



## **“ENDANGERED LAWYERS”**

**A PROJECT BY THE *UNIONE DELLE CAMERE PENALI***

**(ITALIAN CRIMINAL LAWYERS ASSOCIATION)**

Lawyers and defense rights have constantly been under threat. In multiple occasions, basic fundamental rights have been -and are- violated. Therefore, lawyers, who represent key figures in defending these rights, are seriously put at risk. This is the reason why, in the light of international mobilizations and pressure by the legal professionals community, the Italian criminal lawyers have decided to stand united towards this critically important issue.

Some famous cases, from the II WW until today, are presented as follows (please refer to the video on youtube hannel endangeredlawyers).

### **Michael Siegel**

**Germany, 1933**

Jewish lawyer in Munich, he went to the Munich police station to intercede on behalf of a Jewish client. Dr. Michael Siegel was thrown into a basement room at the Munich Police HQ, and severely beaten by a troop of S.A storm troopers. He was then marched through the streets of Munich, barefoot, bleeding and was made to carry a board around his neck with the words: "*Ich bin Jude aber ich will mich nie mehr bei der Polizei Beschwerden*"[I am a Jew but I will never again complain to the Police].

### **Hans Litten**

**Germany, 1938**

Litten called Hitler as a witness, hoping to expose the Nazi party's deliberate strategy of overthrowing democracy by bringing terror to the streets. Over the next five years, he was held in a succession of notorious concentration camps. He was singled out for especially brutal treatment at the hands of the guards, who knew full well of the Fuehrer's personal antipathy towards him. By February 1938, he took his own life by hanging himself. He was 34.

### **Angelo Bettini**

**Italy, 1944**



Murdered during a mass killing organized by Nazi-fascist forces.

### **Serafino Famà**

#### **Italy, 1995**

Killed by the Mafia at 57. The final court decision (1999) stated: «the murder of mr. Famà was due exclusively to the fair exercise of his defense duties as a lawyer»

### **Fulvio Croce**

#### **Italy, 1977**

Murdered by the Red Brigades: «court-appointed lawyers serve the regime, not our interests. Thus, for every initiative they take on our behalf, we will react accordingly»

### **Teng Biao**

#### **China**

He has been a vocal supporter of human rights activists. He has been arrested at least twice, in March 2008 and in February 2011.

### **Guo Feixiong**

#### **China**

“Barefoot lawyer”, who has worked on several controversial issues to defend the rights of marginalized groups. In 2005 and 2006, human rights groups reported that Guo was taken into custody and beaten on multiple occasions for his human rights advocacy. He was arrested, prosecuted and fined.

### **Chen Guangcheng**

#### **China, 2005-2006**

He advocates for women's rights, land rights, and the welfare of the poor. As a result of this lawsuit, Chen was placed under house arrest from September 2005 to March 2006, with a formal arrest in June 2006. On 24 August 2006, Chen was sentenced to four years and three months for "damaging property and organizing a mob to disturb traffic."



### **Chokri Belaid**

#### **Tunisia, 2013**

Under Ben Ali's regime, he worked as a human rights lawyer, and often took part to political court cases. Belaid was shot dead in 2013 (at the age of 48).

### **Abderraouf Ayadi**

#### **Tunisia**

Political activist, he spent 6 years and half in prison. He is constantly harassed and prosecuted (interrogatories, surveillance, even kidnapping).

### **Antonio Trejo**

#### **Honduras, 2012**

A human rights lawyer who represented peasants in disputes with large land owners. Mr Trejo represented lands rights groups in the Bajo Aguan, a fertile palmoil-producing region. He was shot dead by unknown gunmen after walking outside the church.

### **Negad El Borai**

#### **Egypt**

Lawyer and the head of the legal unit at United Group for Law. He has advocated for freedom of expression, assembly and association.

### **Mahienour el-Massry**

#### **Egypt, 2015**

On 31 May 2015 the Court of Appeal sentenced Mahienour El-Massry, along with nine activists, to one year and three months imprisonment on charges of, amongst others, "assaulting security forces". The conviction of El-Massry followed after an incident in March 2013, when she and other lawyers went to Raml police station to provide legal assistance to three activists.



## **Ramazan Demir**

### **Turkey, 2016**

Demir had been charged with “insulting or (...) offending the dignity of a public authority in the performance of his duties”. The charges are based on defense speeches he made during the trial against 44 journalists who are suspected of ties with the KCK.

### **Ayşe Acinikli (with R.Demir)**

In the early morning of 16 March 2016, police raided the houses and offices of nine lawyers in Istanbul, Turkey. The charges are unknown. Allegedly the lawyers are arrested on suspicion of having ties with a terrorist organization.

## **Spain**

Arrested under the generic charge of ‘terrorism’, for having defended clients who are affiliated with the armed faction of ETA. Basque lawyers: **Julen Arzuaga** (charges dropped in 2008), **Aiert Larrarte** (acquitted 2009), **Iñaki Goioaga Llano** (detained for one year and seven months in pre-trial detention, acquitted in 2012), **Joseba Agudo Mancisidor** (detained for two and a half years, acquitted in 2012), **Alfonso Zenon** (investigation still pending), **Arantzta Zulueta**, **Jon Enparantza** and **Iker Sarrieg** (released on bail, investigation still pending).

## **Stanislav Markelov**

### **Soviet Union, 2009**

Russian Federation Stanislav Markelov was murdered at the age of 34 years because of his work for anti-fascist activists

## **Sirikan Charoensiri**

### **Thailand, 2016**

On 2 February 2016, Sirikan Charoensiri received two summons to appear at the Chanasongkram Police Station to be charged with two offences under the Criminal Code of Thailand: “giving false information regarding a criminal offence” and “refusing to comply with the order of an official”. The charges against her seem to be connected to her having filed a complaint with the police when they proceeded to impound her car and evidence contained therein.



### **Anwar al-Bunni**

#### **Syria**

One of the founders of the *Syrian Human Rights Association* and of a center for the defense of journalists and political prisoners. As a lawyer, al-Bunni was particularly involved in defending people who were prosecuted for expressing their opinions in non-violent ways. Because of his work, al-Bunni has been the target of repressive measures by the authorities. The Damascus Bar Association has repeatedly disbarred al-Bunni.

### **Reinaldo Villalba**

#### **Colombia**

He has been a member of the José Alvear Restrepo Lawyers' Collective (CCAJAR) for 18 years. He handles criminal and national litigation, primarily criminal defense and the representation of victims of serious human rights violations. Constantly threatened

### **Valdênia Aparecida Paulino Lanfranchi**

#### **Brazil**

Her commitment to human rights has earned Ms Paulino numerous death threats and forced her to leave her country twice. Ms Paulino still receives death threats and was the target of false accusations of breaking ethical rules, in a case where she defended child victims of sexual abuse, voluntarily and free of charge. She is involved in the national campaign to demilitarize the police in Brazil.

### **Pavel Sapelko**

#### **Belarus**

With other colleagues, he counseled leaders of the opposition, charged of having caused the mass disorders in December 2010. He was disbarred by the national bar association in March 2011.

### **David Peña Rodríguez & Karla Micheel Salas Ramírez,**

#### **Mexico**

Lawyers representing the families of the victims of the uninvestigated assassinations of women in the Campo Algodonero case, also known as Ciudad Juárez femicides. Their action began in 2001,



when the bodies of three young women were found in a cotton field after they had been raped and killed. They were confronted with concealed evidence and threats and intimidation towards themselves and their clients.

### **Nabeel Adib Abdallah**

#### **Sudan**

On Thursday, May 5, 2016 the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) agents raided and continued to broke into the office of prominent lawyer and rights activist Mr. Nabeel Adib Abdallah and arrested several university students. No other information about the arrests, or removal of the property of Mr. Nabeel Adib Abdallah has been provided, nor has information about specific charges been provided.

### **Namal Rajapakshe & Manjula Pathiraja**

#### **Sri Lanka**

Defence lawyers who represent victims of human rights violations across Sri Lanka. Because of their work, they have received several death threats. A man armed with a gun, cornered and then threatened Mr Rajapakshe by saying that Mr Rajapakshe and Mr Pathiraja would be killed if they defend any more “unnecessary cases”.

#### **REFERENCES**

- Amnesty Italia
- BBC news, 2012
- cosecharoja.org
- fairtrialwatch.org
- repubblica.it/trentino
- trentinocorrierealpi
- wikipedia
- www.advocatenvooradvocaten.nl
- www.ccbe.eu
- www.frontlinedefenders.org
- www.lrwc.org
- www.peacebrigades.org.uk
- www.yadvashem.org