

## **SES Call for Solidarity**

The curfew was in force in Cizre for 79 days with no break from late 2015 to early 2016. It is the longest curfew in the world in this respect. National and international human rights organisations and relevant international bodies documented the curfew per se and grave human rights violations resulting from this practice in Turkey. The population in Cizre faced serious problems in access to housing, food, medical services etc. There were also serious human rights violations particularly right to life. No protective health services or regular health services and even emergency health services were provided to the community throughout the curfew in Cizre. Neither health centers nor medical workers were able to fulfill their responsibilities.

Several professional and health organizations especially the Turkish Medical Association (TTB) and the Trade Union of Public Employees in Health and Social Services (SES) prepared reports on the curfew and [called for solidarity](#).

As a response to the call from SES and TTB, a group of voluntary health care workers decided to act. They aimed to access to Cizre and help people, particularly those who were in “basements”, in need of medical services. In fact, the group’s decision was made on the basis of an old tradition that health care workers have created for centuries. Health care workers react to any extraordinary situation be it a natural disaster or a conflict area. These health care workers, whose objective is to protect public health, right to life etc, informed relevant authorities about their mission to Cizre. A voluntary ambulance accompanied the group to facilitate their services there. Security forces did not allow the voluntary group. Consequently, dozens of civilians including children lost their lives due to having no access to medical services.

As many national and international declarations and the World Medical Association General Assembly (Chicago 2017) resolution on “Armed Conflict Environments” indicate that health care workers have responsibility to provide medical services in conflict areas and in war. The group voluntary health care workers, members of SES and TTB, were not allowed to fulfill their responsibilities in this respect. On the contrary, they face a court case to respond the call.

The first hearing of the court case will be held at 09.00 on 28 September 2018. The hearing will be held before the 3rd Assize Court in Mardin, a Southeastern city. SES is of the opinion that the court case is against health care workers’ professional responsibility, independency, international human rights law, and universal ethnic. We call on all medical organizations and human rights organizations to show solidarity with the voluntary group.