



23rd OF MAY - ALERT DAY FOR THE INDEPENDENCE OF JUSTICE

Every year on May 23, MEDEL marks the *Alert Day for the Independence of Justice*, to pay tribute to the memory of judges Giovanni Falcone, Francesca Morvillo and Paolo Borsellino, killed together with their security details in devastating Mafia attacks.

On this day, MEDEL honours all those who fight, even at the cost of their life or personal freedom, to uphold Justice.

One of the brightest examples is that of Murat Arslan, president of Yarsav and 2017 CoE's Vaclav Havel Prize laureate, unjustly arrested in 2016, sentenced to 10 years in prison following a sham trial and still detained for his unwavering commitment to human rights and the Rule of law.

Today MEDEL sounds the alarm since these values are increasingly under threat and the entire human rights system established in the wake of the tragedies of World War II risks being swept away.

We observe political leaders pursuing dominance through the illegal use of force, war crimes and violence on a massive scale; the International Criminal Court becoming the target of systematic attacks and undermined by the failure of States Parties to fulfil their obligations; European governments calling into question the universality and indivisibility of the human rights enshrined in the Convention and the legal and judicial system designed to protect them at the highest level; political and institutional pressure addressed at the national level against judges, prosecutors and lawyers, as well as threats to their independence. All this as part of a global attack on the legal profession and of an authoritarian drift challenging rights and freedoms.

Against this backdrop, MEDEL calls on:

the international community to take all necessary steps to safeguard the international order based on the Rule of law, and the international justice system designed to protect fundamental rights;

European States to act in accordance with their declared *unwavering commitment* to the Convention system as a mechanism to promote Europe's core values of human rights, democracy and the Rule of law, and *rejection of attacks at high political levels* on the rights protected by the Convention and the ECtHR's judgments seeking to safeguard them (Reykjavík Declaration, 2023)¹;

national authorities to respect the principle of the separation of powers, the independence of the judiciary and that of individual judges, prosecutors and lawyers.

MEDEL urges the European institutions to take all necessary steps so that Murat Arslan and all those unjustly detained in Turkey are finally given back their freedom and Rule of law and independent justice are restored.

May 22, 2026

¹ <https://rm.coe.int/4th-summit-of-heads-of-state-and-government-of-the-council-of-europe/1680ab40c1>

