



Minister of Justice, Abdulhamit Gül
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18 July 2018

Your Excellency,

We are writing to you on behalf of the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME), the European organisation representing national medical associations across Europe, to express our grave concern over the imprisonment of Prof. Dr. Onur Hamzaoğlu in the Ankara/Sincan prison and his lack of freedom of expression.

Prof. Dr. Hamzaoğlu is a professor in public health and is publicly known for his public health efforts, shown by his service as editor of the Turkish Medical Association periodical, "Community and Physician".

He was taken into custody on 9 February 2018 and arrested on 17 February. The reason for his imprisonment is that he expressed support in favour of peace in a joint press statement in February 2018. On 5 April 2018, the Prosecutor's Office requested for the release of Prof. Dr. Hamzaoğlu stating that there are no conditions for making arrest necessary.

We believe that such warrants of arrests are not compatible with international human rights standards, in particular the freedom of opinion and expression as stated in article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that Turkey ratified in 2003 and in the [United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) of 1948: *"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."*

The case will be seen by the 29th Criminal Court of Ankara and the first hearing will be held on 19 July 2018. In view of the coming hearing, I urge you to take immediate action within your capacities to release Prof. Dr. Hamzaoğlu and drop all charges against him, since his imprisonment violates freedom of expression and human rights principles.

We trust that you will take promptly the necessary action in line with these core universal rights and values.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Jacques de Haller
CPME President



Annabel Seebohm, LL.M.
CPME Secretary General