

WMA EXPRESSES SHOCK AT TURKISH PHYSICIAN LEADERS' PRISON SENTENCES

The World Medical Association has expressed shock at prison sentences handed down to several leading Turkish physicians

Dr. Sebnem Korur Fincanci, the Chair of Human Rights Foundation of Turkey and former member of Istanbul Chamber of Medicine Honorary Committee, was sentenced this week to two years six months imprisonment. And last week Dr. Ozdemir Aktan, a former president of the Turkish Medical Association, was sentenced to one year and three months imprisonment, while a court in Istanbul ruled that the prison sentence of two years three months handed down to Dr. Gençay Gürsoy, a former Chair of the TMA and one of the founders of Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, would be upheld.

WMA Chair Dr. Ardis Hoven said: 'We are shocked at what is going on in Turkey. These physicians, along with many other doctors and health care workers, are being punished for supporting a petition calling on the Turkish government to stop the violence against civilians. These are just the latest examples of the Turkish authorities completely ignoring the most basic human rights by violating the right to free speech. The WMA has repeatedly called on the Turkish Government to call a halt to the appalling harassment of physicians and academics in Turkey following the failed coup in 2016'.

Dr. Gürsoy was unable to attend the court hearing for medical reasons and his sentence will now go through an appeals process.

Dr. Hoven called for the charges against these and other physicians facing trial, to be dropped unconditionally. Former members of TMA's boards, including Dr. Feride Aksu Tanik, a former Secretary General of TMA and official advisor to WMA, are facing trial or sentences on the same charges of supporting terrorism. Many of them have lost their jobs, had their passports cancelled and will never be able to work in public institutions.