

Dear President, Esteemed Colleagues, Distinguished Participants,

It is a great pleasure and honor for me that the World Congress of Medical Law is being held this year in Istanbul. These lands are where the universal values of medicine first flourished, where Hippocrates and Galen left their footprints, and where the earliest healthcare institutions in history were established. It is a privilege for us to host you in a country with such a profound medical and ethical heritage.

Today's main themes—"vulnerability", "gender issues", "patient safety", and "human rights in medicine"—are not merely academic topics; they are vital issues that touch the daily lives of millions of people around the world.

As we hold this congress, we must not only engage in theoretical discussions but also confront the tragedies occurring and remember our responsibilities on behalf of all humanity.

Unfortunately, these are not just abstract principles but are intertwined with concrete suffering. The ongoing war in Gaza presents an unacceptable reality in terms of medical ethics and human rights. Beyond international legal norms, in a way that even universal conscience cannot accept, hospitals and healthcare workers are being targeted, and access to healthcare services is severely obstructed. Hunger has been weaponized, and the fundamental right to life is under threat.

The ancestors of those attacking Gaza today suffered the most violent, unexpected, and horrific genocide in history in the first half of the century. Evil had become a part of our daily life. Tragically, the descendants of those who inflicted this suffering are now trying to make life a living hell. This is a profoundly ethical issue of humanity. The banality of evil, as described by Hannah Arendt 50 years ago, still holds true today. To make our world a better place, we must find new attitudes, new definitions and new expressions, together with responsible people like you. I respectfully and lovingly greet you and your convention which aimed to make the world better place.

Türkiye is also undergoing its own trials in these four thematic areas.

Healthcare workers have increasingly been subjected to violence in recent years and are experiencing burnout due to long and strenuous working conditions. Violence against healthcare workers is not only a threat to individual safety but a violation of both medical ethics and legal protections. Ethically, it undermines the fundamental principles of respect, dignity, and trust that form the basis of the patient–clinician relationship. Legally, such acts demand robust frameworks that ensure accountability, prevention, and institutional responsibility. Medical law must not only punish perpetrators but also oblige healthcare systems and governments to implement protective regulations, secure working environments, and psychosocial support mechanisms.

Following the devastating earthquakes of February 6, 2023, there are still significant shortcomings in access to healthcare in affected regions.

Issues such as discrimination faced by women and LGBTQ+ individuals in accessing healthcare and the lack of timely medical intervention for those in prisons call us to reflect and take action from medical, legal, and ethical perspectives.

On the other hand, integrating technological developments such as AI-assisted systems into medical practice is creating great opportunities in medicine but is presenting complex ethical-legal challenges. Digital inequalities risk triggering a new wave of health injustice. Legal regulations have not yet fully kept pace with this rapid transformation. Therefore, robust medical law and proactive ethical oversight are essential to ensure that innovation in healthcare does not come at the expense of patient rights, professional integrity, or social equity.

As the Turkish Medical Association, we do not limit ourselves to identifying problems but also actively strive for solutions.

The Turkish Medical Association (TMA) is a public institution founded by law and rooted in professional solidarity and is dedicated to upholding the rights of physicians, safeguarding public health, advancing medical education, and addressing the social determinants of health. We take pride in being one of the most trusted institutions in our country, recognized for our independent voice and evidence-based advocacy.

TMA actively engages in the field of medical law to protect both physicians' rights and patients' dignity, while promoting ethical and legal standards in healthcare.

We aim to ensure that health authorities and policymakers adopt fair, evidence-based, and ethical approaches by offering well-grounded scientific guidance.

TMA integrates ethics and law to build a healthcare system rooted in justice, accountability, and human dignity.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Professor Berna Arda, the Congress Chair, and to the entire organizing committee for their tireless efforts in preparing this outstanding scientific and cultural program. I also extend warm thanks to all our distinguished speakers, moderators, and participants—your expertise and perspectives will make this congress a milestone event.

As we embark on these discussions, I invite all of us to approach them not only as professionals, but as human beings—aware that medical law is not an abstract concept but a living framework that shapes lives, protects rights, and builds trust in society. Let Istanbul inspire you with its spirit of dialogue, resilience, and diversity.

I wish you a fruitful and inspiring congress.

Thank you.

**Dr. Alpaz Azap**

**President of the Central Council  
of the Turkish Medical Association**