



Physician Leaders Urge Turkish President to End Attacks on Doctors

(21.11.2016) A plea to the Turkish President to end the victimisation of doctors and the health service in Turkey has been made by the World Medical Association and the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME).

In a letter to President Recep Erdogan, the Presidents of the two organisations say they are most concerned that the decrees adopted in the aftermath of the attempted coup in July are having a severe effect on the Turkish healthcare system and on Turkish physicians.

The letter, signed by Dr. de Haller, President of the CPME and Dr. Ketan Desai, President of the WMA, refers to the lawsuit facing the Istanbul Chamber of Medicine requiring the removal of all elected bodies, as well as the investigation into the President of the Istanbul Chamber of Medicine, Dr. Selcuk Erez, following a press interview he gave. In addition, a member of the Executive Committee of the Ankara Chamber of Medicine, Dr. Benan Koyuncu, had been arbitrarily suspended from her work in her university and many academicians in schools of medicine, mostly members of the Turkish Medical Association, had been suspended or had lost their work in their universities.

The letter points out that in the immediate aftermath of the attempted coup, the Turkish Medical Association had denounced it as an unlawful challenge to the democratic system. The Association had also reaffirmed its commitment to fundamental rights.

The letter says the increasing pressures facing the Turkish Medical Association and its leaders raised very serious concerns.

It goes on: 'The CPME and the WMA reaffirm strongly the unconditional need to safeguard the civil and human rights of all, including their right to health. Access to high quality health care must be ensured and supported by a functioning healthcare system and safe conditions for the health workforce.

'We therefore condemn any action failing to respect these principles and endangering

the fundamental rights of doctors. The CPME and the WMA remain fully supportive of the achievements by the Turkish Medical Association to uphold democracy, fundamental rights and medical ethics.

'We therefore call on Your Excellency and all authorities to end any action which fails to observe and promote fundamental rights and which undermines the integrity of health in Turkey. We will continue to monitor the situation and stay in close contact with our Turkish colleagues'.

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