



STATEMENT ON TURKEY – PSI CAS 11 JUNE

Public Services International welcomes this opportunity to speak at the Committee on the application of standards on the Turkish case. PSI has nine Turkish public service affiliates, municipal and public administration workers, social, health and construction workers. We support our affiliates in their struggle for decent working conditions, collective bargaining and freedom of association in an increasingly complex environment with a growing number of workers in the public sector that are in precarious employment.

In the last year, unprecedented attacks on trade union rights have been documented in Turkey. In February, 151 trade union representatives were arrested. Most of them are members of KESK, the Confederation of Public Employees, and its affiliated unions. These arrests follow the detention of 15 female trade unionists on 15 February and over 67 of our colleagues on 25 June 2012.

Most of them have not been fully cleared yet. PSI, the European Commission, European governments, international human right organisations and others have expressed their deep concern about the situation.

Whereas in the last years, we had to note targeted attacks on KESK trade unions under false pretexts, the attacks on other unions have become more and more frequent. In recent months, we are informed of armed police raids on union offices, using extreme violence. Just a few days ago, municipal workers in Ankara were threatened to be fired if they participate in protest actions.

A new draft labour law reform will make it increasingly difficult for unions to register and bargain collectively. This reform is in essence another element of the anti-union strategy that the Turkish government is leading.

Intimidation of trade union members and leaders, political and social repression, creating precarious jobs for millions – all this is a far cry from a democracy that generates growth in confidence and respect, instead such policies perpetuate gender and other inequalities.

We urge the government to stop the harassment of trade unionists and to promptly release those detained in prison. We demand a renewed commitment to convention 98, so that collective bargaining will be a reality for all workers in Turkey and that they can contribute to the many challenges they are faced with.