

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION
ITUC OnLine

Turkey: 10,000 More Public Workers Dismissed

Brussels, 10 November 2016 (ITUC OnLine): The government of Turkish President Erdogan has recently fired a further 10,131 of its employees, bringing the total number of public sector employees dismissed or suspended since the failed 15 July military coup attempt to more than 100,000. The dismissals, across 35 different government ministries and agencies, were mainly in the health, education and justice departments. New recruitments may be arbitrary, not based on objective criteria, in education institutions where most dismissals have occurred so far. Those fired are barred from future employment in the public sector.

The sackings are linked with the announcement of two further decrees under state of emergency provisions adopted by the Council of Ministers following the coup attempt. A total of ten decrees have now been passed, many with permanent consequences for the country's politics, economics and society. The authorities have also blocked social media sites and VPN internet connections, and last week detained 11 members of the opposition HDP party, after the immunity of more than 130 democratically elected Members of Parliament was lifted in May this year. The HDP has announced a suspension of its parliamentary work. Fifteen more media outlets have been closed by the authorities and almost 100 journalists are now in prison.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said, "Democracy is becoming a complete sham in Turkey, with the government attacking the fundamental freedoms of speech, association and assembly, and even resorting to arresting serving members of parliament. President Erdogan is again using the actions of a disreputable few who failed to win power by force as a pretext for eliminating the most fundamental cornerstones of democracy. The ITUC has warned before of the risk that Turkey will slide into dictatorship, and ordinary workers are being punished simply based on their ethnicity, or because of their political views."

At an extraordinary ETUC Executive Committee meeting which conveyed its grave concerns to Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the Commission, ETUC General Secretary Luca Visentini said, "Turkey has to respect the democratic values and trade union freedoms set out in ILO Conventions and international and European Charters, as well as to enforce the rule of law. We condemned the failed coup, but we cannot accept that the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of workers and their families are destroyed, in most cases without proof of evidence."

The ITUC represents 180 million workers in 162 countries and territories and has 333 national affiliates.

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