

## **WMA RESOLUTION ON HEALTH AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN ZIMBABWE**

Adopted by the 58<sup>th</sup> WMA General Assembly, Copenhagen, Denmark, October 2007

### **PREAMBLE**

Noting information and reports of systematic and repeated violations of human rights, interference with the right to health in Zimbabwe, failure to provide resources essential for provision of basic health care, declining health status of Zimbabweans, dual loyalties and threats to health care workers striving to maintain clinical independence, denial of access to health care for persons deemed to be associated with opposition political parties and escalating state torture, the WMA wishes to confirm its support of, and commitment to:

- Attaining the World Health Organization principle that the "enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being"
- Defending the fundamental purpose of physicians to alleviate distress of patients and not to let personal, collective or political will prevail against such purpose
- Supporting the role of physicians in upholding the human rights of their patients as central to their professional obligations
- Supporting physicians who are persecuted because of their adherence to medical ethics

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Therefore, the World Medical Association, recognizing the collapsing health care system and public health crisis in Zimbabwe, calls on its affiliated national medical associations to:

1. Publicly denounce all human rights abuses and violations of the right to health in Zimbabwe
2. Actively protect physicians who are threatened or intimidated for actions which are part of their ethical and professional obligations
3. Engage with the Zimbabwean Medical Association (ZiMA) to ensure the autonomy of the medical profession in Zimbabwe
4. Urge and support ZiMA to invite an international fact finding mission to Zimbabwe as a means for urgent action to address the health and health needs of Zimbabweans

## Human rights Abuses in Zimbabwe

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In addition, the WMA encourages ZiMA, as a member organization of the WMA, to:

1. Uphold its commitment to the WMA Declarations of Tokyo, Hamburg and Madrid as well as the WMA Statement on Access to Health Care
2. Facilitate an environment where all Zimbabweans have equal access to quality health care and medical treatment, irrespective of their political affiliations
3. Commit to eradicating torture and inhumane, degrading treatment of citizens in Zimbabwe
4. Reaffirm their support for the clinical independence of physicians treating any citizen of Zimbabwe
5. Obtain and publicize accurate and necessary information on the state of health services in Zimbabwe
6. Advocate for inclusion in medical curricula, teachings on human rights and the ethical obligations of physicians to maintain full and clinical independence when dealing with patients in vulnerable situations

The WMA encourages ZiMA to seek assistance in achieving the above by engaging with the WMA, the Commonwealth Medical Association and the NMAs of neighboring countries and to report on its progress from time to time.