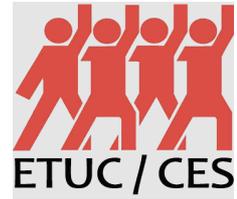




INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION
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HTUR/FW

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Thirty two union members and leaders still in prison

Prime Minister,

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), which represent workers throughout Europe and the world, including Turkey, are deeply disappointed to have to write to you yet again to protest against the constant harrasment, dismissal, random judicial proceedings and arrests of members and leaders of our affiliate, the Confederation of Public Employees' Trade Unions (KESK). As we write, 32 of them remain in prison, without access to due process and in contravention of Council of Europe and ILO standards.

The ITUC wrote to you on 29 May, 15 June and 18 June, protesting the numerous arrests of members and leaders of KESK and one of its main affiliates, the teachers' trade union Egitim-Sen. On 28 May, 35 of them were detained, of which 22 remain in prison to date. They include KESK Women Secretary **Songül Morsümbül**, former KESK General Secretary **Abdurrahman Dasdemir**, and Egitim-Sen Women Secretary **Gülçin Isbert**. Ten KESK members and leaders were already in prison before that time.

On 28 May 2009, KESK's headquarters in Ankara, its branch offices in İzmir and Van, and even the houses and workplaces of some of its members were raided and searched by the Gendarmerie. They searched the office of Women Secretary Songül Morsümbül and confiscated all official documents regarding gender issues and trade union activities, as well as a laptop and 18 CDs, as if it were criminal evidence. As we have already stated, these proceedings were carried out by the Gendarmerie, which runs counter to Turkish ad hoc legislation, which stipulates that, if required, they should have been carried out by the Public Prosecutor's office.

We are also very worried about the health of one of the female detainees, Ms. **Elif Akgül Ates**. We have been informed about the living conditions in Izmir prison, which we understand are completely unacceptable. On 18 June, we already expressed our concerns about Ms. Ates' health; more than a month later, her condition has severely deteriorated. Moreover, we note that the number of women among the 32 persons who remain in detention is another worrying element. We have also been informed that several of the imprisoned women have been sexually and otherwise harrassed. The ITUC and the ETUC consider this to be completely unacceptable and we urge you to ensure that these claims are promptly and thoroughly investigated.

The 32 unionists currently imprisoned are:

- KESK Women's Secretary Ms. **Songül Morsunbul**
- Egitim-Sen Women's Secretary Ms. **Gülçin Isbert**
- Former KESK general Secretary Mr. **Abdurrahman Dasedemir**
- Former Egitim-Sen Women's Secretary Ms. **Elif Akgül Ates**
- Egitim-Sen Ankara Branch member Mr. **Lami Özgen**
- Egitim-Sen Izmir/Bergama representative Mr. **Haydar Deniz**
- Egitim-Sen Izmir Branch member Ms. **Mine Cetinkaya**
- Egitim-Sen Izmir Branch member Ms. **Sermin Günes**
- Egitim-Sen Izmir Branch member Mr. **Nihat Keni**
- Egitim-Sen Izmir Branch member Mr. **Mehmet Hanifi Kuris**
- Egitim-Sen Izmir Branch member Ms. **Sakine Esen Yilmaz**
- Egitim-Sen Izmir Branch member Mr. **Aydin Güngörmez**
- Egitim-Sen Izmir Branch member Mr. **Mustafa Beyazbal**
- Egitim-Sen Izmir Branch member Mr. **Harun Gündes**
- Egitim-Sen Izmir Branch member Mr. **Abdulcelil Demir**
- SES Izmir Branch Law Secretary Ms. **Yüksel Özmen**
- BES Izmir Branch workplace representative Ms. **Meryem Çağ**
- BTS Izmir Branch member Mr. **Hasan Soysal**
- Egitim-Sen Manisa/Turgutlu Branch member Mr. **Aziz Akikloglu**
- Egitim-Sen Van Branch member Mr. **Hasan Umar**
- Egitim-Sen Izmir Branch member Ms. **Sueyda Demir**
- Turkey Peace Assembly member Ms. **Yüksel Mutlu**
- Egitim-Sen Sivas Branch President Mr. **Onder Dogan**
- United Trade Union of Transport Employees (BTS) Sivas Branch President Mr. **Nejat Sezginer**
- Egitim-Sen Branch Agri Branch President Mr. **Cezmi Gunduz**
- Former Egitim-Sen Agri Branch President Mr. **Ali Cengiz**
- Postal, Telecommunication and Media Workers' Union (Haber-Sen) Agri representative Mr. **Bisar Polat**
- Trade Union of Public Employees in Health and Social Services (SES) Ankara Branch board member Ms. **Seher Tumer**
- Former SES headquarters' executive board member Ms. **Olcay Kanlibas**
- Egitim-Sen Istanbul nr. 4 Branch member Mr. **Erdal Guzel**
- Egitim-Sen Tekirdag Branch member Ms. **Emriye Demirkir**
- Municipality Workers' Union (Tum-Bel-Sen) Van Branch member Ms. **Selma Aslan**

All this time, the Turkish judiciary has kept the cases "under secrecy", meaning that lawyers are not allowed to access their clients' files until the Prosecutor's office prepares the indictments.

These events are seriously damaging to your country's international reputation. Citizens of a democratic country cannot be held arbitrarily, and certainly not for several weeks and months without access to due process. The searches of union premises and members' houses and workplaces were not carried out by the appropriate authority, official trade union documents were confiscated, the rights of the defence were violated and the detainees are being kept in poor conditions, to the serious detriment of the health of at least one of them. On top of this, we have received no reaction whatsoever from you, in spite of our repeated protests.

Taking into account that next month, on 15 August, negotiations on working conditions for public sector workers will be initiated, which the Turkish authorities refer to as "collective consultative talks", which in itself is in breach of the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Convention 98 on collective bargaining, it is impossible to consider these events as anything else than severe and systematic anti-union harassment, and a serious infringement of ILO Convention 87 on freedom of association. We therefore reiterate, once again, that the rights of workers' organisations can only be exercised in a climate that is free of violence, reprisals or threats of any kind against their leaders and membership. We firmly urge you to ensure the immediate and unconditional release of all the arrested KESK and Egitim-Sen members and leaders, and await your response.

Yours sincerely,



Guy Ryder
General Secretary
ITUC



John Monks
General Secretary
ETUC