

WMA RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE RIGHTS OF PATIENTS AND PHYSICIANS IN THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

Adopted by the 60th WMA General Assembly, New Delhi, India, October 2009

WHEREAS,

Physicians in the Islamic Republic of Iran have reported:

Unsettling practices of injured persons being taken to prisons, without adequate medical treatment or the consensus of the attending physicians;

Physicians being hindered from treating patients;

Concern about the veracity of documentation related to the death of patients and physicians being forced to clinically inaccurate documentation; and

Corpses and badly injured political and religious prisoners who were admitted to hospitals with signs of brutal torture, including sexual abuse.

THEREFORE, the World Medical Association

1. Reaffirms its Declaration of Lisbon: Declaration on the Rights of the Patient, which states that whenever legislation, government action or any other administration or institution denies patients the right to medical care, physicians should pursue appropriate means to assure or to restore it.
2. Reaffirms its Declaration of Hamburg: Declaration Concerning Support for Medical Doctors Refusing to Participate in, or to Condone, the Use of Torture or Other Forms of Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment, which encourages doctors to honor their commitment as physicians to serve humanity and to resist any pressure to act contrary to the ethical principles governing their dedication to this task.
3. Reaffirms its Declaration of Tokyo: Guidelines for Physicians Concerning Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment in Relation to Detention and Imprisonment, which:
 - prohibits physicians from participating in, or even being present during the practice of torture or other forms of cruel or inhuman or degrading procedures;
 - requires that physicians maintain utmost respect for human life even under threat, and prohibits them from using any medical knowledge contrary to the laws of humanity.

4. Reaffirms its Resolution on the Responsibility of Physicians in the Documentation and Denunciation of Acts of Torture or Cruel or Inhuman or Degrading Treatment; which states that physicians should attempt to:
 - ensure that detainees or victims of torture or cruelty or mistreatment have access to immediate and independent health care;
 - ensure that physicians include assessment and documentation of symptoms of torture or ill-treatment in the medical records using the necessary procedural safeguards to prevent endangering detainees.
5. Refers to the WMA International Code of Medical Ethics, which states that physicians shall be dedicated to providing competent medical service in full professional and moral independence, with compassion and respect for human dignity.
6. Urges the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to respect the International Code of Medical Ethics and the standards included in the aforementioned declarations to which physicians are committed.
7. Urges National Medical Associations to speak out in support of this resolution.