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Public Statement - The Law Society of Upper Canada expresses concern about the death of Alberto Nisman

TORONTO, May 6, 2015 /CNW/ - The Law Society of Upper Canada is deeply concerned about the death of prosecutor Alberto Nisman in Argentina.

Reports indicate that on January 18, 2015, Alberto Nisman, Argentine state prosecutor, was found dead in his apartment. The cause of death was identified as a gunshot wound to the head.

Four days prior to his death, he had accused President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner and Foreign Minister Héctor Timerman of conspiring to cover up Iran's alleged involvement in a 1994 attack on a Jewish community centre located in Buenos Aires that killed 85 people. Alberto Nisman had spent more than 10 years investigating this case and he was scheduled to testify before Congress about this matter on January 19, 2015.

The Law Society would like to remind the government of Argentina of Principles 16 and 17 of the United Nations' *Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers*.

Principle 16 states:

"Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; (b) are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely both within their own country and abroad; and (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics."

Principle 17 states:

"Where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities."

Concerns have been raised that Alberto Nisman was killed as a result of fulfilling his legitimate legal duties.

The Law Society urges the government of Argentina to:

- a. ensure that the investigation into the death of Alberto Nisman is fair, impartial and independent;
- b. ensure that all lawyers can carry out their peaceful and legitimate activities without fear of physical violence or other human rights violations;
- c. ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments.

**The Law Society of Upper Canada is the governing body for more than 47,000 lawyers and 7,000 paralegals in the province of Ontario, Canada. The Treasurer is the head of the Law Society.*

The mandate of the Law Society is to govern the legal profession in the public interest by upholding the independence, integrity and honour of the legal profession for the purpose of advancing the cause of justice and the rule of law.

SOURCE The Law Society of Upper Canada

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