

ASSAULT ON THE LEGAL PROFESSION

persecution of human rights lawyers in
the OSCE region

Warsaw National Stadium
PGE Narodowy

September 17
08:00 – 09:30
Meeting room: 3

Breakfast will be provided

SPEAKERS:

Rasul Jafarov,
Head of Human Rights Club

Khalid Bagirov,
disbarred lawyer from Azerbaijan

Yevgeniy Zhovtis,
Head of Kazakhstan International Bureau for
Human Rights and the Rule of Law

Uguloy Boboeva,
human rights lawyer (Tajikistan)

Ramute Remezaite,
Legal Consultant at the European Human
Rights Advocacy Centre

Ulviya Hasanova,
Legal Consultant, ICJ Europe and Central Asia
Programme

MODERATION:

Jurate Guzeviciute,
Programme Lawyer at International Bar
Association's Human Rights Institute



Human rights lawyers working with victims of rights violations play a vital role in ensuring respect to minimum fair trial guarantees and securing access to justice even in some of the most repressive environments. Nonetheless, the lawyers themselves are increasingly becoming the target of repressive policies that restrict their ability to practice law and act on behalf of victims. This deteriorating situation of the independence of legal profession can be observed in a number of OSCE participating states.

A notable example is Azerbaijan where since 2005, at least 20 human rights lawyers have been targeted as a direct result of their human rights work: over 10 human rights lawyers have been disbarred, leaving them completely unable to practise as lawyers before domestic courts in Azerbaijan for an indefinite period; and a number of lawyers have been criminally prosecuted or had their licence suspended. Attempts to increase regulation and control of the legal profession affect other countries of the FSU region as well.

This event will provide an overview of the ongoing challenges human rights lawyers in the OSCE region are facing in their daily work and will offer possibility for discussing how these challenges can be addressed practically and what the OSCE participating states and institutions can do to reinforce the independence of practicing lawyers as a guarantee of the promotion and defence of the fundamental freedoms recognised in OSCE human dimension commitments.