



Launch of the project "Adopt an Endangered Lawyer"

The right to defence is a fundamental right that lawyers, through their activity, promote together with others rights and freedoms. However, such a right is not always taken for granted, nor is it always observed: on too many occasions, indeed, our colleagues are hindered, persecuted or threatened, even killed, simply because they perform their duties.

Lawyers in danger are often isolated and abandoned. Receiving support, both from a moral and concrete point of view, from civil society and in particular from colleagues, gives them the strength to continue their battles.

The UCPI - Italian Criminal Lawyers' Association has always shown support and solidarity towards endangered colleagues, in particular through the activities of the Focus Group on Endangered Lawyers and the Focus Group on European and International Law and Relationships.

Such a commitment in favour of lawyers and human rights defenders in danger has already been concretely implemented with many initiatives, including:

- the involvement with the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights Defenders;
- the participation in fact finding missions and hearings against Colleagues unjustly tried because of the free exercise of their profession;
- the participation in national and international networks in support of lawyers and human rights defenders in danger;
- the organisation of events, in particular, on the occasion of the International Day of Endangered Lawyers (January 24);
- the drafting of reports and press releases in support of colleagues, also in synergy with international legal organisations and associations, and on the occasion of events and celebrations of national and international relevance.

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Starting from the need and will to support defenders in danger in an even more effective way, the Italian Criminal Lawyers' Association decided to launch the initiative "Adopt an Endangered Lawyer", coordinated by Federico Cappelletti, Nicola Canestrini, Ezio Menzione and Giorgia Cigalla.

The project, starting from a list of names of colleagues who find themselves operating in critical contexts, will involve the local Criminal Lawyers' Associations, aiming to reach a national and, hopefully, international level: each entity involved will be committed to organising events and awareness campaigns in the area, involving local administrations, the Bars and associations of lawyers, for a year from the start of the project.

The local Criminal Lawyers' Associations will receive a communication to the attention of their Chairman, so that they can proceed with the assignment of the name of the Colleague and with the implementation of the project.

The initiative is sponsored by the Global Campus of Human Rights, international excellence in the promotion of the culture of protection of fundamental rights and long-standing partner of the Italian Criminal Lawyers' Association, and avails itself of the collaboration of Gianluca Costantini - artist and human rights activist who collaborated in many projects promoted by some of the most important national and international entities in the field of fundamental rights - who, through his illustrations, will allow us to convey the message we intend to spread with a new, effective and immediate approach.

We hope, therefore, for a wide support and participation, because a concrete help in favour our colleagues in danger not only deals with human and professional solidarity, but also represents a step forward for the defence of the rights of everybody.

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UCPI Board

UCPI Focus Group on Endangered Lawyers

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