



**LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN NETWORK OF  
HEALTH INSTITUTIONS AGAINST TORTURE, IMPUNITY  
AND OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS**

September 18th, 2023

Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan  
President of the Republic of Turkey  
Ankara, Turkey

**Subject: Dr. Ayşe Uğurlu risks indefinite dismissal from public service because she followed the requirements of the medical profession and advocated for human rights**

His Excellency

The Latin American and Caribbean Network of Health Institutions against Torture, Impunity and other Human Rights Violations shared, a month ago, our concern about the judicial and administrative harassment that a valuable professional and Turkish citizen, Dr. Ayşe Uğurlu, forensic doctor and human rights defender, is suffering (see letter sent on the 15<sup>th</sup> of August).

Now we have learned that on August 18th, 2023, the Ministry of Health requested her dismissal from public service based on article 125 of the Public Servants Law, which establishes indefinite dismissal from public service for "*cooperating with terrorist organizations, helping to these organizations, use public media and resources to support these organizations, or make propaganda for these organizations.*" – A baseless accusation. Dr. Ayşe Uğurlu presented her defense, but if she is sanctioned, she will be indefinitely deprived of her duties as a doctor in the public service.

We remember that the Malta Declaration on hunger strikes of the World Medical Association (WMA) protects the physicians against "political pressures" under Principle 25; that the WMA's Declaration of Hamburg Concerning Support for Medical Doctors Refusing to Participate in, or to Tolerate the use of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment and affirms the responsibility "*to support physicians experiencing difficulties as a result of their resistance to any such pressure*" under the article 4.2 of its Resolution.

The strong corpus of international human rights and health standards, various international ethical declarations and guidelines subscribed to by the medical profession clearly protect Dr. Ayşe Uğurlu's fulfilment with the requirements of the medical profession and human rights advocacy. Dr. Ayşe Uğurlu's legal and legitimate efforts, such as enjoying her freedom



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of expression to defend human rights and following ethical codes, are suppressed with threats of sanctions based on unfounded accusations and the instrumentalization of anti-terrorism laws. With the indefinite dismissal from public service of Dr. Ayşe Uğurlu, the population as a whole would be punished.

For these reasons, Mr. President, we, the Latin American organizations that have signed this letter supports the requests of the *Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT)* to:

1. Put an end to all proceedings against Dr. Ayşe Uğurlu that causing to suspend of, and dismiss from public service, and immediately and unconditionally cease the disciplinary investigation launched against her;
2. Reverse the decision of removing Dr. Ayşe Uğurlu from the roster of experts;
3. Immediately drop all charges against Ayşe Uğurlu's for her fulfilment of the requirements of medical profession and human rights advocacy, and guarantee in all circumstances that HRDs are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial and administrative harassment;
4. Stop all repressions and reprisal against Dr. Ayşe Uğurlu, and health workers facing threats and administrative harassment due to their work in the field of human rights;
5. Comply with all the provisions of the United Nations Declaration on Human Rights Defenders adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 9, 1998, in particular its Articles 1, 11, 12.2, and 13.

**Network for children and families, Peru.**

**Collective Against Torture and Impunity (CCTI), Mexico.**

**Argentine Psychosocial Work and Research Team (EATIP), Argentina. Community Studies and Psychosocial Action Team (ECAP), Guatemala. Foundation for the Comprehensive Rehabilitation of Victims of Violence (PRIVA), Ecuador.**

**Institute for Therapy and Research on the Aftermath of Torture and State Violence (ITEI), Bolivia.**

**Human Rights Office of the Archdiocese of Guatemala (ODHAG), Guatemala.**

**Center for Mental Health and Human Rights (CINTRAS), Chile.**



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**Psychosocial Care Center. Psychosocial Care Center (CAPS), Columbia.**

**Psychosocial Care Center. Psychosocial Care Center (CAPS), Peru.**

Cc: Minister of Justice, Yilmaz Tunc

Minister of Interior, Mr. Ali Yerlikaya

Minister of Health, Mr. Fahrettin Koca

Ambassador, Mr. Güven Begeç, Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations Geneva Office.

Chairperson, Mr. Yıldırım Tuğrul Türkeş, Turkish Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.