

President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

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Mr President Erdoğan,

We are writing to you to express our grave concerns regarding the current campaign against the Turkish Medical Association (TMA) further to its press release of 24 January 2018 stressing that war is a public health concern that destroys environment, humankind and threatens social life.

The campaign included intimidations against TMA and its members last week. A criminal complaint was then filed against TMA and the head prosecutor of Ankara opened an investigation. In addition, another lawsuit was filed against TMA's leaders, demanding that they are dismissed from their position on the ground that they are acting beyond the scope of mission of TMA. The 11 TMA's leaders are now under arrest.

Like our Turkish colleagues, we do feel responsible to denounce violence and alert our governments and other relevant decision-makers to the dramatic immediate and long-term health effects of warfare and armed conflicts.

Moreover, filing a criminal complaint against the TMA further to its call for peace constitutes a flagrant infringement of the freedom of opinion and expression as stated in the [United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) of 1948 and in the the International Covenant

on Civil and Political Rights that Turkey has ratified in 2003, hereby establishing its consent to be bound by its provisions.

The Turkish Medical Association has done nothing else than expressing its opinion in support of human rights and peace. To our knowledge, calling for peace constitutes an expression of opinion, certainly not a criminal offence.

We therefore urge the Turkish authorities to:

- Release immediately the physicians' leaders of the Turkish Medical Association;
- Put an immediate end to all acts of harassment and intimidation, including at the judicial level, against the Turkish Medical Association;
- Ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments ratified by Turkey.

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

Yours sincerely

The Swedish Medical Association



Heidi Stensmyren

President

Copy:

World Medical Association
Swedish Embassy in Ankara

Turkish Embassy in Stockholm