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HTUR/NT

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Trade unionist arrested on terrorism charges

Prime Minister,

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) which represents over 170 million workers through its 312 affiliated organisations in 157 countries and territories, including Turkey, wishes to protest against the recent arrest of Murad Akincilar, which took place on the 30 September 2009.

According to our latest information, Murad Akincilar was arrested at his home by officers in civilian clothes. His wife witnessed his arrest. He was arrested along with 16 other persons on terrorism charges when working on the organization of a Social Forum in Turkey. 10 persons were released after having their statement taken by the police. The others including Murad Akincilar, however, remain in detention. His lawyer in Istanbul could not have access to the entire file.

Once again, the ITUC deplors that this arrest confirms the ongoing anti-union harassment climate prevailing in your country. As stated in our previous letters this year, this constitutes a serious infringement of Convention 87 on Freedom of Association of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which your country ratified in 1993. The rights of workers' organizations can only be exercised in a climate that is free of violence, reprisals or threats of any kind against their leaders and membership, and it is up to governments to ensure that this principle is respected.

The ITUC urges you to instruct the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Murad Akincilar and all the persons arrested with him. We also demand that your government respect and ensure fundamental trade union rights in Turkey.

Yours sincerely,

General Secretary