



Istanbul Bar Association
Barreau d'Istanbul
Rechtsanwaltskammer Istanbul

Mr. Bas MARTENS
President of FBE

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Dear Mr. President Martens,

Distinguished Colleague,

I would like to thank you for your letter of support and the Zoom meeting we had earlier today. We feel the support and solidarity of FBE in these difficult times.

We are deeply saddened by the great disaster caused by the earthquakes, which took place in Kahramanmaraş on February 6, 2023 and spread to 10 provinces in the region. We wish God's mercy on our citizens who lost their lives in the earthquake, our condolences to their families, relatives and our nation, and a quick recovery to those who were injured.

According to the information from the field, 75 of our colleagues lost their lives due to the earthquake, and we haven't had a sight or sound of 24 of our colleagues. It is thought that they may be under the rubble. We have 16,000 colleagues in 10 provinces that were devastated by the earthquake. More than 10,000 colleagues' homes and/or law offices were destroyed or rendered unusable. This number means that approximately one in 15 lawyers in Turkey has lost his/her home and/or law office.

From the very first day, our people, bar association, colleagues and NGO's acted in an extraordinary spirit of self-sacrifice and cooperation in order to heal the wounds together.

As Istanbul Bar Association, we launched in-kind aid and donation campaigns to meet the vital needs of our citizens and colleagues who were left homeless in the earthquake zone. In-kind parcels collected in the bar association units in Çağlayan Courthouse, Istanbul Anadolu Courthouse, Bakırköy Courthouse and Büyükçekmece Courthouse were loaded on a truck and sent to the earthquake area. We continue to deliver our aid.

A Red Crescent Blood Donation Point was established in Çağlayan Courthouse for the injured citizens, a call for blood donation was made to our colleagues.

A solidarity desk regarding the earthquake was set up in Istanbul Bar Association. For all solidarity requests such as solidarity with our colleagues who have relatives in the earthquake area, financial and in-kind aid collection campaigns of our Bar Association, blood donation, support for the hearings and works with a deadline, the solidarity desk can be contacted via a phone line or physically.

The relatives of many of our lawyers in Istanbul and other provinces live in the provinces affected by the earthquake, and all our lawyers across the country have set out to help the provinces affected by the earthquake.

A criminal complaint has been filed by the Presidency of Istanbul Bar Association in order to identify contractors, the authorized and responsible persons who took part in the construction, the public officials responsible for the supervision and inspection of all kinds of buildings collapsed in two separate earthquakes in 10 provinces centered in Kahramanmaraş, the public officials who have given construction and occupancy permits to those buildings as well as the public officials who have neglected to identify risky buildings and to take precautions despite the fact that the region has earthquake risk, and to file a public lawsuit against all those mentioned above.

75 voluntary colleagues were sent to Hatay, Gaziantep and Kahramanmaraş in 3 separate buses, from the budget of Istanbul Bar Association, to make legal evaluations, to support the bar associations in the earthquake provinces as well as the victims of the earthquake. They keep on recording evidence in 10 provinces hit by the earthquake.

Visiting the earthquake zone, President of Istanbul Bar Association Atty. Filiz Saraç and Board Member Atty. Assoc. Prof. Ahmet Ayar have supported the bar associations and our colleagues suffering from the earthquake. They paid a visit to Malatya, Kahramanmaraş, Gaziantep and Hatay provinces and they made evaluations and exchanged ideas on the legal process, coordination of work in aid centers, determination of needs, coordination of legal aid services and legal studies in the region.

Our mobilization continues for this devastating disaster.

Kindly submitted for your information.

Atty. Filiz SARAÇ

President of Istanbul Bar Association

