

URGENT APPEAL - THE OBSERVATORY

New information
TUR 010 / 1120 / OBS 135.2
Judicial harassment
Turkey
November 2, 2021

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a partnership of the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) and FIDH, has received new information and requests your intervention in the following situation in **Turkey**.

New information:

The Observatory has been informed about the ongoing judicial harassment of Dr. **Şeyhmus Gökalp**, a physician, member of the High Disciplinary Committee of the Turkish Medical Association (TTB)[[1](#)] and a volunteer of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT)[[2](#)].

On October 15, 2021, Dr. Gökalp appeared before the Diyarbakir Heavy Penal Court Number 10 to attend the second hearing in his case. The prosecutor presented his final argument and did not take into consideration any of the arguments and evidence presented by defence lawyers over the previous years. Accordingly, the prosecutor demanded that Dr. Gökalp be imprisoned between seven and 15 years on the grounds of “membership to an armed organisation” and “membership to a terrorist organisation” (Article 314/2 of the Criminal Code and Article 5/1 of the Anti-Terror Law No. 3713, respectively). The next hearing is set to take place on November 19, 2021, when the court is expected to issue its verdict on the case.

The Observatory recalls that Dr. Gökalp was [arrested](#) on November 20, 2020 by the Turkish police within the scope of an investigation conducted by the Prosecutor's Office in Diyarbakir.

On February 10, 2021, the Heavy Penal Court of Diyarbakir Number 10 ordered the [release](#) of Dr. Şeyhmus Gökalp after more than 80 days of pre-trial detention.

The Observatory condemns the judicial harassment of Dr. Gökalp and recalls that this is not the first time that TTB members and Dr. Gökalp are being [targeted](#) because of their peaceful and legitimate human rights activities. These practices are used as a threat to civil society in conditions where the rule of law is eliminated, and the judiciary lacks independence.

The Observatory urges the Turkish authorities to immediately and unconditionally put an end to all forms of harassment, including at the judicial level, against Dr. Şeyhmus Gökalp and all human rights defenders in Turkey.

Actions requested:

Please write to the authorities of Turkey asking them to:

- i. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical integrity and psychological well-being of Dr. Şeyhmus Gökalp and of all human rights defenders in Turkey;
- ii. Put an end to all forms of harassment, including at the judicial level, against Dr. Şeyhmus Gökalp and all human rights defenders in Turkey, and ensure in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their activities without hindrance and fear of reprisals;
- iii. Refrain from the practice of abusing anti-terrorism legislation for silencing dissent and crackdown on human rights activities.

Addresses:

- President of the Republic of Turkey, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Email: contact@tccb.gov.tr
- Minister of Justice, Mr. Abdülhamit Gül. Email: info@adalet.gov.tr.

- Minister of Interior, Mr. Süleyman Soylu. Email: diab@icisleri.gov.tr; sti@icisleri.gov.tr
- Ambassador Mr. Mehmet Kemal Bozay, Diplomatic Mission of Turkey to the European Union in Brussels, Belgium. Email: info@turkdeleg.org; tr-delegation.eu@mfa.gov.tr
- Ambassador Mr. Sadık Arslan, Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. Email: turkey.unog@mfa.gov.tr

Please also write to the diplomatic missions or embassies of Turkey in your respective country.

Geneva-Paris, November 2, 2021

Kindly inform us of any action undertaken quoting the code of this appeal in your reply.

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (the Observatory) was created in 1997 by the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) and FIDH. The objective of this programme is to intervene to prevent or remedy situations of repression against human rights defenders. OMCT and FIDH are both members of ProtectDefenders.eu, the European Union Human Rights Defenders Mechanism implemented by international civil society.

To contact the Observatory, call the emergency line:

- E-mail: Appeals@fidh-omct.org
- Tel OMCT + 41 22 809 49 39
- Tel FIDH + 33 1 43 55 25 18

[1] Established in 1953, the Turkish Medical Association (TTB) is a chamber of medical doctors in Turkey. The TTB aspires to defend the rights of doctors, represent the profession of medical doctors and protect the ethic codes, contribute to medical education, improve and sensitise about public health in Turkey. The TTB counts around 85.000 members which represents almost 60% of Turkey's doctors and it is affiliated to the World Medical Association.

[2] Established in 1990, the HRFT is a non governmental and non-profit organisation providing treatment and rehabilitation services for torture survivors and documenting human rights violations in Turkey.