Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor Mr Ahmet Akça Hacı Bayram Veli Mahallesi Atatürk Bulvarı No:40 Sıhhiye/Ankara TÜRKİYE

Dear Chief Public Prosecutor,

I am writing to express my concerns at the arrest and unjust detention of the human rights defender **Prof Şebnem Korur Fincancı**. The accusations against her are unfounded and her arrest is arbitrary.

On 21 October, Prof Fincancı’s lawyers became aware that a criminal investigation had been launched against her. This was requested by the Ministry of Defence following her public comments calling for an independent investigation into allegations of possible chemical weapons use in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Prof Fincancı is a prominent human rights defender and a forensic medicine expert.

In the early hours of 26 October 2022, Prof Şebnem Korur Fincancı was taken into police custody for allegedly *“making propaganda for a terrorist organization’”*. Launching a criminal investigation against Prof Fincancı simply because she called for an inquiry into allegations of banned weapons use amounts to misuse of the criminal justice system.

Attempting to silence a human rights defender is in contravention of the state authorities’ duty to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. They must ensure criminal investigations, detentions and prosecutions are not misused to target human rights defenders. Such proceedings are unjust for the individuals and may create a chilling effect on all those who speak out about possible human rights abuses.

I urge you to request the immediate and unconditional release **Prof Şebnem Korur Fincancı** I also urge you to refrain from prosecuting her for expressing herself in the context of her work as a human rights defender.

Yours sincerely