

national lawyers guild

"An organization of lawyers, law students, legal workers, and jailhouse lawyers... in the service of the people, to the end that human rights shall be regarded as more sacred than property interests." Preamble to the NLG Constitution

January 17, 2020

Dear colleagues of CHD,

On behalf of the National Lawyers Guild and its International Committee, we send our warmest greetings of solidarity and congratulations on the convening of the General Assembly of CHD, the Progressive Lawyers' Association of Turkey.

In particular, we congratulate you on the re-establishment of your association despite the immense levels of repression you have faced in recent years, including the arrests, trials and imprisonment of multiple CHD members and leaders, including Selcuk Kozagacli, a Bureau member of the International Association of Democratic Lawyers, to which the NLG is also affiliated.

As members of the NLG challenging U.S. imperialism, racism and capitalism inside and outside the United States, we are inspired by the theme of your general assembly, "The Crisis of Capitalism and the Law of Crisis." Your analysis and approach are desperately needed at this time. We also take great inspiration from your continued willingness to struggle despite the serious repression that you have faced. CHD members are imprisoned for the very practice of law itself, for representing activists and social movements that fight back against exploitation. Nevertheless, you continue to provide the necessary legal support for social movements, refounding your association and moving forward despite all of the serious threats that you face.

CHD is an inspiration for us in our continued work to practice law for the people. On this occasion, the NLG emphasizes our solidarity with our imprisoned colleagues in Turkey. These cases have gone on for years on end, marked by procedural and substantive violations, including the concealment of evidence and the replacement of seemingly recalcitrant judges.

These prosecutions are not fundamentally legal in nature; they are political mechanisms that are intended to block lawyers in Turkey from providing legal representation, advice and counsel to the social movements on the front lines. That you have continued to do this despite all odds compels us once more to advocate for the freedom of our comrades and colleagues, noting that Turkey and the U.S. are allies in NATO and in various political and military activities in the region.

Once again, we in the NLG congratulate the CHD on your general assembly and the re-establishment of your association. We look forward to continuing to struggle together for a just society in which human rights are valued above property interests.

National Lawyers Guild International Committee

75 Years of Law for the People