ICTUR was founded to defend and extend trade union rights and to raise awareness of these rights and their violations around the world.

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Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım
Çankaya Mah. Ziaur Rahman
Cad. Çankaya / Ankara, Türkiye

CC:
TÜMTİS
TÜRK-İŞ

April 2017

Dear President Erdoğan, Prime Minister Yıldırım,

The International Centre for Trade Union Rights is gravely concerned about the continuing repression of trade unionists in Turkey.

ICTUR understands that criminal sentences against fourteen officials of Turkish union TÜMTİS’ Ankara branch were upheld in March 2017 by the appeal court. The fourteen are Nurettin Kılıçdoğan (Branch President), Hüseyin Babayiğit, Süleyman Demirtaş, Serdal Cenikli, Cihan Türe, Atilla Yılmaz, Selahattin Demir, İhsan Sezer, Metin Eroğlu, Candan Genç, Binali Güney, Halil Keten, Satılmış Öztürk and Erkan Aydoğan. TÜMTİS firmly maintains that the charges, which date back to November 2007, were politically-motivated: seven branch officials were originally arrested in a night-time raid after TÜMTİS’ undertook an organisation drive at the Horoz Kargo logistics company. They were originally sentenced in 2012 by Ankara 11th Criminal Court for ‘founding an organisation for the purpose of committing crime, violating the right to peaceful work through coercion in order to obtain unfair pecuniary gain and obstructing enjoyment of union rights’. Their
sentences range from one to six years; these were upheld by the Penal Department No 16 of Supreme Court. It is further understood that the special assize court which originally sentenced them has since been abolished and the judges dismissed because of “being a member of a terrorist organisation”.

ICTUR urges the government to take steps to ensure that this case is properly reviewed and that the trade unionists concerned receive a fair hearing in accordance with Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), such as to respect the rule of law and ensure the fundamental freedoms of workers to join and form unions and to take action in defence of their interests. ICTUR recalls that trade union rights are protected under Convention 87 of the International Labour Organisation, under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and under the ECHR, all of which have been ratified by Turkey.

ICTUR will report this situation in the journal International Union Rights, which was established in 1993, and which enjoys a readership in more than 100 countries.

Yours Faithfully,

Daniel Blackburn, Director