



BAR COUNCIL AND BAR HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE JOINT STATEMENT ON UKRAINE

The Bar Council, which represents barristers in England and Wales, and the Bar Human Rights Committee have voiced concerns regarding a number of reports they have received (including from Ukrainian lawyers) of Rule of Law concerns relating to the recent demonstrations in Kiev and other regions of Ukraine. In particular, they have been informed that a number of court hearings have taken place against demonstrators who were not given the opportunity to obtain legal representation. It is understood that many of these hearings resulted in the detention in custody of those demonstrators.

There have also been disturbing reports that a number of people suspected of having participated in the demonstrations have been taken from their apartments, from their cars and while on the streets and detained without court orders authorising their detention. In many cases the whereabouts of their detention is unknown (even to their relatives).

These reports, if true, would constitute serious violations of Ukraine's obligations under Articles 3 and 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

The Bar Council and Bar Human Rights Committee urge the Ukrainian Government to investigate these reports as a matter of urgency and to take all necessary steps to ensure that anyone arrested in connection with the demonstrations is detained only in accordance with due legal process and is allowed a prompt opportunity to obtain legal advice and representation in relation to his or her arrest, detention and any connected proceedings.

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. Further information is available from the Bar Council Press Office on 020 7222 2525.
2. The Bar Council represents barristers in England and Wales. It promotes:
 - The Bar's high quality specialist advocacy and advisory services
 - Fair access to justice for all

- The highest standards of ethics, equality and diversity across the profession, and
- The development of business opportunities for barristers at home and abroad.

The General Council of the Bar is the Approved Regulator of the Bar of England and Wales. It discharges its regulatory functions through the independent Bar Standards Board