



President of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
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Dear Mr President Erdoğan,

We are writing to you to express our deepest concerns regarding the recent arrests of the President of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT), Şebnem Korur Fincancı, together with Erol Önderoğlu (journalist from Reporters Without Borders) and Ahmet Nesin, further to their participation in a solidarity campaign to support the Journal of Özgür Gündem that is currently under investigations and threatened to be closed.

We believe that such warrants of arrests are not compatible with international human rights standards, in particular the freedom of opinion and expression as stated in the [United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) of 1948: "*Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference, and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers*".

Free, independent and varied media based on freedom of information and expression is a core element of any functioning democracy. It is in fact indispensable for the protection of all other human rights.

In addition, Dr. Şebnem Korur Fincancı has a long-standing commitment at domestic and international level on the fight against human rights violations, mainly torture and ill-treatments in places of detention. As concerned health professionals, we fully share her commitment and have been supporting her actions as President of HRFT in combating these unacceptable breaches of fundamental rights.

We therefore urge the Turkish authorities to take immediate action in order to:

- Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Ms. M.D. Şebnem Korur Fincancı, Mr. Erol Önderoğlu and Mr. Ahmet Nesin;
- Release them immediately and unconditionally, and drop all charges against them since their detention is arbitrary as it only aims at preventing freedom of expression and their human rights activities;
- Put an end to all acts of harassment and intimidation, including at the judicial level, against human rights defenders and journalists;
- Put an end to the continuous threat on human rights defenders in line with Turkey's international commitments and comply with all the provisions of the [United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders](#);
- Ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments ratified by Turkey.

Our organisations represent together millions of physicians worldwide, committed to the respect of human rights and medical ethics for all people. We trust that you will take promptly all the necessary actions in line with these core universal rights and values.

Yours sincerely,



Sir Michael Marmot, President, World Medical Association (WMA)



Dr. Raşit Tükel, President, Turkish Medical Association



Donna McKay, Executive Director, Physicians for Human Rights (PHR)



Dr. de Haller, President, Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME)



Victor Madrigal, Secretary General, International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)

Copy to:

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- Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Dr. Sadık Ahmet Cad, No: 8 Balgat / Ankara – Turkey 06100; Tel : +90 (312) 292 10 00
- Minister of Justice, Mr. Bekir Bozdağ, 06659 Kızılay, Ankara; Tel: +90 (312) 417 77 70; Fax: +90 (0312) 419 33 70; E-mail: info@adalet.gov.tr
- Minister of Interior, Mr. Efkan Ala, Bakanlıklar Ankara; Tel: +90 (312) 422 40 00; Fax: 90 312 418 1795; Email: mustesarlik@icisleri.gov.tr // ozelkalem@icisleri.gov.tr
- Ambassador Faruk Kaymakçı, Diplomatic Mission of Turkey to the European Union in Brussels, Avenue des Arts 36-38, 1000 Bruxelles, Belgium; Fax: + 32 2 511 04 50
- Ambassador Naci Kuru, Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations in Geneva, Chemin du Petit-Saconnex 28B 1211 Geneva 19, Tel: +41 22 918 50 80; Fax: +41 22 734 08 59; Email: mission.turkey@ties.itu.int