

Statement Regarding the Case of Günay Dağ

27/06/2025

Günay Dağ, a lawyer at the People's Law Office (HHB) and a member of the Progressive Lawyers Association (ÇHD), is currently facing a serious threat to his internationally recognized right to asylum and protection. His case warrants urgent attention from legal and human rights institutions due to clear violations of fundamental legal principles and international obligations.

Mr. Dağ was forced to leave Turkey and seek political asylum in Greece in 2020, following the criminalization of his lawful professional activities as a lawyer. He was subjected to political prosecution, judicial harassment, and prison sentences for his role in defending politically sensitive clients—an infringement of both the independence of the legal profession and his basic rights under the rule of law. One key reason Dağ fled Türkiye was the Interior Ministry's practice of designating lawyers as "wanted terrorists" simply for representing politically persecuted clients. This is a direct punishment for fulfilling professional obligations as a lawyer, in clear violation of Article 18 of the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, which prohibits the identification of lawyers with their clients' causes.

His application for asylum was accepted in 2022, and he was granted international protection, including a three-year residence permit. Despite this official recognition of his need for protection, Mr. Dağ's rights have continued to be restricted in practice. For three years following the granting of asylum, he was denied a residence permit card and passport, effectively rendering him unable to exercise his right to freedom of movement and residence. The cited reason for this restriction was an administrative decision by the Italian state in 2020—imposing a Schengen-wide entry ban. However, Mr. Dağ has never been to Italy and has never been the subject of any judicial or administrative procedure by Italian authorities. The lack of any legal or factual basis for this measure makes it clearly arbitrary and unlawful.

Having exhausted legal channels in his efforts to overturn this restriction, Mr. Dağ began a peaceful sit-in protest in front of the Greek Ministry of Migration and Asylum on January 27, 2025, demanding the issuance of his residence card and passport, as guaranteed under international and Greek asylum law.

On March 20, 2025, he was unexpectedly notified of the initiation of proceedings to revoke his asylum status, on the basis of an unsubstantiated claim that he posed a "threat to national security." This assertion was based solely on a "confidential document" dated February 27, 2025, the contents of which have not been disclosed to him or his legal representatives. No material evidence, factual explanation, or legal reasoning has been provided to justify this claim.

Furthermore, the investigation process—which typically spans several years due to its serious implications—was concluded in less than one month, and the revocation of Mr. Dağ’s international protection status was finalized and communicated on April 28, 2025. The failure to provide the content of the accusations or allow meaningful participation in the appeal process constitutes a violation of Mr. Dağ’s right to an effective remedy, as enshrined in Article 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Article 47 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. In this regard, we wish to recall the ad hoc 2022 decision of the Court of Justice of the European Union (C-159/21), which provides guidance to Member State authorities and affirms that refugees must be granted access to, and allowed to express their views on, information classified on national security grounds that forms the basis for the withdrawal of their refugee status.

In response to the denial of legal remedies and the lack of transparency, Mr. Dağ began a hunger strike on May 12, 2025, declaring he will continue until his right to asylum is restored and the unlawful revocation is reversed.

Many of the undersigning organisations have also all previously publicly condemned the Turkish government’s targeting of ÇHD and People’s Law Office lawyers — a broader pattern of repression that directly relates to Mr. Dağ’s case. The European Parliament has also condemned Türkiye’s systemic denial of the right to a fair trial, including in the landmark *Kavala v. Türkiye* case (2019, ECtHR). This situation is deeply concerning not only because of the procedural violations involved but also because of the grave risk it poses to Mr. Dağ’s safety. Should the revocation be enforced, he may be returned to Turkey, where he faces a real risk of persecution and prolonged imprisonment for the same reasons that led to his original asylum claim. Notably, nine of his colleagues from the same legal organization, prosecuted under the same politically motivated charges, have been imprisoned for over eight years following unfair trials.

The right to seek and enjoy asylum is a cornerstone of international human rights law, protected by the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol. Revoking this right based on undisclosed evidence, without due process or the ability to respond to the allegations, constitutes a serious breach of international and European legal standards.

We call upon relevant legal institutions, asylum authorities, human rights organizations, and judicial bodies to urgently intervene in this case. The arbitrary revocation of Günay Dağ’s protection status must be reversed, and his full legal and residency rights must be restored to ensure his safety, dignity, and the preservation of the rule of law.

Signatories:

Alternative Intervention of Athens Lawyers - Εναλλακτική Παρέμβαση Δικηγόρων Αθήνας, (Greece)

Arab Lawyers Association (UK)

Asociación Americana de Juristas, (AAJ)

Associação Portuguesa de Juristas Democratas (Portugal)

Association of Lawyers for Freedom (ÖHD)

Association of Social Lawyers (VSAN), (Netherlands)

Avocats européens démocrates - European Democratic Lawyers (AED)

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

Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE)

Cyprus Democratic Lawyers Association

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

Democratic Lawyers Association of Bangladesh

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

European Criminal Bar Association (ECBA)

Evelyn Dürmayer, main representative of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers at the United Nations, Vienna, Austria

German Bar Association (Deutscher Anwaltverein, Germany)

Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit, (UK)

Haldane Society of Socialist Lawyers, (UK)

Indian Association of Lawyers

Institut des droits de l'homme du barreau de Bordeaux, France

Institute for Human Rights of the Bar of Brussels, Belgium

International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL)

International Association of Russian Advocates

International Bar Association's Human Rights Institute (IBAHRI)

Italian Association Democratic Jurists

Legal Centre Lesbos (Greece)

National Association of Democratic Lawyers (South Africa)

National Lawyers Guild International Committee (United States)

National Union of Peoples' Lawyers (Philippines)

New York City Bar Association (United States)

Progressive Lawyers' Association (Turkey)

Republican lawyers association (RAV), (Germany)'

Socialist Lawyers Association of Ireland

Swiss Democratic Lawyers (Switzerland)

The Defense Commission of the Barcelona Bar Association