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### **Protest against the prison sentence handed down to EGITIM Sen-KESK union members**

Prime Minister,

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), which represents 175 million workers through its 305 affiliated organisations in 151 countries and territories, including Turkey, is writing to you with considerable dismay as the Izmir Criminal Court has issued its final judgment in the EGITIM Sen-KESK trial.

The ITUC has been informed by its affiliate KESK that 25 Turkish trade unionists, members of EGITIM Sen-KESK including KESK President Lami Özgen were sentenced to 6 years and 2 months prison under the guise of the anti-terrorism legislation. This despite the clear lack of evidence noticed by the head of the court himself who asked for the acquittal.

The ITUC firmly condemns those appalling sentences against trade union members. The ITUC supports KESK in its appeal against the Criminal court judgment and will follow this case closely.

This judgment is a woeful example of the judicial harassment faced by KESK trade union members as well as the abuse of the Turkish justice system in order to silence Turkey's workers. It unfortunately illustrates the harsh anti-union environment in which Turkish trade unions have to operate.

This represents a clear assault on democracy. As already denounced by the ITUC, this also constitutes a very serious infringement on various European and international legislations and treaties to which Turkey is a signatory, such as International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 87 (on Freedom of Association and the Right to Organise), the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and the European Convention on Human Rights.

During its 100th Session in June this year, the ILO Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS) expressed, in its conclusions, among many other things, "concern

[about] the new allegations of the restrictions placed on freedom of association and assembly of trade unionists.” It urged the Turkish government to report on the respect for trade union rights before the ILO Governing Body session in November this year, and to avail itself again of ILO technical assistance.

The ITUC urges your government to rescind the sentences and to take immediate action in order to improve its trade union rights record.

Trade Union Rights are Human Rights, and these can only be exercised in a climate that is free of violence, reprisals or threats of any kind against their leaders and membership, and it is up to governments to ensure that this principle is respected.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. R.' followed by a stylized flourish.

General Secretary