



Türk Tabipleri Birliđi

— Turkish Medical Association —

World Medical Association
secretariat@wma.net
otmar.kloiber@wma.net
clarisse.delorme@wma.net

351/2018

16.02.2018

Dear President,

The active support you extended during the recent process concerning the Turkish Medical Association was extremely valuable for us. We are sincerely thankful for your support.

On this occasion we would like to inform you about two dimensions of on-going assaults on the TTb:

1. Investigation against TTb CC members following the press statement

Upon the military operation that Turkey launched in Afrin, the TTb made a press statement announcing that war is a public health problem and added

“As members of a profession who have taken oath to save lives we constantly keep in mind our first and foremost duty to defend life and commit to maintain the environment of peace.” (You can access this statement and other news on our website in English <http://www.ttb.org.tr/>)

In the course of events following the press statement, as you know, 11 members of the Central Council were detained. Charges against and penalties demanded are as follows:

- "Making propaganda in favour of a terrorist organization" - Paragraph 2 of Article 7 in the Anti-Terror Law (“Any person making propaganda so as to legitimize or praise the methods of a terrorist organization that entail force, violence or threat or encourage others to resort to such methods is punished with imprisonment from one to five years. The punishment will be increased by half in case this act is committed through the media.)

- "Provoking people to be rancorous and hostile” – First paragraph in Article 216 of Turkish Criminal Code (Any person who openly provokes a group of people belonging to different social class, religion, race, sect, or coming from another origin, to be rancorous or hostile against another group, is punished with imprisonment from one year to three years in case of such act causes risk from the aspect of public safety.)

Further, with unlawful search in the building of the TTB computers at the central office were seized and some are still not returned. In these computers there is personal/confidential information of many doctors and patients including disciplinary actions conducted.

Although all CC members were released after a week in detention, official investigation on the basis of charges mentioned above is continuing.

Given that the rules of law are respected, we expect that the Prosecutor will drop the case.

2. Denying the TTB the status of national medical association.

The assault on the TTB following the press statement is not limited to detention. With another process starting with statements made by the President and other high authorities the agenda now is to delete the words "Turkish" or "Turkey" in the names of national associations including not only TTB but also bar associations and associations of Architects, Engineers, Dentists, Pharmacists and son on. This means removing the national or country-wide status of these associations. If enacted, this also means according these professional organizations the status of CSO, compulsory membership will be lifted, their legally recognised authorities including disciplinary actions and sanctioning will be withdrawn, and any group will be entitled to establish its own professional organization at any size and place.

Presently we are discussing with other relevant organizations in the country what we can do in the face of such initiative which we consider extremely damaging in terms of the environment of health in the country, professional autonomy, and our struggle that is built upon the right to health and professional values.

The Turkish Medical Association is determined to defend the right to health and professional values under all circumstances.

We reiterate our thanks for your sincere support in this challenging process we are going through and want you to be sure that your support means much to us.

We wish you success in your work while expecting your solidarity in near future as well.

With our best regards,

Prof. Dr. M. Raşit TÜKEL



President
Turkish Medical Association