

ARCHIVED: WMA COUNCIL RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF ALEXEI NAVALNY

Adopted by the 217th WMA Council Session, Seoul (online), April 2021

and rescinded and archived by the 72nd WMA General Assembly (online), London, United Kingdom, October 2021

The World Medical Association notes with alarm the critical health condition of the Russian opposition activist Alexei Navalny detained in Moscow since January 2021.

Navalny has been on a hunger strike since 31 March and was transferred to a prison hospital on Monday 21st of April. Corroborating information indicates that he is facing denial of adequate medical care and threatened to be force-fed by the prison authorities.

The WMA recalls its [Declaration of Malta on Hunger Strikers](#) laying down the medical ethical principles governing hunger strikes, in particular the respect of the individual's autonomy and dignity. Force-feeding and any other forms of coercion constitute a form of torture and is contrary to medical ethics.

The WMA recalls the standards of international human rights law, including the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, guaranteeing, amongst other matters, the freedom of expression, access to adequate healthcare as well as the prohibition of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. The Russian Federation ratified the covenants in 1973 and is held accountable for its commitments.

Thus, the WMA and its members call on the Russian authorities to ensure full respect for its human rights obligations, and demand immediate action to ensure that Alexei Navalny be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person, in particular:

- That he be urgently examined by independent and qualified medical experts,
- That the Russian authorities take all the required measures to provide adequate conditions in line with the Malta Declaration to respect his decision to hunger strike and to ensure that he is not force-fed,
- That he be released immediately as he is a prisoner of conscience deprived of his liberty for his peaceful political activism and exercising free speech.