

LAWYERS FOR LAWYERS



Annual report 2014



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Lawyers for Lawyers (L4L) is an independent and non-political Dutch foundation that was founded in 1986. L4L supports worldwide lawyers and organizations of lawyers that are being oppressed. L4L was granted Special Consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council in July 2013.

www.lawyersforlawyers.org

Preface

Dear Sir, Madam,

In a lawyer's daily practice the rule-of-law-concept is not constantly, nor overwhelmingly, present. One may fear that 'billable hours' easily scores higher on a lawyer's list of worries.

For **L4L**, the Rule of Law is the centre of its focus and the cornerstone of its being. The right to a fair trial is just one of the fundamental rights that leads to the requirement that lawyers, as "essential agents of the administration of justice" are able to act totally independently as well as exclusively on behalf of their clients.

Whenever any of our more than 50 volunteer-lawyers is involved in **L4L**-activities the notion of the rule-of-law becomes real and alive because of the confrontation with the lack thereof in the daily practice of our colleagues across the world.

In 2014 we, again, worked on behalf of more than 100 lawyers, who were actively restricted, hindered, harassed, prosecuted, imprisoned or sometimes even worse. And these are only the ones that we got to know about and for whom **L4L** organized campaigns, demonstrated, lobbied, sent out fact finding missions and trial-monitoring delegations and submitted urgent reports at several UN and EU bodies. Without any doubt the number of threatened lawyers across the world runs into the thousands.



Phon van den Biesen

The number of unbillable hours spent by **L4L**-lawyers, including the hours spent by the Members of the **L4L** Board, at a rough estimate, easily surpasses 8,000, which is in the first place illustrative of the extent of the need for our actions. This report aims to show you numbers, names and concrete actions that illustrate exactly what Lawyers for Lawyers has been up to and will continue to be up to.

We look forward to your observations and also to your ongoing support in 2015 and years to come.

Phon van den Biesen,
President of Lawyers for Lawyers

Wrongly detained in Vietnam

Human rights lawyer and blogger Le Quoc Quan

Le Quoc Quan is a Vietnamese human rights lawyer and blogger and has been detained since 2012, officially because of tax evasion. The United Nations (UN) have called his imprisonment unjust and called upon Vietnam to release him immediately. **L4L** has for years been fighting for the acquittal of [Le Quoc Quan](#).

Speaking at the United Nations

Le Quoc Quan asked **L4L** to bring his case to international attention. Lawyers of the focus group South-East Asia keep in close contact with him and his family. One of them is the lawyer Otto Volgenant (Boekx advocaten, Amsterdam). In 2014 he was in Geneva to draw attention to Le Quoc Quan's situation at the Human Rights Council of the United Nations.

Stay brave

Otto: 'Le Quoc Quan's mother, a small Vietnamese lady who doesn't speak a word of English, was also in Geneva. It was the first time in her life that she left Vietnam. It gives Le Quoc Quan and his family great moral support that we have drawn attention to his fate at the highest international level. To keep on fighting bravely, international support is tremendously important.'



Volunteer Otto Volgenant at the UN

Focus groups in South-East Asia, China and the Philippines took action in 2014 on behalf of **17** lawyers in [Vietnam](#), [Pakistan](#), [Indonesia](#), [Sri Lanka](#), [the Philippines](#) and [China](#). In all, they sent **7** statements and letters.

UN activities of **L4L** in 2014

- **L4L** presented in total **4** Universal Periodic Review¹ submissions. We did this for Iran, Vietnam, Turkey and Kazakhstan.
- **L4L** filed **1** submission at the Human Rights Committee under the ICCPR² for Russia.
- **L4L** submitted **5** statements to the Human Rights Council.
- **L4L** participated in **2** pre-sessions of UPR-info.

'We are extremely grateful for Lawyers for Lawyers' persistent support and campaigning for our husband and brother. [It] protects Quan from mistreatment in prison. He is safer because of you! Quan or any other lawyers in distress will no longer be lonely.'

brother of Le Quoc Quan



Le Quoc Quan before detention and after his hunger strike

Lawyers for Lawyers Focus groups

Ten focus groups, with about 50 lawyer-volunteers, form the backbone of the organisation. These working groups focus on the specific situation of lawyers in a certain country or region.



Volunteers during course

Activities **L4L** Vietnam in 2014

- 12-02-2014 – **L4L** participates in 'side-event' for UPR
- 14-02-2014 – Joint statement: Le Quoc Quan in hunger strike
- 17-02-2014 – Letter to court in appeal proceedings Quan
- 19-02-2014 – Joint press release: Appeal Court upholds Quan's sentence
- 29-05-2014 – Written statement for the UPR outcome of Vietnam at UN
- 27-08-2014 – Letter to authorities and petition to WGAD³
- 16-09-2014 – Oral statement at UN Human Rights Council
- 10-12-2014 – letter-writing campaign and Christmas cards campaign for Quan

Publications

March 2014 – **L4L** at Human Rights Council in Geneva

Mass arrests in Turkey

46 lawyers behind bars

In Turkey groups of lawyers have been prosecuted on several occasions. The largest group arrest was in 2011. 46 Turkish lawyers were arrested because of an 'anti-terrorism operation', intended to eradicate the Kurdish Communities Union (KCK). Turkish authorities view the KCK as the urban wing of the banned Kurdish PKK. All 46 lawyers had acted on behalf of (former) PKK members. In February 2014, the remaining 15 lawyers still in pre-trial detention were released.

Trial observation missions in Turkey

Angela Meijer (Van der Woude De Graaf Advocaten, Amsterdam) is a member of the focus group Turkey. She attended the trials in Turkey as an international observer. Angela: 'The detained lawyers told us that international attention is helpful, and it also gives moral support, courage and strength.'

Influence on politics

Angela: 'I feel it is my responsibility to help colleagues who are in difficult situations. Nobody knows whether it helps the court case, but it does help in political terms. The lawyers understood that the international solidarity prevented further operations.'

In 2014, focus group Turkey monitored **4** hearings in cases against **62** Turkish lawyers. The remaining **15** lawyers still in pre-trial detention were released this year. The President of the Istanbul Bar Association was acquitted of all charges.



Court case against KCK

Activities **L4L** Turkey in 2014

- 06-01-2014 – **L4L** attends hearing of President Ümit Kocasakal
- 26-02-2014 – **L4L** attends hearing: President and Board Istanbul Bar Association acquitted.
- 21-03-2014 – Pre-trial detention remaining lawyers lifted
- 01-07-2014 – Joint UPR submission **L4L**, LRWC, Law Society and FTW
- 14-11-2014 – **L4L** observes hearings in Istanbul

'The international attention is helpful and gives moral support, courage and strength. It meant a lot to us. [...] In our view, the international and national solidarity prevented further operations.'

Quote from a thank-you letter for observers at the trial of Ibrahim Bilmez, a lawyer at the law firm Asrin Hukuk Bürosu in Istanbul.



Trial observers Turkey

Case against President of Istanbul Bar Association.

In January 2014 both the Board of the Istanbul Bar Association and the President, Ümit Kocasakal, were summoned to appear in court charged with 'influencing the judge'. Later that year they were [acquitted](#) by the court.

Other concerned Presidents

L4L attended [all hearings](#) in the case and asked a number of Dutch representatives to observe the trial on behalf of other concerned Presidents of Bar Associations in the Netherlands.

Video as teaching material

L4L interviewed a number of the released Turkish lawyers and turned this into a video. These videos are used as teaching material in the vocational training of lawyers.

Lawyers for Lawyers in the media (Turkey)

- 07-01-2014 – Radio 1 interview Hans van Veggel, former President of the Bar Association
- January 2014 – BNR Radio interview Judith Lichtenberg
- 04-03-2014 – *Advocatenblad* interview Umit Kocasakal
- April 2014 – *Advocatenblad* interview lawyer Ramazan Demir
- December 2014 – *Advocatenblad* article 'Tombola of Turkish law'

The Caravana in Colombia

Caravana Internacional de Juristas

As it had done so in 2010 and 2012, **L4L** participated in the **Caravana Internacional de Juristas** in Colombia in 2014. One of the most important aims of the Caravana is to increase the visibility of the work of Colombian human rights lawyers.



Number of Caravana participants

Dramatic stories

During the Caravana, participants talked to judges, lawyers and authorities. Two volunteers of the **L4L** focus group Latin America attended in 2014. Harald Wiersema, (NautaDutilh Amsterdam) is one of them. Harald: 'I was asked to join because of my Spanish-language background. I heard many dramatic stories about threats, murder, extortion and torture, often through the eyes and ears of family and friends.'

Hopeful but realistic

Harald is hopeful but realistic about his contribution: 'In Colombia, I saw how failure is embedded within the system. Lawyers are often threatened. With my work for the focus group, I make my own small contribution. Hopefully, many small contributions together make the difference.'



Harald Wiersema

Missions in numbers

During the Caravana mission **70** lawyers, judges and other legal professionals visited **8** regions in Colombia: Bogota, Bucaramanga, Buenaventura, Cali, Cartagena, Medellin, Pasto and Santa Marta. **2** volunteers from **L4L** participated in the mission. It was the 3rd time that **L4L** participated in the Caravana mission. In 2014 **L4L** went on **2** fact-finding missions (to the Ukraine and Colombia) and **5** trial monitoring missions (**4** to Turkey and **1** to Kazakhstan).

Rommel Durán Castellanos

In its report on the mission, the Caravana expressed its concern about lawyer Rommel Durán Castellanos. Rommel was arrested in August 2014 and detained for 20 hours in dire circumstances. He was released after national and international protests. **L4L**, too, asked for attention to be drawn to his situation.



Rommel Durán Castellanos

Awareness

In 2014 the Day of the Endangered Lawyer focused on Columbia. Guest Speaker was the Colombian lawyer Miguel Puerto, who was interviewed by Alice Krispijn of the focus group Latin America. Apart from hosting events, **L4L** also gives frequent presentations to create **awareness**. At these presentations, the knowledge and use of the [Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers](#) is promoted. In all, **L4L** gave six presentations for various stakeholders in 2014. President Phon van den Biesen was also a guest on the 'lawyers tour' of the vocational education for lawyers.



Miguel Puerto and Alice Krispijn

Support

L4L gives threatened lawyers support in a number of ways. **L4L** lobbies for threatened lawyers in The Hague, Geneva and New York, as well as at the authorities of the country concerned. **L4L** publishes articles, draws attention to the key values of lawyers and organises various missions.

There are fact-finding missions to investigate the background of a case, observation missions to attend trials and letter-writing campaigns to send letters to the authorities.

Strong women in the Middle-East

Where is the Syrian lawyer Razan Zaitouneh?

On 9 December 2013, the Syrian lawyer [Razan Zaitouneh](#) and her husband and two colleagues were kidnapped in Douma. Exactly one year later, Razan and the others are still missing. On 9 December 2014 **L4L** and 56 other organisations released a joint statement, requesting the immediate release of these four.

Earlier unrest

As a young lawyer, Razan mainly represented political prisoners. She could do her work in relatively calm surroundings until 2011. Since then, she has been the target of the authorities and even had to go into hiding. When the authorities failed to arrest her, they arrested her brother.

Major campaign of threats and intimidation

The imprisonment of Razan is part of a major campaign of threats and intimidation of anyone who tries to raise the subject of human rights violations in Syria.

In 2014 **L4L** cooperated with at least **57** human rights organisations for campaigns in Syria. During the human rights day on 10 December, **L4L** conducted a large-scale campaign for lawyers in Syria.



Razan Zaitouneh

Activities **L4L** Syria in 2014

- 19-03-2014 – Call for the release of human rights lawyer Mazen Darwish
- 05-05-2014 – Joint statement 1.5 years since the disappearance of Khalil Ma'touq
- 30-05-2014 – Joint statement **L4L**: Razan Zaitouneh missing for six months
- 07-09-2014 – Call for the release of Mazen Darwish
- 02-10-2014 – Joint statement for the release of Khalil Ma'touq
- 09-12-2014 – Joint statement **L4L**: Razan Zaitouneh missing for one year

Articles in Advocatenblad

- Dec. 2014 – Where is Razan Zaitouneh?

Egyptian lawyer released after receiving Award

On 2 January 2014 the Egyptian lawyer [Mahinour el-Massry](#) was sentenced to two years imprisonment and a fine of 50,000 Egyptian pounds. She was alleged to have violated the law against protests, attacked security forces and hindered traffic.

Ludovic Trarieux Award

Later that year she was granted the Ludovic Trarieux Award. Shortly afterwards, on 21 September 2014, the Court of Appeal reversed her judgment. She was released immediately.



Mahinour el-Massry

'Others were less lucky'

El-Massry: 'Others were less lucky. I was the only one who was acquitted, my friends are still detained. Before the judge gave his judgment, he asked me about the award. [...] I now know what jail means. By having us experience the things they frightened us with, they only make us stronger. '



Nasrin Sotoudeh

Good news from Iran?

[Nasrin Sotoudeh](#), Iranian, defended many human rights activists who were arrested after the presidential elections in 2009. In 2010 she was sentenced herself for, among other things, not wearing a headscarf.

L4L took action on her behalf with letter-writing campaigns and by lobbying at the UN. After her release in 2013, Nasrin thanked **L4L** in January 2014 in a [video message](#). Later that year she was again briefly arrested. Her licence was withdrawn, which made it impossible for her to practise her work as a lawyer.

Concerns over Eurasia

Forced psychiatric confinement in Kazakhstan

On a summer day in 2013, four police officers, accompanied by a group of doctors, forcibly entered the apartment of the lawyer Zinaida Mukhortova. They forced her into an ambulance that took her to a psychiatric hospital.



Kazakhstan

Old Soviet methods in Kazakhstan

Zinaida worked for more than ten years as a lawyer in Kazakhstan. She gave free legal advice to the local population and denounced corruption and the interference of political interests in the judiciary. Her forced psychiatric confinement seems connected to her activities as a lawyer. This is a well-known method from the Soviet era, to silence alleged troublemakers.

Serious concerns

L4L is concerned about the situation of Mukhortova. In a letter, **L4L** called upon the Kazakhstan authorities to release her immediately and to guarantee her physical and psychological integrity. *In the end, this has happened.*



Zinaida Mukhortova

Activities **L4L** Eurasia in 2014

- 31-01-2014 – Web article "Lawyers in Kazakhstan disbarred for 'breach of professional ethics'."
- 20-03-2014 – Kazakhstan: submission to the UPR
- 07-04-2014 – **L4L** observer at the trial of Lyubov Agushevich and Polina Zhukova in Kazakhstan
- 11-07-2014 – Letter for Zinaida Mukhortova from Kazakhstan
- 30-12-2014 – Attorney Vitaly Cherkasov from Russian Federation attacked

"I think that there are no legal, but political motives behind those charges. Intigam Aliyev underlines his detention was connected with his activity as human rights defender, and the purpose of this is to silence him down, based on a political instruction from above."

Lawyer of Intigam Aliyev



Intigam Aliyev

Azerbaijan

As a human rights lawyer, [Intigam Aliyev](#) brought more than 200 cases to the European Court of Human Rights. Until July 2014, when he was himself summoned for questioning. He was accused of, among other things, tax evasion, and was immediately remanded in custody. Aliyev denied all charges and stated that the motives were not legal but political. **L4L** organised, among other things, a letter-writing campaign for Aliyev.



Azerbaijan

Activities **L4L** Azerbaijan in 2014

- 20-08-2014 – Joint letter: human rights lawyer Intigam Aliyev in pre-trial detention
- 18-09-2014 – Website message: Court decides that Aliyev be kept in pre-trial detention
- 07-11-2014 – Website message: Court extends Aliyev's pre-trial detention
- 24-12-2014 – **L4L** letter: Khalid Bagirov disbarred for 'breach of professional ethics'

Key figures

In 2014 **L4L** cooperated with **50** lawyers, who work in **10** focus groups: South-East Asia; China; Turkey; Latin America; Russian Federation; Eurasia; Africa; Philippines; Iran/Syria; Gulf States

L4L in 2014 was engaged in **29** written interventions and distributed **6** letter-writing campaigns.

In 2014 **L4L** was active in 30 countries:

Azerbaijan	Malaysia
Bahrain	Mexico
China	Ukraine
Colombia	Pakistan
The Congo	Russia
Brazil	Saudi Arabia
Cuba	Sri Lanka
Egypt	Swaziland
The Philippines	Syria
Indonesia	Tajikistan
Iraq	Thailand
Iran	Turkey
Kazakhstan	U.A. Emirates
Kyrgyzstan	Vietnam
Libya	Zimbabwe

In 2014 **17** people who **L4L** had taken action for were released.

L4L in 2014 cooperated with more than **60** organisations in, among other things, joint statements.

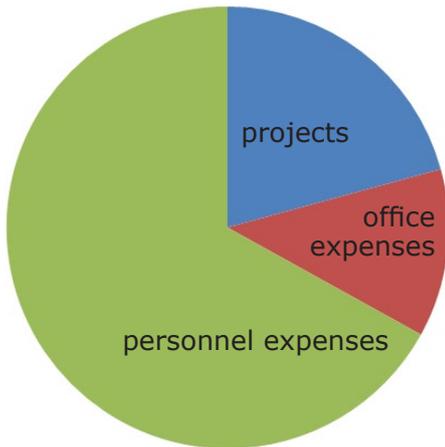
In 2014 **L4L** took action for, in total, **141** individual lawyers. **71** in Turkey, **14** in Eurasia, **15** in Colombia, **6** in the Middle East, **3** in Africa, **12** in South-East Asia, **12** in Iran, **3** in Syria and **5** in China.

In 2014 the Board of **L4L** comprised 7 (former) lawyers namely Phon van den Biesen, Irma van den Berg, Robert Crince le Roy, Bernadette Ficq, Joost Italianer, Judith Lichtenberg and Tony Vermeulen.

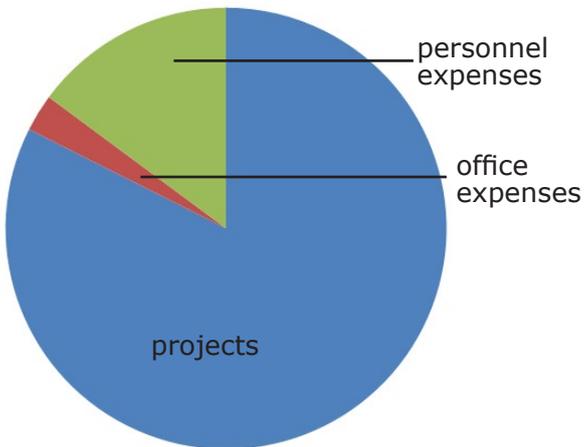
The Managing Director Adrie van de Streek is supported by two part-time assistants and one volunteer for administrative work.

Financial accountability

Expenses 2014

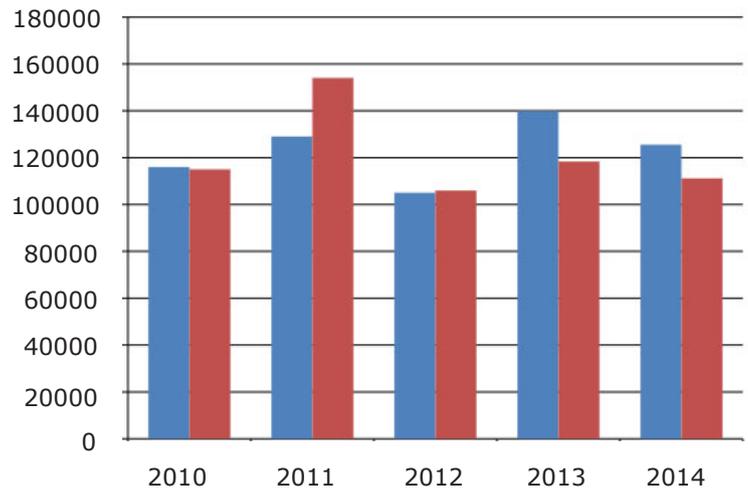
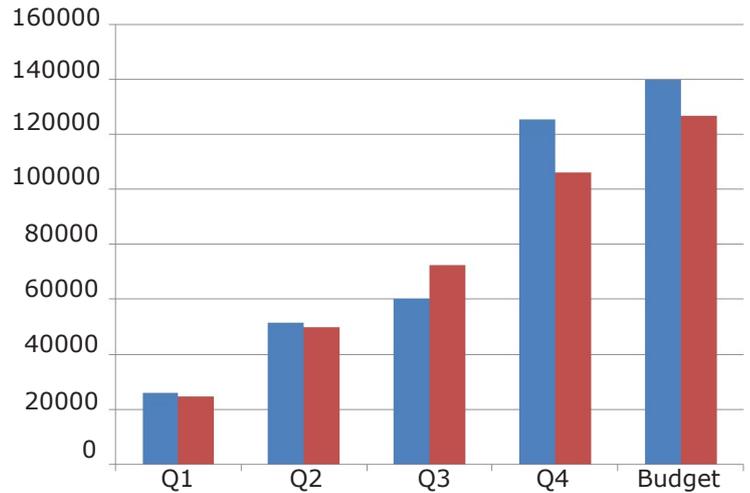


Excluding work hours volunteers



Including work hours volunteers

Results term 1, 2, 3 en 4



For further details on the finances of **L4L**, please see our [annual account](#).

Remuneration policy

Fee attendance money

Board members receive no fee attendance money or other allowances for the work they perform for **L4L**, except for the expenses referred to below.

Expenses

If an employee of **L4L** carries out work at the request of the Board and travel or accommodation expenses are incurred, these costs are reimbursed within reason.

If a Board member or another **L4L** volunteer carries out work at the request of the Board and travel or accommodation expenses are incurred, these costs are reimbursed within reason. In every other respect they receive no reimbursement whatsoever for these trips, any loss of income or holiday days taken up are for their own account.

If the Board decides that the above-mentioned activities need to be undertaken, it also determines how many people are entitled to be reimbursed for their travel or accommodation expenses.

To support the Executive Director and the focus groups, **L4L** has two on-call assistants. Of the personnel costs, 1/3 is allocated to 'General policy and management', and 2/3 to 'Projects'.

Policy plan

Click [here](#) for the policy plan for 2014-2017 (in Dutch).

Annotations (page 2 and 3)

¹ The UPR is a process undertaken by the UN Human Rights Council. It involves review of the human rights records of all 192 UN Member States once every four years.

² International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

³ WGAD is a UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention



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Lawyers for Lawyers
PO Box 7113
1007 JC Amsterdam
T: +31 (0)20 7171 638
F: +31 (0)20 7171 111

www.lawyersforlawyers.org