



LAWYERS FOR LAWYERS

ANNUAL REPORT
ACTIVITIES 2013

Who are we?

The Foundation Lawyers for Lawyers (**L4L**) was established in 1986 on the initiative of the Professional Lawyers of Amnesty International Netherlands with the support of the Dutch Bar Association, the Dutch Legal Committee for Human Rights (NJCM) and the Study and Information Center Human Rights (SIM). **L4L** is an Institution for the Promotion of the Public Interest.

The basis

L4L is of the belief that lawyers anywhere in the world should be able to exercise their profession freely and independently. It bases this belief on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders (1984) and the Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (1990).

What does L4L do?

The Foundation supports lawyers anywhere in the world, who, because of their profession, are threatened or persecuted, and it tries to increase awareness of their situation. Often, these are human rights lawyers. **L4L** tries to tailor its support as much as possible to the specific needs of the lawyer or organisation concerned.

Board

The board of **L4L** is comprised of (former) lawyers. An executive director is responsible for the day-to-day work, and in 2013 there was one management change : a new treasurer joined the board to complete the term of office of the former treasurer.

SUPPORT



In 2013, two Iranian lawyers, on whose behalf **L4L** has fought for many years, were released by the regime. [Nasrin Sotoudeh](#), the human rights lawyer who previously received the Sakharov Award, was arrested in 2010 and sentenced to six years' imprisonment for having endangered state security. She was also prohibited from practising law. Sotoudeh defends those who take a critical view of the regime. She fights not only for women's rights but also against the death penalty for juvenile offenders. Because of her work, she has increasingly clashed with the authorities. On

18 September, Sotoudeh was unexpectedly released. The news spread across the entire world. Sotoudeh has not talked much to the media, but in an [exclusive interview](#) with the Dutch 'Advocatenblad' she thanked **L4L** for all their support during the previous years.

The human rights lawyer [Houtan Kian](#) was also released. He was reportedly seriously beaten during his three-year imprisonment. Kian represented Sakineh Ashtiani, a woman who was sentenced to death by stoning for committing adultery. He was arrested in 2010 after an interview with German journalists about this case. Kian was sentenced for maintaining ties with 'foreign anti-revolutionary groups'. In May, **L4L** produced a [film](#) in which human rights lawyers from six different countries appealed to the Iranian regime to release Houtan Kian. Along with a press statement on 12 June, the film was shared globally on social media. On 23 August, Houtan Kian was unexpectedly released after three years imprisonment.

In 2013, **L4L** acted for more than 170 individual lawyers in Bahrain, China, Colombia, the Philippines, Haiti, Iran, Cameroon, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mexico, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Vietnam and Zimbabwe. In addition, **L4L** acted for lawyers in a more general way in China, Malaysia, Iran and Cambodia.

Missions

L4L regularly monitors court cases against lawyers. In 2013, **L4L** organised three trial observation missions to Turkey, where the government's fight against its critics, and the Kurdish minority and its sympathisers in particular, has intensified in the past few years. In January, the trial of [46 Turkish lawyers](#) who had been arrested on 22 November 2011 resumed. These lawyers had all supported Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), who is serving a life sentence on the island of Imrali. They are suspected of membership of the PKK and of passing on commands from Abdullah Öcalan to PKK members. The arrests caused a shockwave in the international legal world. **L4L**



monitored these cases closely and sent a delegation of four lawyers to Silivri, a town west of Istanbul where the hearings were held. Hearings were held in January, March, June, September and December, and were attended by **L4L**.

In March, **L4L** launched a petition to raise awareness for 22 of the 46 lawyers who, by then, had been in pre-trial detention for more than 500 days. The petition was supported by dozens of bar associations, including the British, Belgian and Dutch Bar Associations. An advertisement was also placed in several Turkish newspapers.

In April, it was announced that [Ümit Kocasakal](#), the Dean of the Istanbul Bar Association, had been summoned to court for having acted on behalf of lawyers in the so-called Sledgehammer case, which concerned an alleged military coup against the government. A delegation from **L4L**, including the former President of the Amsterdam Bar Association, Hans van Veggel, attended the first hearing of this case on 17 May. The trial was due to continue in October, however the hearing was adjourned until January 2014.

L4L Letters



If **L4L** receives information about a threatened lawyer, the threat is examined and the need for help is assessed. In most cases, the board will send a letter to the relevant authorities. Sometimes, a lawyer is arrested because of his/her human rights activities. This has happened, for instance, in the United Arab Emirates, an autocratic Gulf State where human rights activists fighting for political reform, and their lawyers, have been persecuted vigorously. Lawyer [Mohamed Al-Roken](#) (pictured) acted on behalf of five activists in an infamous case; shortly afterwards, he, himself, was

detained on grounds that were unclear. **L4L** insisted that the authorities should release him immediately. Sudanese lawyer [Adam Sharif](#) was detained for a month without charge. A week prior to his detention, in a radio interview, he had strongly condemned the violent acts of the Sudanese government forces during a demonstration. On 11 October, **L4L** demanded his immediate release by the Sudanese government, arguing that Sharif was only exercising his right to freedom of speech.

On 11 March 2013, prominent Zimbabwean human rights lawyer [Beatrice Mtetwa](#) was arrested for obstruction of justice during a search at a client's home. **L4L** wrote a letter to the Zimbabwean authorities requesting her release.

Arrests, however, are more the rule than the exception. Lawyers are increasingly being threatened or intimidated by, or on the instruction of, the authorities, often anonymously, though the origins of the threats are often easy to determine. **L4L** also appeals directly to the authorities to remind them of their responsibility for the safety of the threatened lawyer. Sri Lankan human rights lawyer [Lakshan Dias](#) has represented, among others, victims of torture and deportation. He was also active in opposing the impeachment of the Chief Justice of Sri Lanka's Supreme Court. He

received a number of intimidating phone calls and was under surveillance for months. He filed a police report, though no action was taken. On 12 April, **L4L** asked the Sri Lankan authorities to investigate the matter.

L4L has also lobbied the government of Cameroon on behalf of lawyer [Michel Togu  ](#), who defends people who are prosecuted for their homosexuality and is constantly harassed as a result. He has received death threats, intimidating emails addressed to his wife and his office has been burgled. Homosexuality is still an offence in Cameroon and contempt for it is deeply rooted in Cameroon society. Togu  's wife and children have applied for asylum in the United States because of these threats.



L4L has also long been concerned about the position of [lawyers in the Philippines](#). They are systematically intimidated and threatened and some have died under suspicious circumstances. **L4L** has established that the weak position of the government towards the military has created a culture of impunity in which lawyers and members of the judiciary are systematically demonised. In an open letter dated 31 July, **L4L** called upon President Aquino to honour his 2010 election promise of legal reform.

In the Russian Federation, too, the situation has deteriorated noticeably. Lawyers in (sensitive) criminal cases are being seriously threatened, identified with their clients, or their clients' causes and, in some instances, murdered. In August, **L4L** sent a letter to the Russian Minister of Justice seeking information on the murder, one month earlier, of Dagestan criminal defence lawyer, [Magomed Guchuchaliev](#). A year before, his colleague [Omar Saidmagomedov](#) was shot dead on the street in broad daylight by security forces. Both worked at Kavkaz, a law firm known for defending alleged terrorists. The lawyers working at Kavkaz frequently denounced the use of torture by security forces. **L4L** also acted on behalf of [Farid Murtazin](#), a Russian lawyer whose licence to practice law was under threat of revocation for unspecified reasons, these most likely being his involvement in a sensitive murder case. The action taken by a number of non-governmental organisations was successful: Murtazin kept his licence to practice law.



L4L has also focused on the former Soviet Republic of Kazakhstan, where confinement in psychiatric institutions, a well-tested Soviet-era method of silencing critics, seems to have been rediscovered. [Zinaida Mukhortova](#) (pictured), a Kazakh lawyer who uncovered a case of corruption, has been confined in such an institution. On 15 August, **L4L** called upon the authorities of Kazakhstan, to release her immediately.. In the neighbouring country of Kyrgyzstan, lawyers are physically attacked by members of the public, both in and outside court rooms, due to the ethnic tensions

between the Kyrgyz and the (suppressed) Uzbek minority. [Dinara Medetova](#) and [Kubanychek Zhoroyev](#) are two lawyers who were prevented from acting on behalf of their clients by people shouting during a court hearing. After the hearing, they were physically attacked. They had previously asked the judge to take protective or preventative measures, but even during the hearing no action was taken. On 4 September, **L4L** called upon the Kyrgyz authorities to denounce the attacks and to guarantee the safety of the lawyers.

Letter-writing campaigns

If **L4L** feels that letters might make a difference, it will organise a letter-writing campaign by Dutch lawyers. **L4L** prepares a model letter that individual lawyers can download, sign and send to the relevant governments or institutions. In these letters, **L4L** describes the circumstances and events that threaten the lawyer concerned. **L4L** receives this background information from a global network of lawyers and verifies them as much as possible using public resources.

In each case, **L4L** also refers to the pillar of the rights of lawyers as adopted by the UN: the [Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers](#) (1990). To achieve the best possible result, **L4L** also coordinates these letter-writing campaigns with other non-governmental institutions and international (lawyers') organisations.

In 2013, **L4L** organised six letter-writing campaigns, in which both Dutch and foreign lawyers participated. In January, **L4L** organised a letter-writing campaign for the Vietnamese lawyer [Le Quoc Quan](#). In December 2012 this Vietnamese blogger, lawyer and human rights activist was charged with tax evasion. Previously, he had been disbarred, although this did not prevent him from continuing to work for victims of human rights violations.



Two letter-writing campaigns were addressed to the Russian Federation, the first on behalf of the Chechen lawyer [Magamed Abubakarov](#). The North-Caucasian authorities have labelled him an 'Al Qaeda lawyer' because of his work for the suspected culprits of a 'terrorist attack' on a government building in the Russian Republic Kabardino-Balkaria. Abubakarov survived an attempt on his life but has needed to use a walking stick since the incident. In March, **L4L** called upon the federal security forces to track down the attackers and to guarantee Abubakarov's safety.

In the Republic of Dagestan, criminal defence lawyers [Sapiyat Magomedova](#) and [Musa Suslanov](#) have received serious threats via email because they represented the families of five men killed the previous year. In June, **L4L** called upon an investigative committee of the Russian Federation to investigate the threats.

Two letter-writing campaigns were also organised for Colombian human rights lawyers, who are often in the firing line in the fierce battle between (corrupt) governments and drug cartels. In April, **L4L** called upon the Colombian authorities

to start a serious investigation into the violent death of [six lawyers](#) in the Valle del Cauca. In August, after the killing of another three lawyers, **L4L** wrote again to the Colombian authorities, referring to the earlier letters.

In May, [Ramazan Demir](#), a Turkish lawyer, was charged because he would have insulted the public prosecutor. The charges were based on defence speeches he made during the trial against a number of journalists who were suspected of having ties with the Kurdish movement. This offence carries a maximum sentence of two years. As the public prosecutor pressed ahead with the charges **L4L** organised a letter-writing campaign in November urging the authorities to withdraw them.

Birthday card for Le Quoc Quan

Le Quoc Quan spent his birthday, 13 September, in prison. To lift his spirits, **L4L** sent him a birthday card.



Cooperation with other organisations

More pressure means more impact. Where possible, **L4L** joins forces with other human rights organisations.

The international campaign for the release of Vietnamese lawyer Le Quoc Quan was supported by dozens of non-governmental organisations. The actions taken for the Syrian lawyers [Razan Zeitoun](#) and [Khalil Ma'touq](#), the Zimbabwean lawyer Beatrice Mtetwa, the Turkish lawyer Ramazan Demir and his dozens of colleagues in mass trials were coordinated jointly.

Organisations that **L4L** cooperated with in 2013 include (among others) Access Now, Amnesty International, Article 19, Avocats Sans Frontières Network, Cairo Institute for Human Rights, Electronic Frontier Foundation, English PEN and PEN International, Frontline Defenders, Human Rights Watch, Index on Censorship, International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Justitia et Pax, Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada, Media Defence/Southeast Asia, Peace Brigade International, Reporters Without Borders, Solicitors International Human Rights Group, The Law Society of England and Wales and Zimbabwe Watch.

AWARENESS

The degree to which lawyers can freely exercise their profession is a reliable indicator of the functioning of the rule of law in a state. That is why **L4L** tries to raise as much awareness as possible of compliance with the [Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers](#). Every starting lawyer in the Netherlands, for instance, receives a copy of the Basic Principles. The document can be downloaded in seven languages on the **L4L** website. This site also contains a link to a [database](#) where the documents these Basic Principles refer to can be found.

On its website www.advocatenvooradvocaten.nl, **L4L** reports on the action taken by it on behalf of threatened lawyers, but only if this does not lead to further problems for these lawyers. New developments are also communicated as soon as possible. Publicity is often helpful for threatened lawyers, so **L4L** will often place their profiles

on its site. In 2013, it posted profiles of, among others, the Indonesian-Papuan [Olga Hamadi](#) (pictured) and [Gustaf Kaver](#) both of whom fight for the rights of indigenous Papuans, and of the Chechen lawyer Magamed Abubakarov. Information about lawyers not supported in other ways by **L4L** are released by press messages. In 2013, 66 messages were posted.

Regular sections [Advocatenblad](#) and [Amsterdam's Balie Bulletin](#)

L4L has a monthly article in [Advocatenblad](#), a legal magazine that all 17,000 lawyers in the Netherlands subscribe to and that is also read by non-lawyers (politicians, journalists). Subjects are discussed with editorial staff and cover current issues. Much attention was given to the Syrian lawyers (four articles) and the court cases against the Turkish-Kurdish lawyers (three articles). There was also special coverage of the exclusive interview by the Iranian human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh after her sudden release from prison in October, **L4L** fought for her release for a number of years..

L4L also has a regular section in [Amsterdam's Balie Bulletin](#), which is published quarterly and read by all 5,000 lawyers (approximately) in Amsterdam. These articles are also published in a number of other Balie Bulletins.

ECOSOC status

The UN Economic and Social Council adopted the recommendation of the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations to grant 'special consultative status' to **L4L** in July 2013. This so-called [ECOSOC status](#) is granted to NGOs that focus on certain specific interest areas of ECOSOC. The ECOSOC status gives **L4L** the right to participate in UN conferences and meetings, to submit written statements and reports and to hold mediations and panel discussions in UN buildings in Geneva.

Lobbying internationally

Thanks to its ECOSOC status, **L4L** can actively lobby in Geneva at the UN Human Rights Council, a body of ECOSOC. The Human Rights Council monitors compliance with human rights globally, also through the so-called [Universal Periodic Review](#) (UPR), which examines the human rights situation in a specific country. In 2013, **L4L** filed three UPR [submissions](#). In March, a joint submission with the Law Society of England and Wales and Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada was filed about the situation in [Mexico](#), where human rights lawyers are insufficiently protected by the government and often find themselves in difficult situations due to the bloody war against drugs. In June, **L4L** and these same organisations filed a second submission about the very alarming situation in [Vietnam](#), where suspects rarely have access to lawyers: dissident lawyers like Le Quoc Quan are imprisoned and the Bar Associations are monitored by the Communist Party. A third submission shed light on the ways in which [Chinese](#) human rights lawyers are hindered in their work on sensitive cases. They are, for instance, not allowed to examine files. Chinese lawyers themselves can be guilty of committing crimes if they have their clients give statements that according to the authorities are 'untruthful' (for example a statement of innocence).

Lobbying in the Netherlands

L4L is a member of the [Breed Mensenrechten Overleg](#), a cooperative venture of human rights organisations and development organisations based in the Netherlands. In BMO, these organisations collaborate in lobbying and advocacy activities aimed at prioritising human rights in Dutch foreign policy. As part of these activities, **L4L** was invited by Mr Timmermans, the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs, to a meeting prior to his trip to Russia to celebrate the Netherlands-Russia Year. **L4L** also updated the standing committee of Foreign Affairs on the situation in Turkey, ahead of a trip there. In June, **L4L** participated in the annual consultative meeting between BMO and Minister Timmermans.

Annual lobbying events include meetings with parliamentarians prior to the General Consultations on the human rights policy of Foreign Affairs, and the human rights courses organised by Foreign Affairs for Dutch embassy staff when they are in the Netherlands.

L4L Award

As of 4 January, lawyers from all over the world are nominated for the [L4L Award](#), an award given to lawyers who have displayed exceptional courage in their fight for human rights. The award was established in 2011 and is given every two years. Twenty lawyers from sixteen countries were nominated. On 31 May the award was given to the Chechen lawyer Magamed Abubakarov. The jury, comprising Heikelen Verrijn Stuart, Theo van Boven, Egbert Myjer and Els Swaab, praised him for his 'exceptional courage and persistence.' Special mention was made of Pakistani lawyer [Shahzad Akbar](#) who defended civilian casualties of American drone attacks, and of Indonesian lawyers Olga Hamadi and Gustaf Kawer for their work on behalf of the indigenous population of Papua-New Guinea.



Film event

On 10 July, **L4L**, along with Amnesty International, Zimbabwe Watch and the World Justice Project, organised a film event in Filmhuis Den Haag about Zimbabwean lawyer Beatrice Mtetwa, who was in the Netherlands at the time. Mtetwa defends civilians, journalists and human rights activists who oppose the dictatorship of President Robert Mugabe.

Annual Congress Dutch Bar Association

To inform Dutch lawyers of its work, in 2013, **L4L** organised a session at the Annual Congress of the Dutch Bar Associations. At this session, **L4L** drew attention to the situation of Chechen lawyer Magamed Abubakarov, the winner of the **L4L** Award.

Conference Saint Petersburg

On 28 and 29 October, the international conference 'Human rights in the European Union and Russia' was held in Saint Petersburg as part of the Netherlands-Russia Year. Eighty academics, legal professionals, lawyers, representatives of NGOs and students discussed current human rights issues in the EU and Russia. **L4L** and the Russian foundation HRR Centre for legal assistance and legal documentation organised the conference. Judith Lichtenberg, a board member of **L4L**, was one of the speakers at the conference.

Young Bar Association lectures

To make young lawyers aware of the important role of independent lawyers who must be able to freely exercise their profession, in 2013, we gave lectures at the Young Bar Associations of The Hague and Amsterdam to law students from Tilburg and various law firms.

Communication and social media

L4L also sends a monthly edition of the *Newsflash*, with news, to interested parties. **L4L** has a private group on LinkedIn with 510 members. **L4L** is also on [Facebook](#), where we post regular updates.

FOCUS GROUPS

Most of the activities of **L4L** are carried out by members of the focus groups. These are groups comprising between five and eight lawyers, who are assigned a certain country or region. In all, some fifty to sixty lawyers work without pay for an average of one-and-a-half hours a week for **L4L**. The focus group members collect specific information about the particular country or region such as its legal system, the functioning of the Bar Association, the judiciary, the political situation, and the position of lawyers in particular. They keep in touch with lawyers and institutions. They also draft letters for letter-writing campaigns and contributions for the UN, and write news bulletins and press releases about a certain country, which they post on the website (often with links to the **L4L – Newsflash**).



There are focus groups for Africa, China, Eurasia, the Philippines, the Gulf States, Iran and Syria, Latin America, the Russian Federation, Turkey and South-East Asia. The focus group for the Gulf States was set up in 2013 following an increasing number of requests for help from lawyers from this region.

FUNDRAISING AND GIFTS

Mr., a legal magazine, organised the [Mr. Rally](#), the proceeds of which go to **L4L**. On Saturday 14 September, for the 2013 event, more than eighty teams drove 1230km

from Driebergen to Bosch en Duin. The proceeds amounted to EUR 9,932. Additionally, Kluwer Juridische Uitgevers, a legal publisher, gave **L4L** a significant amount of [advertising space](#) in *Mr.* and in *Nederlands Juristenblad*.

[The Quickest Lawyer](#) was held for the second time in The Hague on 26 May. This is an event sponsored by SDU Uitgevers, the publisher of, among other things, *Advocatenblad*. The title was awarded to the quickest lawyer over 5km or 10km. SDU donated part of the proceeds, EUR1,135, to **L4L**.

Blaauw Committee

L4L, too, felt the impact of the economic crisis in 2013. Contributions and gifts decreased. To bolster its fundraising activities, the board asked Willem Blaauw, a lawyer in Haarlem, to set up a 'fundraising committee', called the [Blaauw Committee](#). Willem Blaauw asked a group of prominent lawyers to assist him with his fundraising activities. Partly due to the efforts of the Blaauw Committee, the financial year 2013 closed with a positive result. The committee has also helped **L4L** to bring in structural income. The Blaauw Committee has proved a good sounding board for (the fundraising activities of) **L4L** and will continue its activities in 2014.

Financial results

The (positive) result realised in 2013 amounted to EUR21,486. The reserves are around the level deemed to be the maximum that is acceptable by the Herkströter Committee (Committee on Capital Requirements for Charities) (ie a maximum continuity reserve of one-and-a-half times the annual turnover). Donations come mainly from law associations such as local Bars, Youth Bar Associations, law firms and individual lawyers all over the Netherlands.

For a more detailed explanation of **L4L**'s financial records, see our (abbreviated) [Annual Accounts for 2013](#).

L4L has only one part-time employee who works three days per week (the executive director) and who is in turn supported by on-call workers and a volunteer secretary who also works three days per week. For a good understanding of **L4L**'s financial situation, it is important to realise that a major part of the activities of **L4L** are unpaid and carried out by volunteers: the approximately 50 to 60 members of the focus groups and the board members. , In addition to their own work as lawyers, they spend a lot of time on **L4L** projects.. This, however, is not reflected in our annual accounts (as these people are unpaid). These efforts are also difficult to express in monetary terms, but the unpaid activities allow **L4L** to engage in a great number of activities with only a small budget, and to initiate and execute projects.

Policy plan

Click [here](#) for the policy plan for 2014-2017.

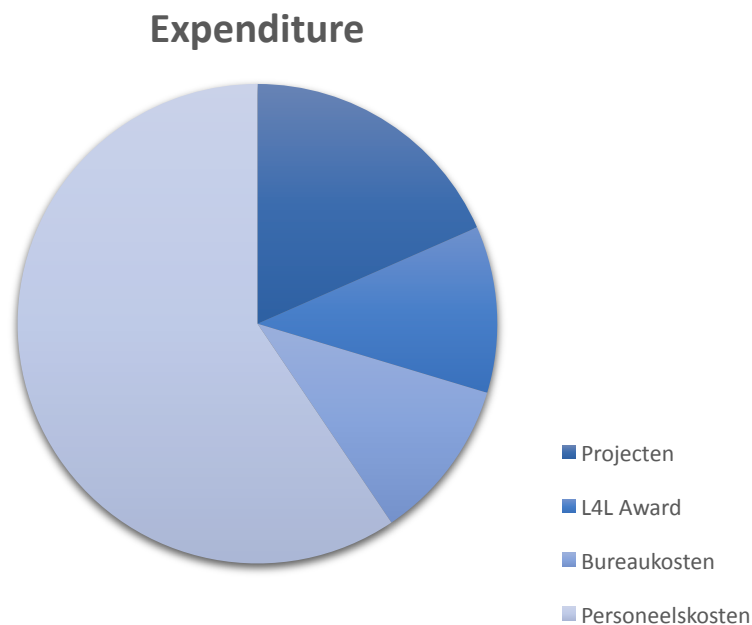
Remuneration policy

[Attendance fees](#) – Board members receive no attendance fee for the work they perform for **L4L**, other than the expenses allowance mentioned below.

Expenses allowance – If an employee of **L4L**, at the request of the board, carries out work, and incurs travel or accommodation expenses, these costs are reimbursed within reason.

If a board member or other volunteer working for **L4L** carries out work at the request of the board, and incurs travel or accommodation expenses, these costs are reimbursed within reason. In every other respect no reimbursement whatsoever is given for these trips, and any loss of income or holidays are for the individual's own account.

If the board decides that travel and accommodation are necessary it also determines how much people are entitled to receive in reimbursement of their travel or accommodation expenses.



To support the executive director and the focus groups, **L4L** has two on-call assistants.

One-third of the personnel costs is allocated to 'General policy and management', and two-thirds to 'Projects'.