

TURKISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION



Pressure on Physicians and Medical Neutrality in Turkey

**CPME General Assembly
November 15th, 2015
Budapest**

Health Problems during Gezi Park Demonstrations

- As a result of tear gas and brutal force used by the police during “Gezi Park Protests”, starting at the end of May 2013 thousands of people were injured and faced various health problems.



Health Services

- The MOH failed to organize health services in such an extraordinary situation leading to so many health problems.
- MOH did nothing to stop police violence!
- Those who could reach official health facilities during events were asked to fill in forms giving their personal information including their involvement in protests.



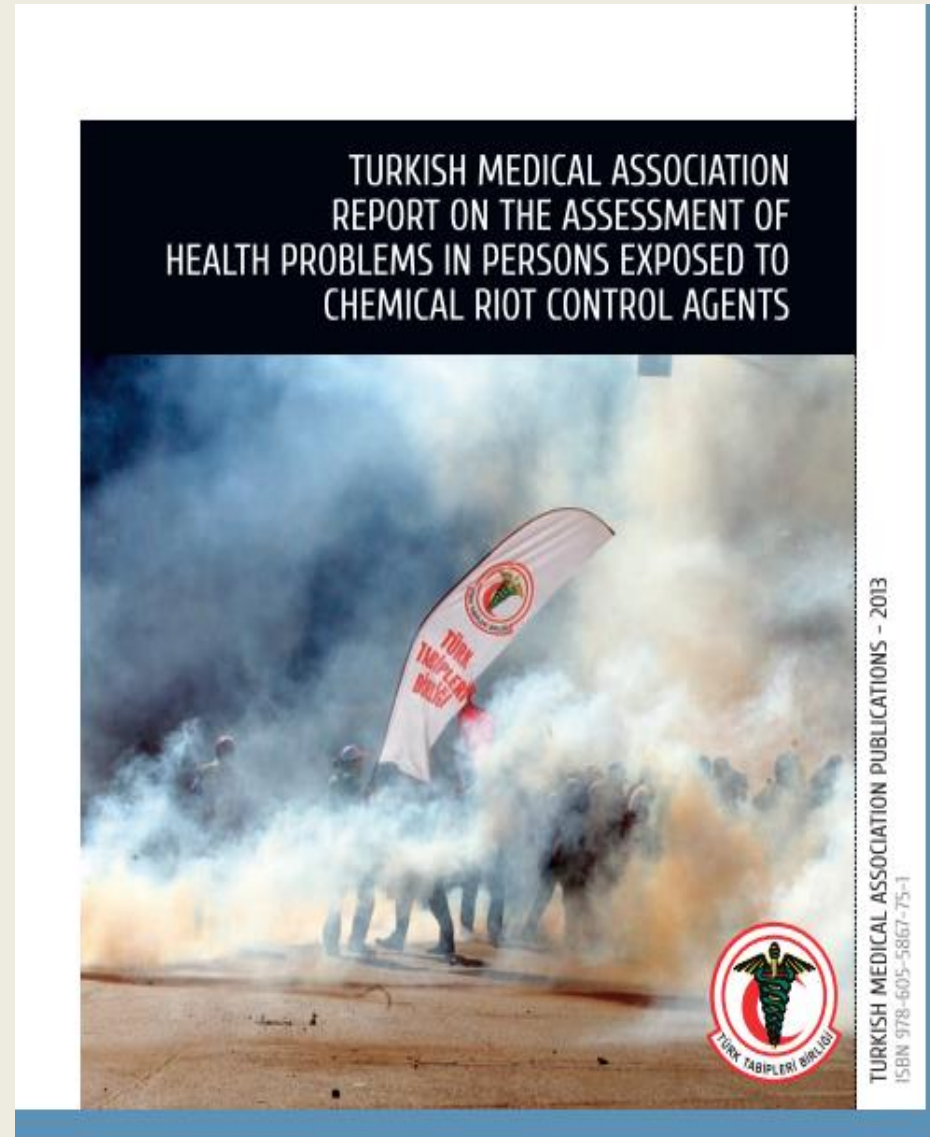
Physicians, nurses, medical students

- Physicians, nurses and medical students spontaneously run to the help of injured people to deliver first aid services
- The MOH started inquiring those health workers who were involved in these health interventions



TMA and Medical Chambers

- The Turkish Medical Association (TMA) reconfirmed its commitment to extent first aid services to all without any distinction and stated that it was the duty of all health workers worldwide
- Through its chambers, the Turkish Medical Association (TTB) gathered information about the health status of demonstrators
- TTB conducted a web-based scientific study on health problems experienced by persons exposed to tear gas
- Turkish Medical Association also took initiative before the World Medical Association to come up with a statement of position on the use of chemical riot control agents.



Court Suit Against Ankara Medical Chamber

- The Ministry of Health appealed to Civil Court for the dismissal of the members of the governing bodies of Ankara Chamber of Medicine with the charge of “engagement in activities out of their original mission by establishing illicit, unauthorized and unsupervised healthcare service units under the name of ‘infirmary’”.
- Pre trial hearing was on 30th September, 2014
- Next trial December 23rd



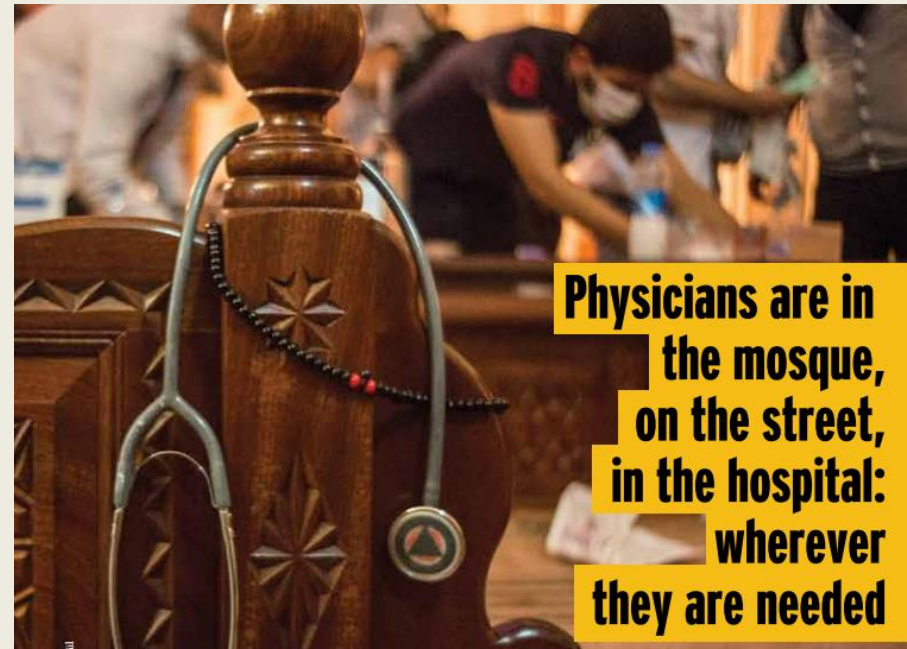
Court Suit Against Hatay Medical Chamber

- Selim Matkap, President of Hatay Chamber of Medicine, informed the public after autopsy conducted on Ahmet Atakan, a citizen losing his life after falling down from a building during protests in this province.
- MOH brought a law suit against Dr Selim Matkap and the Governing Body of the local chamber for standing as a party and intervening in social protests which is claimed to be out of the mission of the Chamber.
- First trial was on 14th October, 2014 and second on 24th October
- Judge refused the case on second trial.



Physicians Helping Injured People in the Mosque are on Trial!

- A penal case was brought against Dr. Erenç Yasemin Dokudan and Dr. Sercan Yüksel who delivered first aid services to citizens injured upon the disproportionate use of force by the police during Gezi Park protests on such grounds as “helping demonstrators” and “fouling a mosque while extending first aid”.
- First trial was on May 7th, 2014
- Next trial was on November 14th.
- 3rd trial will be on March 6th 2015



**Physicians are in
the mosque,
on the street,
in the hospital:
wherever
they are needed**

Taksim Solidarity Group and Dr. Ali Çerkezoglu-Istanbul Medical Chamber

- Penal cases were brought against many leaders of professional and civil society organizations including Dr Ali Çerkezoğlu, Secretary General of İstanbul Chamber of Medicine.
- Charges include “Establishing an organization for committing crime by participating to Taksim Solidarity Platform to exercise the right to participation for healthier cities, instigating people to unlawful assemblies and demonstrations and not disbanding a protest march in spite of warnings by the police.”



Many more court suits against physicians related to Gezi Park Demonstrations

- There are many more court suits against physicians related to Gezi Park demonstrations in almost every part of Turkey
 - Kırklareli
 - 18 court cases against head of the chamber!
 - Ankara
 - İstanbul
 - İzmir
 - Adana



A new legislation after Gezi Park: Delivering unauthorised health services

- This new legislation invented a new type of “offence” as “delivering unauthorized health services” prohibiting physicians to deliver any health service other than in any place licensed by the Ministry. Sanctions for offenders include imprisonment from 1 to 3 years and monetary fine up to 2 million TL (about 900,000 USD).
- This Law (Number 6514, article 46) is effective since January 8th 2014
- The Law is in the Constitutional Court



LETTERS

ATTACKS ON MEDICAL PERSONNEL IN TURKEY

We must unite against health law that threatens medical neutrality in Turkey

Vincent Iacopino *senior medical adviser*, On behalf of Vivienne Nathanson, director of professional activities (2); Otmar Kloiber, secretary general (3); Julian Sheather, ethics manager (2); Michele Heisler, professor of internal medicine and health behavior and health education (4); DeDe Dunevant, director of communications (1); Eliza Young, publications coordinator (1); Alejandro Moreno, consultant (1); Emily Nee, intern (1); Mukesh Haikerwal, chair (3); Margaret Mungherera, president (3); Birgit Beger, secretary general (5); Katrín Fjeldsted, president (5); Frank Ulrich Montgomery, president (6). (1) Physicians for Human Rights (PHR), New York, NY, USA; (2) BMA, London, UK; (3) World Medical Association (WMA), Ferney-Voltaire, France; (4) University of Michigan, MI, USA; (5) Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME), Brussels, Belgium; (6) German Medical Association (Bundesärztekammer, GMA), Berlin, Germany

Giving information related to public health may lead to be penalized!

- Dilovasi
- Industrial area with heavy pollution
- Dr. Onur Hamzaoglu
 - Professor of Public Health
- Found heavy metals in colostrum of mothers and meconium of newborns
- Informed public about increased number of cancer cases
- Penalized by Rector of the University and insulted by the mayor of the city



Giving information related to public health may lead to be penalized!

- Ergene
- A heavily polluted river in Trakia region
- Dr. Dilek Tucer
 - Gastroenterologist in a state hospital in Edirne
- Informed public on health problems related to pollution of Ergene in a program she had been charged
- Removed from her job by the Governor!
- Returned her job after strong resistance from physicians and public



TMA and Turkish Doctors Say: Don't Mess with my Hippocratic Oath

- We thank CPME and other international medical and human rights organizations for their support.



State of Refugees in Turkey

- War in Syria and Iraq
- More than 1 500 000 refugees from Syria in last 3 years
- Some in camps (250 000)
- Most outside camps
- Problems in preventive health care, vaccination (measles, polio)
- Increased infectious diseases (measles, leishmaniasis, danger of polio!)
- Many problems in accomodation, basic needs, getting health care



State of Refugees in Turkey

- Ezidi Refugees
- 25 000
- In different regions of Turkey
- Difficult to give primary health care, vaccination
- Danger of infectious diseases (measles, poliomyelitis)
- Problems in legal status, and getting health care in hospitals



War in Kobane-Syria

- War in Kobane against ISIS is very hot
- More than 180 000 refugees in last 2 months
- Many injured come Suruc/Turkey
- TMA collected names of voluntary physicians in different parts of Turkey to work there
- TMA try to make contact with MOH to assign voluntary physicians in the region

