



ITUC INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION CSI CONFÉDÉRATION SYNDICALE INTERNATIONALE
CSI CONFEDERACIÓN SINDICAL INTERNACIONAL IGB INTERNATIONALER GEWERKSCHAFTSBUND

Bd. du Roi Albert II, 5, Bte 1, B – 1210 Bruxelles Belgique
Tel. +32 (0) 2224 0211 Fax +32 (0) 2201 5815 E-mail info@ituc-csi.org http://www.ituc-csi.org

SHARAN BURROW
PRESIDENT
PRÉSIDENTE
PRÄSIDENTIN
PRESIDENTA

GUY RYDER
GENERAL SECRETARY
SECÉTAIRE GÉNÉRAL
GENERALSEKRETÄR
SECRETARIO GENERAL

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

Fax: +90 312 417 04 76
+90 312 419 20 71

HTUR/FW

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Eight more trade unionists arrested

Prime Minister,

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), which represents 170 million workers through its 312 affiliates in 157 countries throughout the world, including Turkey, deplores to have to write to you for the third time in little more than two weeks to protest in the strongest possible terms against the arrest, on Tuesday 16 June 2009, of yet another eight leaders and members of the ITUC-affiliated Confederation of Public Employees' Trade Unions (KESK) and KESK-affiliated teachers' union Egitim-Sen.

After our previous letters dated 29 May and 15 June 2009, in which we strongly urged for all the detained trade union leaders and members to be released and for fundamental trade union rights to be respected in Turkey, the ITUC was very dissatisfied upon being informed that on the contrary, eight more union leaders and members were arrested last Tuesday. As the other 22 unionists, whose release we had requested in the above-mentioned letters, still remain in prison, we are indeed appalled by the fact that apparently, our pleas are falling on deaf men's ears.

Among the most recent arrests are both KESK as well as Egitim-Sen's Women's Secretaries **Songül Morsunbul** and **Gülçin Isbert**, who had actually both just been released on court order. They are currently being held together with all the other female detainees in Izmir prison.

The list of KESK and Egitim-Sen leaders and members detained at present is:

- KESK Women's Secretary Ms. **Songül Morsunbul**
- Egitim-Sen Women's Secretary Ms. **Gülçin Isbert**
- Former KESK general Secretary Mr. **Abdurrahman Dasdemir**
- 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**

Prime Minister, we once again vigorously protest at these detentions, which cannot be seen as anything else than anti-union harassment, which in itself constitutes a serious infringement of ILO Convention 87 on freedom of association, which your country ratified in 1993. We strongly reiterate 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 condemn this anti-union attack, and urge you once more to ensure the immediate and unconditional release of all the arrested KESK and Egitim-Sen leaders and members. This kind of actions is really not worthy of a democratic country such as Turkey and it would a true shame if this was to cast a harmful shadow over its aspirations of accessing the European Union.

Yours sincerely,

General Secretary