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SECÉTAIRE GÉNÉRALE
GENERALSEKRETÄRIN
SECRETARIA GENERAL

Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan,
Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister Basbakanlik
06573 Ankara
Turkey

Fax: + 90 312 417 0476

receptayyip.erdogan@basbakanlik.gov.tr

HTUR/FW

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Massive raids against trade union offices, detention of 71 union members and leaders

Prime Minister,

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), which represents more than 175 million workers through its 308 affiliates in 153 countries and territories, including Turkey, is writing to you to protest, in the strongest possible terms, against the massive full-scale attacks against a wide range of trade union organisations which have taken place this morning in around 20 cities in the whole of Turkey. In these attacks, **union offices** as well as **houses of trade union leaders** were **raided and searched**, sometimes causing damage, and no less than **71 trade union members and leaders were detained**.

According to our information, the police raided the offices of the ITUC-affiliated Confederation of Public Sector Workers' Unions (KESK) in the early hours of today, Monday 25 June 2012. Simultaneously, the headquarters of a number of KESK-affiliated unions, such as BTS, Tarım Orkam-Sen, Eğitim-Sen (also affiliated to Education International, EI), SES, Tüm Bel-Sen and BES (also affiliated to Public Sector Workers' International, PSI), ESM (also affiliated to the International Federation of Chemical Energy, Mine & General Workers' Unions, ICEM), Haber-Sen (also affiliated to Union Network International, UNI), as well as trade union branch offices and houses of trade unionists, were raided in a number of provinces including Istanbul, Ankara, Diyarbakır, Ağrı, Bitlis, Siirt, Adana and Eskişehir.

Those detained, and the numbers amount to a staggering 71 in total, include **Mehmet Bozgeyik**, General Secretary of Eğitim-Sen; **Sakine Eren Yılmaz**, Gender Secretary of Eğitim-Sen; **Mehmet Sıddık Akın**, General Secretary of SES; Metin Vuranok, President of Tarım Orkam-Sen; **Seyran Şık**, Gender Secretary of Haber-Sen; **Yunus Akıl**, former BTS President; **Emel Emre**, Gender Secretary of ESM; **Sakine Esen Yılmaz**, Eğitim Sen's Women's Secretary; **Abdullah Karahan**, Eğitim Sen's Secretary of Financial Affairs; **Veysel Özhekti**, Secretary of BTS' Diyarbakır branch office; and the BTS' International Affairs Officer **Osman İşçi**. The entire list of people whom we know have been detained by your police is attached to this letter.

Mr. Prime Minister, the list of acts of intimidation and harassment by your authorities against trade unions and their leaders and members is a terribly long one. We understand the pretext of this large-scale attack was an operation against an illegal terrorist organisation, as it has been on countless occasions during the years under the rule of your Justice and Development Party (AKP). One of the sad highlights of the disgraceful misuse of your country's anti-terrorism laws was the sentencing, on 28 October last year, of 25 Egitim Sen members to six years' and five months' imprisonment by the Izmir Criminal Court. The "evidence" against them included possession of books that can be found in any bookstore in Turkey, and the holding of union meetings. Owing to the lack of evidence, it had appeared that the defendants were going to be acquitted, until two of the judges were summarily removed from the trial just before the final hearing. Even the Chief Justice was in favour of an acquittal. KESK subsequently lodged an appeal against the Criminal Court decision.

So far, the first link between Turkey's trade unions and any real or perceived terrorist organisation has yet to be found; however, your authorities leave no opportunity untapped to refer to such an alleged link as an excuse for whichever repressive measure they feel like taking at any given moment.

The abuse of the legal system to undermine trade union rights is a very serious infringement of Convention 87 on Freedom of Association, which your country has ratified. Actually, this kind of judicial harassment is usually found among the worst offenders of trade union rights, such as Zimbabwe and Swaziland. It is one of the main reasons that your country has to defend its case, year after year, in the Committee on the Application of Standards (CAS) at the annual conference of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Geneva.

The ITUC condemns these ant-union harassment tactics in the strongest possible terms and urges your government to immediately and unconditionally release all 71 detained trade unionists, including all those listed hereunder. We will not hesitate to take further steps in order to make sure that Turkey respects the provisions contained in Convention 87, and the trade union rights enshrined therein.

Yours sincerely,

General Secretary

List of detained trade unionists of whom the ITUC received the names:

1. Lami Özgen (KESK General Secretary)
2. Mehmet Siddik Akin (SES General Secretary)
3. İzzettin Alpergin (Tum Bel Sen General Secretary)
4. Devrim Kahraman (President of Tum Bel Sen Ankara Branch)
5. Feruh Celik (Member of Tum Bel Sen)
6. Yilmaz Yildirimci (Member of Tum Bel Sen)
7. Sakine Esen Yilmaz (Egitim Sen Women's Secretary)

8. Nihat Kılınçalp (Board Member of Egitim Sen Ankara Branch No. 1)
9. Çerkez Aydemir (Secretary of Egitim Sen Ankara Branch No. 1)
10. Erdal Turan (SES Ankara Branch Board Member)
11. Fikret Çalagan (SES Former Executive Board Member)
12. Seyran Sik (Haber Sen Executive Board Member)
13. Mehmet Sezgin İbin
14. Mustafa Bozan
15. Resit Sunbul (Egitim Sen Ankara Branch Member)
16. Aykut Erhan Turgut (Egitim Sen Ankara Branch Member)
17. Civan Yildirim (BES Member)
18. Yunus Akil (BTS Former President)
19. Belgizar Sazak (BES Member)
20. Bülent Kaya (BES Former President)
21. İzzettin Ekin
22. Mehmet Arda (Board Member of Egitim Sen Ankara Branch No. 5)
23. Mehmet Sadık Varlı (Egitim Sen Member)
24. Murat İrfan Isık (BES Member)
25. Ozkan Yorgun (Member of Tarım Orkam Sen)
26. Cabrail Arslan (Member of Tım Bel Sen)
27. Osman İşçi (Member of Egitim Sen Branch no 5.)
28. Emel Emre
29. Metin Vuranok (Tarım Okram Sen President)
30. Hasan Kaldık (SES Executive Board Member)
31. Abdullah Karahan (Egitim Sen Financial Secretary)
32. Kasım Birttek (Egitim Sen Diyarbakır Board President, Former KESK President)
33. Sadrettin Kaya (Egitim Sen Member)
34. Veysel Özhekti
35. Yusuf Kösele
36. Hanim Koçyiğit
37. Erdal Yılmaz
38. Bekir Gurbuz
39. Cezmi Gunduz
40. Abdulgani Cayhan (Egitim Sen Bitlis, former Branch President)
41. Lokman Özdemir (President of Diyanet and Foundation Workers Union)
42. Salih Ersan
43. Sibel Anıl
44. Faik Deli
45. Alican Kaplan
46. Cemile Duman
47. Ahmet Koçyigit
48. Hadi Aslan
49. Abdulkadir Baydur
50. Niyazi Yılmaz (Egitim Sen Member)
51. Tarık Kaya (Board Member of Egitim Sen Malatya Branch)
52. Hamdullah Yildirim (Egitim Sen Member)
53. Şerif İldogan
54. Hasan Olgun (Tunceli Branch President)
55. Müzahit Karakus (President of Egitim Sen Van Branch)
56. Cengiz Paycu (President of Diyanet and Foundation Workers Union)

Cc: President of Turkey, Mr. Abdullah Gül, Cumhurbaşkanlığı 06100 Ankara, Turkey;
Fax: +90 312 468 5026; Email: cumhurbaşkanligi@tccb.gov.tr

Minister of the Interior, Mr. Beşir Atalay, Ministry of Interior, İçişleri Bakanlığı,
06644 Ankara, Turkey; Fax: + 90 312 418 17 95 / +90 312 418 7696,
besir.atalay@icisleri.gov.tr

Minister of Justice, Mr. Sadullah Ergin, Ministry of Justice, Adalet Bakanlığı,
06659 Ankara, Turkey; Fax: + 90 312 414 62 26

Foreign Minister Mr. Ahmed Davudoglu, Office of the Prime Minister,
Basbakanlık, 06573 Ankara, Turkey; Fax: +90 312 287 88 11

Ambassador, Mr. Ahmet Üzümcü, Permanent Mission of Turkey to the United
Nations in Geneva, Ch. du Petit-Saconnex 28b - CP 271, CH-1211, Geneva 19,
Switzerland, E-mail : mission.turkey@ties.itu.int Fax: +41 22 734 08 59

Diplomatic Mission of Turkey to the European Union in Brussels, avenue Louis
Lepoutre, 99, 1050 Bruxelles, Belgium, Fax: + 32 2 340 98 79

Minister of Labour and Social Security, Mr. Omer Dincer, İnönü Bulvarı No:42 Pk:
06520 Emek, ANKARA, iletisim@csgb.gov.tr

ILO ACTRAV

Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu (DISK)

Kamu Emekçileri Sendikaları Konfederasyonu (KESK)

Türkiye Hak İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu (HAK-IS)

Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu (TÜRK-IS)