

MR. BENJAMIN NETENYAHU
PRIME MINISTER
ISRAEL

03 July 2015

His Excellency,

We follow with great concern debates going on in relation to the amendment to the *Israel's Prisons Act* (No. 48, 4808-2014). This amendment titled *Preventing Damages due to Hunger Strikes* will allow physicians to resort to force-feeding of prisoners in hunger strike.

We declare our unconditional support to the denouncement made by the Israel Medical Association (IMA) on the ground that the amendment is against medical ethics and the call by IMA President Dr Leonid Eidelman to physicians in Israel to stand against the draft and refuse to take part in force-feeding practices.

Further, we find the statement by Deputy Health Minister Yakov Litzman asking Dr. Eidelman to apologize and retract his statement and that he would "find ways to take action against those who do not follow the letter of the law" simply unacceptable. In the same vein we consider the statement by Gilad Arden, Israel's Minister of Internal Security, that they would "find doctors who would agree to force-feeding" as extremely unfortunate.

Relevant international treaties, conventions, declarations and protocols reflecting the accumulated experience of centuries and also binding the State of Israel absolutely prohibit any practice of force-feeding without informed and voluntary consent of persons concerned. Moreover, there is no way of legitimizing any dictate on health professionals including physicians to ignore medical ethics. Any operation on the body of a person without his or her information and consent is a form of torture and health professionals cannot be a part of such operation.

In the face of this human rights and medical ethics crisis, we call you, The Prime Minister and The Minister of Health of Israel to take urgent action on this issue and state that we are ready to undertake any duty and responsibility in this context.

With our best regards,



Bayazit Ilhan, M.D.
Turkish Medical Association
President



Şebnem Korur Fincancı, M.D.
Human Rights Foundation of Turkey
President