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Conviction of leading Turkish doctor is gross miscarriage of justice

The Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME) condemns the conviction of internationally renowned forensic physician Prof. Şebnem Korur Fincancı, to 2 years, 8 months and 15 days in jail at a trial in Istanbul today.

Prof Fincancı, President of the Turkish Medical Association, was convicted on charges of ‘propaganda for a terrorist organisation’ following an interview in which she called for an independent investigation into allegations of the use of chemical weapons. She has been released from pre-trial detention where she was held since 26 October pending appeal to the supreme court.

In a separate legal case, the entire central council of the Turkish Medical Association is facing dismissal and charges of terrorist propaganda following a hearing in Ankara yesterday. The case has been adjourned until 8 February 2023.

CPME President Dr Christiaan Keijzer said “European doctors are appalled by the conviction of Prof. Şebnem Korur Fincancı and we call for the sentence to be overturned. It is unthinkable that a doctor is imprisoned for defending international law.

“The verdict confirms our grave concern over the continued judicial harassment of doctors in Turkey. The autonomy and independence of the medical profession benefits all of society and must be safeguarded.”

Having observed the trial in Istanbul, CPME Vice President Dr Ole Johan Bakke, added “Today’s conviction is a miscarriage of justice and a gross violation of Prof Fincancı’s freedom of speech. No evidence was presented by the prosecution that could possibly justify the charges Prof Fincancı has been found guilty of. The verdict is unfounded, unlawful and unacceptable.”

The Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME) represents national medical associations across Europe. We are committed to contributing the medical profession’s point of view to EU and European policy-making through pro-active cooperation on a wide range of health and healthcare related issues.