



INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

3rd WORLD CONGRESS

Berlin, 18 – 23 May 2014

Agenda Item 6:

(d) Emergency Resolutions

RESULT OF NEO-LIBERAL POLICIES IN TURKEY: INDUSTRIAL HOMICIDE IN SOMA

(submitted by DISK, KESK, HAK-IS, TÜRK-IS, Turkey)

WHEREAS: On 13 May 2014, an explosion in a coal mine in Soma, Turkey led to the tragic deaths of over 300 miner workers, representing the worst industrial tragedy in country's history.

WHEREAS: This tragedy is no isolated incident. Turkey has the world's third highest rate of workplace injuries and deaths for mine workers. In 2013, roughly 13,000 miners suffered injuries in the mines. A shocking 1,308 mine workers have been killed in workplace accidents since 2000.

WHEREAS: These accidents are the direct result of policies to increase profits for business and shift all of the risks onto workers. With the privatization of the mining sector, there has been a rapid decline in workplace safety. The widespread use of labour subcontracting is one of the reasons for the decline, as subcontractors fail to provide the necessary training or equipment to workers and refuse to observe occupational health and safety measures in the workplace. Most of the Soma miners were unregistered workers barely earning the minimum wage.

WHEREAS: At the same time, the government has made no effort to ensure that the mines are adequately inspected to ensure safety. In light of the high number of deaths and injuries in the mining sector, the government's attitude is reckless and unacceptable. Turkey's labour ministry claims that the mine had been inspected eight times since 2012, most recently in March 2014, and said it was in compliance with the law. Given the horrific explosion, it is obvious that these inspections were, irregular, ineffective and deceiving. If the inspections had been carried out properly, it is likely that our brothers would still be alive today.

WHEREAS: The government has rejected a parliamentary inquiry into the high number of occupational accidents and poor security measures in the Soma district.

WHEREAS: Less than 24 hours after the tragedy, Prime Minister displayed complete contempt for the fallen workers and their families and dismissed the public outrage explaining that "these accidents are usual." As evidence, he cited mine disasters, some

from over a century ago, in other countries as a reason not to be concerned about the Soma disaster.

WHEREAS: In Soma, the Government have banned demonstrations. On Friday, police clashed with protestors, using rubber bullets, tear gas and water cannons. Police have subsequently set up checkpoints and detained dozens including union representatives and lawyers on Saturday.

WHEREAS: Brother Kani Beko, President of DISK, was unable to attend the ITUC Congress as he was hospitalised when police attacked him during a rally held in İzmir for Soma victims.

WHEREAS: For years, the government has shown contempt for workers and unions, and has engaged in harsh anti-union campaign, repeatedly violating the rights of workers to freely associate, to organize and to bargain collectively.

AND RECALLING THAT: Workers in many other countries have suffered workplace injury or death because of government and employer recklessness, brought about by privatization, de-regulation and/or absent law enforcement.

WE THEREFORE CALL ON THE GOVERNMENT:

To ensure the full respect for health and safety legislation through frequent and competent mine inspections

To stop immediately the attack on trade unions

WE THEREFORE CALL ON SOMA HOLDINGS:

To end the practice of subcontracting, which leads to the violation of workers' rights

To ensure that all workers are properly trained and have all necessary safety equipment

WE COMMIT:

To standing with our brothers and sisters in Turkey to make sure that those responsible for the this catastrophe are brought to justice

To join with the ITUC to campaign for the respect of trade union rights in Turkey

To send a high level mission to Turkey in order to monitor the process and support our affiliates in Turkey.

To work in all countries to ensure that health and safety laws are in compliance with international norms and are effectively enforced.

To fight against precarious work, which is an important driver of workplace injury and deaths

To fight against any system that puts profits before people
