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## ARREST OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS DEPLOYED

The arrest of four Turkish health professionals for providing medical care to a wounded child in Turkey during a curfew has been deplored by the World Medical Association (WMA) and the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME).

The four health staff – a physician Dr. Nesim Sayın and three nurses – were detained and arrested by Turkish authorities earlier this month following a police raid on their homes. According to information from their lawyers, they provided care to a 12-year-old wounded child in 2015 at a time when there was a curfew and access to health services was almost impossible. They have now been detained in Şırnak Prison on charges of providing support to terrorist activity.

In a letter to the Turkish President, Dr. Frank Ulrich Montgomery, Chair of the WMA and CPME President, protests about ‘the brutal arrest’ of the four.

He said: ‘There is a remarkable disproportionality between the alleged facts and the measures taken by the Turkish authorities. We are very sceptical that providing care to a 12-year-old wounded child constitutes a crime that poses a threat to public order justifying such a police raid.

‘These health professionals have done nothing more than perform their duties in line with the ethical principles of health care. According to our code of conduct, it is a physician’s obligation to maintain the utmost respect for human life. It is therefore our responsibility to extend health care to all who need it, anywhere and even in emergency situations.

‘Penalizing those providing health care to injured people is an aberration and a flagrant infringement of medical ethics, humanitarian and human rights’.

Dr. Montgomery added: ‘International humanitarian law, ratified by Turkey, requires health professionals to provide healthcare and assistance to all in need and in all circumstances. To criminalize these actions is appalling.

‘We urge the Turkish authorities to recognize this fact and to immediately drop the charges and release these health professionals’.

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