



The Bar Council



H.E Professor Sayed Yousuf “Halim”

Chief Justice

Supreme Court of Islamic Republic Afghanistan

Massoud Square, Kabul,

Afghanistan

26 January 2021

Dear Excellency,

The Bar Council of England and Wales (‘Bar Council’) and the Bar Human Rights Committee (‘BHRC’) write to express our solidarity with members of the judiciary and the wider legal profession in Afghanistan who work tirelessly to uphold and instil the rule of law, and who have, for many years now, come under attack, largely from those who wish to undermine such work.

We were deeply alarmed and saddened to learn of the killings of two female judges, who were travelling to their place of work when they were shot dead in an early morning ambush on 17 January 2021. It is hard to imagine the horror of this attack and its lasting impact upon colleagues in both the judiciary and the wider legal profession and we express our deepest condolences.

The right of citizens to have their cases heard by an independent judiciary able to carry out their duties free from interference, intimidation or attack is a universally recognised principle enshrined in national and international law - which underpins the rule of law itself. It is clear that these murders, set against a background of wider attacks on members of civil society in Afghanistan, were a direct assault on the justice system, to the rule of law in Afghanistan and to the democratic freedoms that the legal and constitutional framework upholds.

The Bar Council and BHRC are committed to supporting judges as well as our legal colleagues around the world, particularly when they find themselves victims of such deadly attacks. We stand with you in solidarity and applaud your efforts in facilitating the administration of justice and maintaining the rule of law, notwithstanding the difficult and challenging circumstances.

If there is anything that we can do to support you during these turbulent times, please do not hesitate to get in contact with us.

With best regards,



Derek Sweeting QC  
Chair, Bar Council of  
England and Wales



Schona Jolly QC  
Chair, Bar Human Rights  
Committee of England and  
Wales