



Union Internationale des Avocats  
International Association of Lawyers  
Unión Internacional de Abogados

Rassemblement des avocats du monde • Bringing Together the World's Lawyers • Reunir a los abogados del mundo

PRESS RELEASE

Paris, July 13, 2020

**30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Adoption of the Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers**  
**Recognize, Uphold, Protect and Promote the Role of Lawyers and the Legal Profession Worldwide**

The International Association of Lawyers (UIA), in a [Call for Action](#), initiated together with the [Japan Federation of Bar Associations \(JFBA\)](#) and the [International Bar Association \(IBA\)](#) and signed by more than 60 bar associations, law societies, and national and international lawyers' organisations from all over the world, on the occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the [UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers](#), urges United Nations Member States to recognize, protect and promote the crucial role of the legal profession as a fundamental pillar of the Rule of Law and of the promotion and protection of human rights.

The Basic Principles compile and address the fundamental guarantees necessary for a free, independent and proper functioning of the legal profession, which is crucial to ensure the right of access to legal assistance for all and, as an extension, the right to a fair trial and due process and, ultimately, the protection of all other rights.

Thirty years after the adoption of the Basic Principles, however, the Call for Action notes with concern that across the world, State and non-State actors are continuously challenging, distorting, and, even, denying the significance and value of both the legal profession and its principles: the independence of the legal profession has been targeted by increasingly frequent, diverse and global attacks and interferences. Correspondingly, increasingly, individual lawyers are being attacked.

**It is therefore of utmost importance to reaffirm the relevance and the universality of the Basic Principles and to reiterate the necessity of defending the independence, freedom and security of lawyers, of professional legal organisations and of the legal profession in general, especially in times of crisis, such as the COVID pandemic the world is facing today.**

In order to fulfill their role, lawyers and professional associations of lawyers must remain free to challenge authorities who do not respect the Rule of Law, including with respect to access to, and administration of justice and regarding the promotion and defense of human rights. In addition, States must also ensure that lawyers participate in a meaningful and material way in the legislative process, especially in relation to the legal profession, access to justice and protection of human rights.

In the Call for Action, UIA urgently calls on Member States to fully integrate, both in their legislation and in their political decision-making, the promotion and protection of lawyers' rights, duties and guarantees, as well as the vital and crucial role of professional associations of lawyers, in accordance with the Basic Principles, while remaining attentive and appropriately responsive to the new realities and threats faced by lawyers and the legal profession.

## More about the UIA

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*UIA is the global and multi-cultural organisation for the legal profession, established in 1927 and now with members in 110 countries, which provides professional development, learning, promotes the rule of law, defends the independence and freedom of lawyers worldwide, and emphasizes friendship, collegiality and networking among members.*

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