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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

ITUC OnLine

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## Turkey: Dozens of Trade Unionists Arrested on Terrorism Charges

Brussels, 2 June 2009 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC and Education International (EI) strongly protest against the intervention by the Turkish police against the Confederation of Public Employees' Unions (KESK) and the teachers' union Egitim Sem, which is in its turn affiliated to KESK.

On Thursday 28 May 2009, the Turkish police invaded the KESK headquarters in Ankara and the KesK local branch offices in Izmir, Istanbul, Van and Manisa. According to the information received by the ITUC, more than 30 Egitim Sem members were arrested. Six of them were released the same day, after having their statements taken by the police. The others remain in detention, and apparently some have been sexually harassed. According to the Turkish press, the operation was "set up in the framework of a bigger operation aimed at cracking down on the terrorist organisation PKK".

"What happened last week in Turkey is just unacceptable," said Guy Ryder, ITUC general secretary. "This is simply part of an anti-union harassment plan which goes against Convention 87 on freedom of association of the International Labour Organisation, ratified by Turkey 16 year ago! Imprisoned trade unionists must be freed and all other threats of imprisonment against independent trade unionists for their legitimate activities be lifted. The fundamental rights of Turkish workers to freedom of association and collective bargaining are still being denied by the authorities, and we call upon them to respect these rights, enshrined in ILO Conventions."

In a letter

[http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/TU\\_arrests\\_29-05-09\\_final\\_.pdf](http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/TU_arrests_29-05-09_final_.pdf) sent to the Turkish government, the ITUC and EI urge Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan to instruct the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release all the trade unionists arrested and to respect without delay fundamental rights in Turkey.

The ITUC represents 170 million workers in 312 affiliated national organisations from 157 countries. <http://www.ituc-csi.org>  
<http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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