

MICHAEL SOMMER
PRESIDENT
PRÉSIDENT
PRÄSIDENT
PRESIDENTE

SHARAN BURROW
GENERAL SECRETARY
SECRÉTAIRE GÉNÉRALE
GENERALSEKRETÄRIN
SECRETARIA GENERAL

M. Recep Tayyip Erdogan
Prime Minister
Istanbul
Democratic Republic of Turkey

+90 312 417 04 76
+90 312 419 20 71
ozelkalem@basbakanlik.gov.tr
bilgi@basbakanlik.gov.tr

HTUR/NT

24 May 2011

Mass indictments of union leaders, members and supporters

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), which represents more than 175 million workers through its 305 affiliates in 151 countries and territories, including Turkey, is joining the Uniting Food, Farm and Hotel Workers World-Wide (IUF) in its protest against the indictment of 111 union leaders, members and supporters for their participation in a 2010 demonstration in Ankara to support TEKEL workers.

In 2009, after the Turkish government decided to privatise the TEKEL warehouses, 12,000 workers were made redundant. After unsuccessful negotiations regarding the future of the warehouse workers between the government and the IUF affiliated TEKGIDA-IS, which represents the workforce at TEKEL, protests were held in Ankara at the beginning of 2010. Those protests were met with violent intervention by the security forces. The ITUC strongly protested at that time against that violent repression.

The ITUC has been informed that the Turkish government has filed criminal charges against 111 union leaders, members and supporters including TEKGIDA-IS' President Mustafa Turkel, 4 other national officers and 12 branch presidents, the current and former heads of the national centre DISK, 2 former leaders of the public sector confederation KESK and other prominent union and social activists. The court proceedings are scheduled to begin on June 3.

We deplore that those indictments show once again the continuous judicial harassment faced by trade union organisations in Turkey. The ITUC wrote to you on numerous occasions concerning the anti-union harassment faced by our members and the disproportionate force used by the police to disrupt peaceful demonstrations.

We urge you to act without delay to ensure that all charges be immediately and unconditionally withdrawn and we look forward to hearing from you in this respect.

On the eve of the International Labour Conference, the ITUC reminds your government, as it has done on previous occasions, of its obligations under international treaties, including the 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.

Yours sincerely,



General Secretary

Cc: Ömer Dinçer, Minister of Labour and Social Security, 00903122127230,
csgb@csgb.gov.tr, iletisim@csgb.gov.tr
DISK
KESK
TURK-Is
HAK-Is
ETUC
Turkish embassy in Brussels, 02 5140748, info@turkey.be
IUF