



**Council of
Global Unions**
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Geneva, 3 June 2013

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www.ifj.org



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www.ituc-csi.org



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www.iuf.org



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www.world-psi.org



TUAC

www.tuac.org



UNI

www.uniglobalunion.org



Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey
Ankara
Turkey

By e-mail: receptayyip.erdogan@basbakanlik.gov.tr

Ref: Violence against peaceful demonstrations in Istanbul and other cities of Turkey

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

We write this letter to you on behalf of global trade union organizations representing hundreds of millions of workers throughout the world, including Turkish trade unions belonging to different national centers.

At its recent meeting of June 3 in Geneva, leaders of the Council of Global Unions have thoroughly discussed the current situation in your country, and expressed their deep concern, regret and outrage over violence, brutal and excessive, which the Turkish security forces have been using against people peacefully exercising their rights of freedom of assembly, an essential part of freedom of expression. Democracy is not just about the ballot box. The right to have peaceful demonstration is one of the basics of genuine democracy.

The global union movement is concerned that your Government has turned violent repression into a regular practice. It is still fresh in our minds that this year's May Day Celebrations, which were supposed to take place in Taksim Square in Istanbul, turned into bloodshed with the attacks of the security forces on demonstrators using tear gas and other repressive methods. According to reports received, there are a number of injured people and thousands in custody.

Such brutality is unacceptable.

Your Government calls itself a champion of democracy and human rights, but for such simple issues as Gezi Park in Istanbul, you consistently refuse dialogue. Intransigent behavior has led to expansion and continuation of the protests. In addition, your insults of your own citizens are provocative and dangerous.

Rather than continuing repression and anti-democratic measures, the underlying causes of the demonstrations should be recognized. Particularly since the 2011 elections, authoritarian actions have increased. This includes legal and illegal union busting, adoption of laws that discourage rather than encourage the exercise of trade union rights, inaction, at best, against employers refusing to respect workers' rights, abuses in the judiciary system, and violence against trade unionists. Coupled with the limits on freedom of assembly and expression, these constitute attacks on fundamental human rights and democracy.

We urgently call on you to take necessary actions to calm the current situation by entering into a real dialogue with your citizens and their representatives. The global union movement urges your Government to take action against those in positions of authority who are responsible for such massive unrest in society and for the violence. We also call on you to

ensure that those detained for participating in peaceful demonstrations be immediately released.

Turkey and its people deserve much better. They deserve democracy and protection of all human rights, including trade union rights. We encourage your Government to move in that direction in the crucial days and weeks ahead.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Ambet Yuson
General Secretary,
Building and Wood Workers' International
(BWI)



Sharan Burrow
General Secretary,
International Trade Union Confederation
(ITUC)



Jyrki Raina
General Secretary,
IndustriAll



Benoît Machuel
General Secretary,
International Arts and Entertainment Alliance
(IAEA)



Fred van Leeuwen
General Secretary,
Education International (EI)



Philip Jennings
General Secretary,
UNI Global Union



Elisabeth Costa
General Secretary,
International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)



Rosa Pavanelli
General Secretary,
Public Services International (PSI)



Stephen Cotton
General Secretary
International Transport Workers'
Federation (ITF)



John Evans
General Secretary
Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD
(TUAC)



Ron Oswald
General Secretary
International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel,
Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers'
Associations (IUF)

CC:
Mr. Faruk Çelik, Minister of Labor and Social Security
Ms. Bernadete Segol, General Secretary, ETUC
Presidents of Türk-İş, DİSK, KESK and Hak-İş