

**United Nations Human Rights Council  
33rd Regular Session, 13 to 30 September 2016  
Agenda Item 4**

**Oral Statement by the International Commission of Jurists in the General Debate under  
Agenda Item 4**

**Rule of Law Crisis in Turkey**

19 September 2016

Mr President,

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) wishes to draw the Council's attention to the crisis of the rule of law in Turkey, and its serious consequences for the protection of human rights.

Within hours of the failed coup attempt in July, the Government initiated a purge of the judiciary on an unprecedented scale. At least 3,300 judges and prosecutors have been dismissed or suspended, and hundreds have been arrested, including members of the High Council for Judges and Prosecutors. Many of these measures appear to be arbitrary and fail to respect the right to a fair hearing before an independent authority.

These actions have done severe damage to the already fragile independence of the judiciary in Turkey, and threaten the right to a fair trial. They represent a dramatic escalation of the attack on judicial independence that was already underway before the attempted coup, documented in an ICJ report published in June.

State-of-emergency decrees further undermine protection of human rights. Periods for pre-trial detention have been extended and detainees' confidential access to lawyers has been restricted. There are credible reports of ill-treatment of detainees, and of harassment of lawyers representing them.

The ICJ recalls that certain rights, including the prohibition on torture or other ill-treatment, and essential elements of the prohibition of arbitrary detention and right to a fair trial by an impartial tribunal, can never be derogated from, even in the most serious states of emergency.

The ICJ urges Turkey to take measures to restore the rule of law and ensure respect for human rights under the state of emergency.

I thank you.

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