



Strasbourg, 23 August 2021

CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN JUDGES (CCJE)

**STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE CCJE
REGARDING UPHOLDING THE PROTECTION NEEDS OF AFGHAN JUDGES
AND OTHER LEGAL PROFESSIONALS IN THE LIGHT OF THE UNFOLDING
SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN**

The President of the Consultative Council of European Judges (CCJE) joins the many international and national organisations and associations expressing serious concerns regarding the unfolding situation in Afghanistan and urging to consider the plight and protection needs of judges and other legal professionals who are reported to be at grave risk, as a result of their work, and who are currently seeking to leave the country to ensure the safety of themselves and their families.

The President of the CCJE notes in particular the recent [Statement](#) of the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ), the [appeal](#) of the “Magistrats européens pour la démocratie et les libertés” (MEDEL) and the [call for international support in Afghanistan](#) of the International Association of Judges (IAJ), underlining the serious dangers faced by judges and their families, and especially by female magistrates. The UN Rapporteur for Judicial Independence also urged the international community to engage urgently in efforts to protect the personal integrity and lives of at least 250 women judges and their families and assist them to leave Afghanistan immediately¹.

The President of the CCJE stresses in this regard that the right to life and the right to liberty and security are fundamental human rights which must be secured and protected by all means. It is utterly concerning that the unfolding situation in Afghanistan threatens the lives of the many judges - notably female judges- and other legal professionals, who contributed actively to the functioning of the domestic judicial system, and are as such now at risk, due to their work and to their gender.

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¹ See at <https://twitter.com/unindepjudges/status/1426950093425446917>.

The President of the CCJE, representing the CCJE members who are serving judges from all Council of Europe member States, therefore calls on the competent authorities of Council of Europe member States to ensure that meaningful action is taken to secure the safe passage, refuge and protection for Afghan judges and other legal professionals, and for their family members, who have well-founded fears of persecution in their country. It is paramount that they are protected from any possible reprisals in Afghanistan. For those who are currently seeking to leave the country to ensure safety for themselves and their families, they should receive the necessary assistance to do so promptly and have access to international protection, in line with applicable international humanitarian and human rights standards.

Judge Nina Betetto, President of the CCJE