

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

Turkish Unions Launch Strike as Government Intensifies Repression

Brussels, 17 June 2013 (ITUC OnLine): Turkish national trade union centres DISK and KESK have launched a national strike today as the government of Prime Minister Erdogan steps up violent repression of demonstrations against his autocratic rule. Five people have died and some 7,500 injured as police have repeatedly attacked demonstrators with tear gas and vicious beatings. Turkey's Interior Minister, Muammer Guler, has reportedly declared the strike "illegal".

"Mr Erdogan seems only to want confrontation, instead of agreeing to dialogue to resolve the legitimate demands of trade unions, environmentalists and others who don't accept his dictatorial behaviour. The path he is following seriously undermines Turkish democracy and will only deepen divisions. We call on him to stop the police violence against innocent people and show respect for the deep and genuine feelings of millions of Turkish people over the high-handed and aggressive way the government has been behaving," said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow.

Prime Minister Erdogan has blamed foreign media, "terrorists" and even social media for the wave of protests in Turkey. In a move guaranteed to inflame tensions, he has called mass rallies of his own supporters to denounce those protesting against his policies.

Organisations representing engineers, doctors and dentists have announced their intention to join the strike. Medical personnel treating demonstrators have been detained by police in recent days. Thousands of lawyers stopped work last week in protest at police detention of 60 of their colleagues.

"Turkey's record on labour rights and other civil rights has been worsening for some time, and it has imprisoned more journalists than any other country in recent years. The government's actions are deepening the divisions, and causing great harm to the very fabric of Turkey's society and economy," said Burrow.

To join the Labourstart campaign action on

Turkey: <http://www.labourstart.org/2013/country.php?country=Turkey&langcode=en>

Video of police kicking detainee in the head:

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=10201308689182667>

Equal Times report from Taksim Square:

<http://www.equaltimes.org/news/live-from-taksim-square>

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