



Organization: Lawyers for Lawyers

Item: 6

Date: 24, 27, 28 March

Speaker: Ms. Marije Pricker

**Oral Statement to the 52nd Session of the UN Human Rights Council from Lawyers for Lawyers, NGO in special consultative status**

Mr President,

We welcome the decision of Indonesia to accept almost all of the recommendations made at its fourth UPR related to the protection of human rights defenders and lawyers.<sup>i</sup> We call upon Indonesia to effectively implement these recommendations without delay.

A fundamental aspect of the rule of law is access to legal representation by an independent legal profession. Lawyers must be able to carry out their professional duties without harassment, intimidation, or improper interference.

In Indonesia, lawyers are often faced with difficulties in accessing clients, especially since the pandemic, when detained persons' access to independent counsel was blocked. We have been informed that law enforcement officials still block lawyers from legal access to their clients both at detention centers and police stations.

Furthermore, there have been multiple reports of harassment and intimidation of lawyers, particularly for lawyers working on politically sensitive cases. This harassment includes anonymous phone calls, threats, attacks at the workplace, and in some cases comes from members of law enforcement agencies or investigative bodies. Impunity for such threats and harassment creates an extremely high risk of a "chilling effect" on the legal profession, potentially preventing other Indonesian lawyers from taking on similar legal cases.

Concerns about the freedom of expression of lawyers have also been raised, particularly in the cases of lawyers representing minority groups such as Papuans.

We urge Indonesia to:

- Take immediate measures to ensure lawyers can access their clients without difficulty;
- Take immediate measures to safeguard the independence of lawyers and provide protection against any form of undue interference with their work.
- Guarantee the freedom of expression and safety of all lawyers, particularly those representing minorities.

Thank you.

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<sup>i</sup> Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review for Indonesia, 17 March 2023, A/HRC/52/8/Add.1  
Supported recommendations:

140.96 Design effective mechanisms to guarantee the protection of human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists (Uruguay)

140.99 Refrain from any actions that may constitute harassment, persecution or undue interference in the work of lawyers and human rights defenders, including their criminal prosecution on grounds such as the expression of critical views (Netherlands)

140.53 Adopt legislation and implement comprehensive policies for the protection of human rights defenders, including environmental defenders, activists and journalists (Costa Rica);

140.54 Adopt a comprehensive policy and legal framework for the protection of human rights defenders that provides for a preventive protection mechanism (Switzerland);

140.55 Ensure a safe and secure space of expression for civil society, including for environmental and human rights defenders and for journalists, by revising the relevant domestic legal framework (Romania);

140.95 Step up its efforts to protect human rights defenders against unlawful prosecution (Greece);

140.96 Design effective mechanisms to guarantee the protection of human rights defenders, lawyers and journalists (Uruguay);

140.97 Ensure that all attacks, threats and intimidation towards civil society organizations and human rights defenders are investigated promptly, independently, impartially and effectively (Belgium);

140.98 Take further steps to comply with the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders to guarantee a safe and enabling environment for human rights defenders, including by investigating and prosecuting threats, harassment and attacks against them (Norway);

140.101 Conduct impartial, thorough and effective investigations into all cases of attacks, harassment and intimidation against civil society activists, human rights defenders, journalists and media workers (Estonia)

Noted recommendations:

140.104 Immediately and unconditionally release all protesters, human rights defenders and journalists detained for exercising their civil and political rights, including the right to freedom of peaceful assembly (Luxembourg)