



STATEMENT BY MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

on the detention of doctor Khursanai Ismatullaeva in Turkmenistan after her case was discussed in the European Parliament

Brussels, 22 July 2021 - “We express our deep concern that the next day after our organized event on 15 July 2021 dedicated to human rights situation in Central Asia doctor Ms. Khursanai Ismatullaeva, whose case was raised by human rights defenders during the event, was arrested in Turkmenistan.

Since 2017, when she was illegally dismissed from Ene Mahri Perinatal Center in the town of Gokdepe, Dr. Ismatullaeva was actively seeking justice and exposing problems within the Turkmen health system. At the prenatal centre where she worked, Dr. Ismatullaeva refused to follow instructions by the centre’s management and prescribe unnecessary procedures at the patient’s expense. Her actions, which were in the best interest of patients’ health, led to dissatisfaction among senior management and resulted in her illegal dismissal.

Struggle of Dr. Ismatullaeva to prove her innocence and defend her right to pursue doctor’s profession, as after starting to fight the illegal dismissal she faced persecution and was not able to find a permanent employment, was raised by human rights defenders at our organized event on 15 July. The next day, 16 July, Dr. Ismatullaeva was arrested by several men in police uniform and several in plain clothes, who took her in unknown direction. Her electronic devices were also seized. Family of Dr. Ismatullaeva has no information about her whereabouts and is not sure what charge, if any, could be laid against her.

We deplore in strongest possible terms the injustice incurred by Dr. Ismatullaeva over the past four years and her illegal detention, and call upon the Turkmen authorities for her immediate and unconditional release. We urge the Turkmen authorities to share information about Dr. Ismatullaeva’s whereabouts and grounds for her arrest. We also call upon the Turkmen authorities to implement a transparent investigation into the illegal dismissal of Dr. Ismatullaeva from Ene Mahri Perinatal Center. We stress upon importance to bring those responsible for persecution of Dr. Ismatullaeva to justice, to remunerate her for the days of enforced absence and to ensure her right to practice doctor’s profession without any impediments.”

Petras Auštrevičius, Renew Europe

Heidi Hautala, Greens/EFA

Isabel Santos, S&D

Róza Thun und Hohenstein, EPP

Helmut Scholz, The Left