

LETTERS

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Turkey Must End Violent Response to Protests

THE TURKISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (TTB) REPORTED THAT 8121 PEOPLE WERE OFFICIALLY admitted to hospitals resulting from police violence between 31 May and 26 June (1). This number includes 5 deaths, 61 life-threatening injuries, 104 head traumas, and 11 ophthalmic injuries, one of which led to loss of an eye due to shots of tear gas canisters from short range



Show of force. Turkish riot police fire tear gas at protesters in Istanbul's Taksim Square.

(1). Turkish police have used excessive amounts of tear gas (lachrymatory agents) in public (2) and confined spaces such as hospitals or infirmaries, according to international media reports and the TTB (1–4). Such use of asphyxiating gases in confined spaces is not only extremely dangerous for public health (5–8), but also strictly limited by international agreements, such as the Geneva Protocol (9), to which Turkey is a signatory. Security forces have used 130,000 tear-gas cartridges in 20 days, and Turkey is planning to buy 100,000 new cartridges (10). Doctors and nurses treating patients affected by tear gas and other police brutality, as well as the Istanbul Medical Chamber General Secretary, have been apprehended by police (11, 12), a clear violation of customary international and human rights law (13). More than 4000 academics around the world have already signed a petition to protest the police brutality (14). We call upon the Turkish government to obey international law in the treatment of protesters and those providing medical treatment to them, and to start a good-faith dialogue with the protest movement.

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Optimizing Peer Review of Software Code

IN THEIR POLICY FORUM "TROUBLING TRENDS in scientific software use" (17 May, p. 814), L. N. Joppa *et al.* make a case for increased education of scientists in computer programming skills and requirements for peer review of scientific software code. We agree in principle but believe that some of the specific recommendations by Joppa *et al.* are unfeasible.

In particular, we believe that requiring prepublication peer review of computer source code by journal reviewers would place impossible strain on an already overburdened system. Many scientific journals currently have great difficulty finding sufficient numbers of qualified reviewers to evaluate submissions in a timely and construc-