21 September 2019

STATEMENT

ADC-ICT Statement on the Death of Derk Wiersum

The Association of Defence Counsel practising before the International Courts and Tribunals (ADC-ICT) expresses its deep concern at the killing of lawyer Derk Wiersum in Amsterdam on 18 September 2019.

Mr. Wiersum was representing a witness for the prosecution in a high-profile criminal case against 16 members of a criminal organization accused of murder and attempted murder between 2015 and 2017.

The ADC-ICT strongly condemns the killing and our sympathies are with his family and friends at this difficult time. This shocking tragedy is a reminder of the risks that lawyers have in seeking to uphold the rule of law.

According to the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, governments must ensure that lawyers are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference (principle 16). The UN Basic Principles specify that “[w]here the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities”.

The Association of Defence Counsel practising before the International Courts and Tribunals (ADC-ICT) is an independent professional association which formerly represented all defence counsel practising before the ICTY and now represents all defence counsel practicing before the UN International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT). The ADC-ICT works to promote and protect the interests of defence counsel and ensure the proper function of defence is respected in proceedings before international courts and tribunals.

For further information, please contact the ADC-ICT: press@adc-ict.org or +31 (0)70 512 5418.