**BY AIRMAIL**Bekir BozdağMinistry of JusticeAdalet Bakanlığı06659 ANKARA **TURKEY**

<<PLACE>>, 10 December 2014

Your Excellency,

The Lawyers for Lawyers Foundation (L4L) has expressed its grave concern about the continuing harassment of our colleague Ms. Eren Keskin. (As a Dutch lawyer, ) I fully share these concerns.

According to my information, Eren Keskin was convicted in December 2014 of “insulting the Turkish state” because in 2005, during a public meeting on human rights, she spoke out against the killing of a 12-year-old boy by the army. She was sentenced to one year in prison, reduced to ten months. She appealed this decision.

Lawyers for Lawyers fears that the prosecution of Eren Keskin is connected to, and serves to curb, her valuable human rights activities. Many more lawyers in Turkey have been targeted in connection to their professional activities as attorneys. This has resulted in arrests of- and trials against at least 70 lawyers.

In view of the above, I would like to draw your attention to UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers[[1]](#footnote-1), and more in particular Articles 16 and 23, which read:

*16. Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference (…) and (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.*

*23. Lawyers like other citizens are entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association and assembly. In particular, they shall have the right to take part in public discussion of matters concerning the law, the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights and to join or form local, national or international organizations and attend their meetings, without suffering professional restrictions by reason of their lawful action or their membership in a lawful organization. In exercising these rights, lawyers shall always conduct themselves in accordance with the law and the recognized standards and ethics of the legal profession.*

Human Rights Day, 10 December, is the day that the UN General Assembly proclaimed in 1950 to bring to the attention ‘of the peoples of the world’ the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as the common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations. In view of this, I urge the authorities of Turkey to ensure that the charges against Eren Keskin are dropped, and that all human rights lawyers in Turkey will be able to practice law without threat, intimidation, hindrance, harassment, improper interference or reprisals.

I thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

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1. The UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers provide a concise description of international norms relating to the key aspects of the right to independent counsel. The Basic Principles were unanimously adopted by the Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders in Havana, Cuba on 7 September 1990. Subsequently, the UN General Assembly “welcomed” the Basic Principles in their ‘Human rights in the administration of justice’ resolution, which was adopted without a vote on 18 December 1990 in both the session of the Third Committee and the plenary session of the General Assembly. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)