

## **Turkey: Urgent International Joint Call for the Immediate Release of Atty. Veysi Çetin and the Cessation of Arbitrary Police Custody**

**July 2, 2026**

We, the undersigned organizations, formally express our grave concern regarding the arbitrary placement in police custody of lawyer Veysi Çetin, Secretary of the İzmir Branch of the Progressive Lawyers Association (Çağdaş Hukukçular Derneği | ÇHD). Atty. Çetin was taken into police custody on 1 July 2026, during a pre-dawn raid in Çanakkale, where he was attending an international youth event in his professional capacity upon the invitation of his clients. It is a matter of profound concern that, during this operation, Lawyer Çetin and all other attendees were subjected to the disproportionate physical measure of rear-handcuffing, a measure disproportionate to any security requirement in the circumstances. The use of such restraint raises significant concerns regarding the absolute prohibition of torture and ill-treatment under international human rights law.

The procedural circumstances surrounding Lawyer Çetin's custody also raise grave concerns regarding the violation of due process and the right to an effective defense. Authorities have imposed a confidentiality order (secrecy decision) on the investigation file, thereby categorically obstructing the defense team's access to the specific accusations and the alleged evidence. This arbitrary restriction severely undermines the fundamental right to a fair trial and constitutes a direct interference with the right of defense from the very inception of the legal proceedings.

This restrictive measure against Lawyer Çetin cannot be viewed as an isolated incident. It is indicative of a broader, systemic pattern of arbitrary placements in police custody observed over the past week, disproportionately targeting workers, students, legal practitioners, and members of the political opposition across multiple provinces in Turkey. The factual circumstances strongly suggest that the underlying objective of this practice of the state is the preemptive suppression of democratic assembly, anti-war advocacy, and civil society space ahead of the upcoming 36th NATO Summit, scheduled to be held in Ankara on 7–8 July 2026. Such preemptive deprivation of liberty undermines the foundational principles of a democratic society and violates the rights to personal liberty and security, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and association.

Furthermore, we categorically condemn the ongoing criminalization of the legitimate professional activities of legal representatives. The United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (the Havana Principles), specifically Article 18, expressly provides that lawyers shall not be identified with their clients or their clients' causes as a result of discharging their professional functions. Lawyer Çetin's attendance at the aforementioned event at the explicit request of his clients, alongside his engagement in international and public discourse, falls squarely within the scope of his professional mandate and societal responsibility. Such activities do not constitute a legal basis for criminal suspicion or placement in police custody. Attempts to confine the practice of law strictly to the courtroom contravene the established standards of an independent and effective legal profession.

The arbitrary placement of lawyers in police custody, coupled with the disproportionate use of physical force, constitutes a material breach of domestic procedural safeguards and international and regional obligations, including the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

Therefore, the undersigned organizations urgently call upon the relevant authorities of the Republic of Turkey to:

1. Ensure the immediate and unconditional release of Lawyer Veysi Çetin and all other individuals subjected to arbitrary police custody in connection with the same law enforcement operation.
2. Immediately cease the disproportionate and punitive use of police force, including the unwarranted application of rear-handcuffs on legal professionals and civilians, and ensure that all law enforcement actions comply strictly with the principles of necessity and proportionality.
3. Immediately lift the arbitrary confidentiality order imposed on the investigation file, guaranteeing Lawyer Çetin and his legal defense team full and unimpeded access to all case materials and evidence.
4. End the ongoing criminalization of the legal profession, guaranteeing that all lawyers in Turkey are fully capable of executing their professional duties without fear of intimidation, hindrance, harassment, or improper judicial interference
5. Refrain from employing the criminal justice system as a preemptive tool to silence democratic opposition, civil society actors, and public discourse ahead of the 36th NATO Summit and other international forums.

The undersigned organizations will continue to monitor these developments with the utmost vigilance. As Turkey prepares to host the NATO Summit, the eyes of the world are on the country and its human rights record, including its treatment of lawyers who work to defend fundamental rights. We reiterate our unwavering solidarity with Lawyer Veysi Çetin and our colleagues at the Progressive Lawyers Association (ÇHD) in their legitimate defense of human rights, due process, and the rule of law.

**Signatories:**

Avocats européens démocrates - European Democratic Lawyers (AED-EDL)

Bologna Bar Association, Italy

Bundesrechtsanwaltskammer - The German Federal Bar (BRAK)

Center for Research and Elaboration on Democracy (CRED), Italy

Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (Conseil des Barreaux Européens, CCBE)

Defense Commission of the Barcelona Bar Association

Défense Sans Frontière – Avocats Solidaires (DSF-AS), France

Deutscher Anwaltverein (German Bar Association)

European Association of Lawyers for Democracy and World Human Rights (ELDH)

Federation of European Bars (FBE)

Foundation Day of the Endangered Lawyer

International Association of Russian Advocates

International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI)

Monza Bar Association, Italy

National Association of Democratic Lawyers (South Africa)

New York City Bar Association, United States

Osservatorio Avvocati Minacciati di UCPI (Endangered Lawyers Observatory of the Union of Italian Criminal Chambers), Italy

Republican Lawyers Association (Republikanischer Anwältinnen- und Anwälteverein- RAV), Germany

Rovereto Bar Association, Italy

Swiss Democratic Lawyers

Torino (Turin) Bar Association, Italy

Vereinigung Demokratischer Jurist:innen (Association of Democratic Lawyers-VDJ), Germany