



To the attention of:

President of the Republic of Turkey, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (contact@tccb.gov.tr)

Minister of Justice, Mr. Bekir Bozdağ (info@adalet.gov.tr)

Minister of Health, Mr. Fahrettin Koca (ozelburo@saglik.gov.tr)

29th of November 2022

Your Excellency,

Re: Review of pre-trial detention of Prof Şebnem Korur Fincancı on 11 December 2022

I am writing to you on behalf of the World Medical Association (WMA), the global federation of National Medical Associations representing millions of physicians worldwide. The WMA plays a key role in promoting good practice, medical ethics and medical accountability internationally.

We would like to draw your attention to the distressing situation of our Turkish colleague, Prof Şebnem Korur Fincancı, President of the Turkish Medical Association (TMA), in pre-trial detention in Ankara since 26 October 2022, after a TV interview in Germany in which she called for an independent investigation on the allegation of the use of chemical weapons. The Ankara 3rd Criminal Court ordered her arrest on charges of “propaganda for a terrorist organisation.”

We understand that Dr. Fincancı’s pre-trial detention is reviewed each month and that the next review is scheduled for the 11th of December.

We have worked with Dr. Fincancı for many years and value her important contribution to the WMA in the pursuit of its mission. Prof Şebnem Korur Fincancı is a well-known forensic physician in Turkey and globally, whose integrity and commitment to the ethical values of our profession are unquestionable.

The denial of liberty for expressing her opinion in recommending an investigation on the use of weapons prohibited under international law, constitutes a gross violation of the freedom of speech. The detention of Dr. Fincancı is arbitrary, abusive, and contrary to the most elementary fair trial rules, guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that Turkey has ratified in 2003.

We call upon you to deliver justice fairly and impartially and strongly reiterate our call for the immediate release of Prof Şebnem Korur Fincancı in the next review of her pre-trial detention

Your sincerely,

Dr Osahon Enabulele,
WMA President