



Judicial Conference of Australia

**MEDIA RELEASE BY
THE HON JUSTICE STEVEN RARES
PRESIDENT, JUDICIAL CONFERENCE OF AUSTRALIA
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Australian judges condemn suspension and prosecution of Turkey's judges

Justice Steven Rares, the President of the Judicial Conference of Australia (JCA), the association of judges and magistrates in Australia, has again expressed strong support for the 680 judges and prosecutors in Turkey who are about to be suspended and put on trial for being members of a “Parallel Structure” and being “Gülenists”.

Justice Rares noted with deep concern recent reports that many more judges and prosecutors are being investigated as a first step to disbarring and trying all of them.

The Turkish Association of Judges and Prosecutors, in seeking support for the targeted judges, has said that “This will be the greatest purge that we have ever seen and we know that without concrete evidence our colleagues and ourselves will be labelled as members of “Parallel Structure” and “Gülenist” and persecuted”.

“Gülenists” are alleged followers of Fethullah Gülen, who is regarded as a terrorist by the Turkish Government. He was until 2013 an ally of the current Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, but the relationship

broke down once Mr Gülen made serious corruption allegations against that Government.

The JCA strongly condemns the Turkish Government's persecution of its judiciary. Justice Rares said that Australia's independent judiciary shares the Turkish Judges' Association's view that "this is the last chance for the contemporary world and the international community, that believe in democracy, fundamental rights and the independence of judiciary, to react strongly otherwise there will be a dictatorship on the doorsteps of Europe".

Justice Rares again called on the Turkish Government to respect the independence of the Turkish judiciary and for that Government to cease its campaign of intimidating Turkey's judges.

The Judicial Conference of Australia is the professional association of judges and magistrates in Australia.

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