

DEFENDING HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYERS IN AUTHORITARIAN TIMES

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GENEVA ACADEMY, VILLA MOYNIER, 120B RUE DE LAUSANNE AND ONLINE

In the past 10 years, a worrisome trend towards authoritarianism has grown in certain democracies, while well-established authoritarian regimes have been emboldened to clamp down further on their societies. ‘Strong man’ governments typically employ the rule of law and its trappings – courts, police, and security apparatus – to exert control. Rather than be seen as valuable pillars of the rule of law, hundreds of lawyers inside these regimes are routinely harassed, intimidated, jailed or even killed for their defense of human rights cases and causes. Authoritarian regimes are also increasingly hard to influence from the outside, they may be impassive to international outcry and indifferent to diplomatic pressure.

- In a context of growing authoritarianism, what strategies and tactics can effectively defend and support human rights lawyers?
- How can Geneva play a role to protect lawyers from intimidation in their home countries?



WELCOME REMARKS

- **Felix Kirchmeier**, Executive Director, Geneva Human Rights Platform

MODERATOR

- **Sandrine Giroud**, Chair of the Human Rights Committee, ODAGE

SPEAKERS

- **Xu Yan**, wife of lawyer Yu Wensheng, Martin Ennals Award Laureate 2021, China
- **Ayşe Acinkli**, Lawyers Association for Freedom, Turkey
- **Tatsiana Khomich**, Human Rights activist, sister of Belarussian political prisoner Maria Kalesnikava.
- **Baroness Helena Kennedy QC**, Director, International Bar Association Human Rights Institute, Member of the House of Lords, UK
- **Diego García-Sayán**, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers
- **Phil Lynch, Director**, International Service for Human Rights

REGISTRATION AND ATTENDANCE

Because of COVID-19 requirements, all participants can join the panel online, but only a limited number of persons can be present physically at the Villa Moynier.

To participate online, please register via [this link](#).

To confirm your participation at Villa Moynier, please contact the following address : chloe.naret@geneva-academy.ch