

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

### ITUC OnLine

#### ITUC Protests Against Lengthy Prison Terms on Turkish Trade Unionists

Brussels, 2 December 2011 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has joined Education International (EI) in its protest over the sentencing of 25 Turkish trade unionists to more than 6 years in prison under false “anti-terrorist” charges this week. The 25, public sector workers and members of EGITIM Sen-KESK which include EI affiliate in Turkey of which KESK President Mr Lami Özgen, the former Women's Secretary of KESK, Ms. Songul Morsumbul, Egitim Sen Women's Secretary Ms. Sakine Esen Yilmaz, as well as former Women's Secretaries Ms. Gulcin Isbert and Ms. Elif Akgul Ates were sentenced by the Izmir Criminal Court despite the head of the Court stating that they should be acquitted of the charges.

“This is an appalling example of harsh and unjustified imprisonment and an abuse of the Turkish justice system. We call upon Prime Minister Erdogan to defend the fundamental principles of human rights and democracy by ensuring that the victims are released immediately and the charges dropped,” said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow.

KESK, an affiliate of the ITUC, has lodged an appeal against the Criminal Court decision, and the international trade union movement will be closely monitoring developments in this latest case of labour standards violations in Turkey.

The International Labour Organisation has repeatedly called on Turkey to respect workers’ rights to freedom of association.

To read the let to Prime Minister Erdogan: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/protest-against-the-prison.html>

The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 153 countries and territories and has 308 national affiliates.

Website: <http://www.ituc-csi.org> and <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

For more information, please contact the ITUC Press Department on the following numbers: +32 2 224 0204 or +32 476 62 10 18

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