

TO ANKARA 32ND HIGH CRIMINAL COURT

File no: 2018/361

Subject: My testimony concerning charges in the indictment.

Esteemed judges,

A woman of science from the discipline of philosophy says, "When deaths cease to be found as painful events by people, we face a violence that enslaves our will. The truth is just one of the most effective ways of owning our will"¹.

There should be no additional explanation or advocacy about what war costs in human life and why we ask for peace. The concept of defence has its significant meaning in legal systems; but what your defence is actually against either reduces it to nonentity or makes it everything in itself. In our day, inference of crime from the statement "war is a public health problem" that led to our present trial is simply in contrast with justice and universal values of law. On my part, personally, it would be betrayal of truth itself to take a defensive position against charges in this indictment which is totally fictitious.

So on this day when values of the profession of medicine, humanity and peace are put to trial I am going to say my words for upholding humanity and peace, and thus to truth and our will.

Firstly, my feelings of affection and respect go to all of our companions whether in our out of this courtroom who have stood with us from the very beginning of the process by expressing their support TO "LIFE AND PEACE."

Then, I must express my sorrow for being judged in a trial where "WAR IS A PUBLIC HEALTH PROBLEM" is asked to be qualified as a crime. I know that processes like these will have their places in history. What we call history is in fact like a living organism. It has a motion carrying it forward with contrasts that it embodies like the good and the bad. For the time being we are undergoing an interval of chaos where the bad has become common and unbound. In such a process, any stance for peace, values of medicine and humanity is exactly the truth itself. And we know that truth has the power of asserting itself sooner or later. This is what makes us powerful when upholding the values of humanity and medicine just as in the case today.

Standing against war and asking for peace are not concepts to change or be changed depending on circumstances. In countries like Turkey, however, the understanding of politics that is determined to put everything, people, all institutions including the judiciary and even words in order and the reflex of people to step back in the face of oppression drive people further away from such concepts. Still, it is good news that there remain some who feel themselves responsible to speak the truth and keep asking for peace. And we'll keep saying

¹ Prof. Dr. Nilgün Toker

“War is not a law of the nature
And peace is not delivered to people just as a gift ...”

In our own geography and in many other parts of the world there have been centuries-long deaths and losses going without even mourning for. As physicians, when we say “war is a public health problem” we might have referred to a hope for peace instead of taking part in a crime. What really matters is to be able to say “Mountains, people, and even death got tired, so saying ‘PEACE’ is the most beautiful poem to be written.”

In conclusion and in relation to our statement “war is a public health problem” the case is as once said by Brailsford: “men understand what war is only when it has ended”. We’ll keep defending life and right to life in all circumstances against heavy costs and destruction that war entails.

Dr. Ayfer Horasan