



Threats to the Medical Profession in Turkey

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Extreme Use of Violence by Police



- Legitimate and peaceful demonstrations
- Taking place in Turkey
- Started June 2013 with Gezi Park events
- Is still in the agenda of Turkey

Medical Witness and Collecting Evidences

- The Turkish Medical Association (TMA) regularly collected information from physicians and medical chambers
 - Numbers of wounded
 - Died and disabled people
 - Types of wounds and
 - Health status of demonstrators
- TMA used these data in urging authorities to prevent them using extreme force in peaceful and legitimate demonstrations
- Survey on Assessment of Health Problems in Persons Exposed to Chemical Riot Control Agents

The Reaction of Security Forces



- Using tear gas as a weapon
- Firing rubber bullets
- Firing ammunition directly at protestors at close range
- Using water cannons spiked with tear gas
- Beating and detaining protestors

Reaction of Doctors and Health Care Workers versus reaction of the Ministry of Health

- Ministry of Health and Red Crescent did not provide medical aid
- Hundreds of all kind of medical profession and students
 - Then and there, wherever needed
 - Definitely and inevitably
 - Voluntarilyrushed to the help of demonstrators



Police Attacks to Voluntary Infirmaries



- Unfortunately, there were police attacks with tear gas, water cannons and rubber bullets to infirmaries delivering urgent medical aid and emergency care services.
- Physicians and medical students were attacked, prevented from giving medical aid by force, detained by the police

Dr. Ali erkezođlu
Secretary General of
Istanbul Chamber of Medicine



Attacks on Professional Autonomy

- The Ministry of Health
 - Started investigations against the TMA and Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir Chambers of Medicine on the ground of "delivering unlicensed health services“!
 - Asked for the names of volunteering physicians engaged in health services
 - Required the medical personnel to report the names of the injured demonstrators as a separate list
 - Law proposal that criminalise the provision of unlicensed or unauthorised emergency medical care

Criminalization of the Medical Profession and the Civil Society



The Ankara Directorate of Security declared TMA and Ankara Chamber of Medicine in its report as

"civil society organizations in opposition to the government"

together with many other professional organizations and trade unions on the basis of its stance in Gezi Park demonstrations.

Charges Against TMA and Ankara Chamber of Medicine

- *Mobilizing public support to activist groups*
- *Exerting psychological pressure on the judiciary and Ankara Security Organization*
- *Encouraging individual complaints to prosecutors for so called disproportionate use of force by the police !*

Attacks to Patient Confidentiality

- General Directorate of Security sent a writing to TMA asking for the names of the people who lost their vision
 - **for purposes of finding those who are responsible**
 - **informing the public correctly!**

TMA Stood Up For The Ethical Values

- Health information conveyed to the Association by individual physicians and Medical Chambers was about their health status and the identity of patients was not collected.
- Even if information about their identity was available in our records, it would still be impossible to provide such information given the right to health care without discrimination, obligation to keep patient information confidential and universal and national arrangements on the privacy of health data.



Results of Attacks to Medical Autonomy

- TMA carried out a survey on exposure to chemicals during Gezi events
- 11155 responses given to survey shows the dimension of the exposure
- There were 8000 wounded people
- According to results of the survey, only 5% of the cases applied to hospital
- This suggests that there is a significant group who avoid applying to health facilities for concerns about being "blacklisted" and/or prosecuted.

Attempts to Taint the Prestige of the TMA by some Media

- TMA declared that the names of the patients are our professional secret
- General Directorate of Security leaked this reply to media organs close to the Government.
- Now, some media organs are launching a series of news features with headings such as
 - Medical Rhetoric
 - Gezi Silence
 - Gezi Lies by the Turkish Medical Association

EDITORIALS

Attacks on medical personnel in Turkey

A call to honour medical ethics and end violations of medical neutrality

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