



Tel. direct: +41 22 791 3535
Fax direct: +41 22 791 4489
E-mail: kruge@who.int

In reply please
refer to:

Your reference:

Özdemir Aktan, MD
Professor of Surgery
President of the Turkish Medical
Association
GMK Bulvarı Ş. Daniş Tunalıgil Sok.
No: 2 / 17 - 23
Maltepe
Ankara
06570
Turquie

16 April 2013

Dear Dr Aktan,

Thank you very much for your letter of 3 April 2013 drawing attention to the issue of violence against health professionals, and proposing that the World Health Organization (WHO) designate 17 April as the “World day on combating violence against health professionals”.

The killing in Turkey of Dr Ersin Arslan on 17 April 2012 was indeed a tragedy, and your decision to mark his death by actively promoting strategies to prevent such violence is laudable. I am sure your efforts are leading to increased awareness about this problem and the need to do more to prevent it. WHO shares your concern about violence as a significant issue for health professionals. As you may be aware, WHO, along with the International Labour Organization, Public Services International, and the International Council of Nurses has published guidelines on preventing workplace violence in the health sector, along with a set of resources including a survey protocol, and country case studies on the prevention of such violence.

Concerning your proposal that 17 April be designated the “world day on combating violence against health professionals”, please note that official days are set by the World Health Assembly, and the WHO secretariat is not in a position to declare any such days. In light of this, you may wish to explore with the Turkish Government whether they would be interested in taking forward such a proposal within the official channels of the World Health Assembly.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Oleg Chestnov
Assistant Director-General
Non communicable Diseases and
Mental Health