportionality;
- End the criminalisation of the legal profession and guarantee that all lawyers in Türkiye can carry out their professional duties without fear of reprisal, undue restriction or harassment;
- 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 above-mentioned organisations will continue to monitor this situation closely. We call on the authorities of the Republic of Türkiye to ensure that lawyers, human rights defenders and civil society actors are able to carry out their legitimate activities without fear of reprisals, harassment or undue interference, in accordance with Türkiye's obligations under international human rights law and international standards protecting the legal profession.