

Turkish government faces widespread condemnation over violation of human rights, democracy and freedom of press violations

(13 March 2017) Working with the Turkish unions, European Federations, Human rights organisations and many others the ETUC has developed a “Memorandum on the evolution of the situation regarding human and trade union rights in Turkey, after the instalment of the state of emergency”. The paper details how 21 Decrees adopted by the Turkish authorities since 15 July 2016 in the framework of the State of Emergency breach International instruments (ILO Conventions; the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights -ICCPR and the International Covenant of the United Nations on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – ICESCR) and European ones: the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the European Social Charter (revised). Those decrees violate the principles of legality, proportionality and necessity, due process guarantees and the presumption of innocence.

To recall ETUC, EPSU, the Turkish unions and many others condemned the coup attempt in July 2017. It was an attack against democracy and many people died defending it. We have argued that the Turkish authorities should bring those responsible to court respecting legal processes. EPSU, ETUC, PSI and many others [have consistently denounced](#) the measures taken by the government as disproportionate and violating European and international standards to which Turkey prescribes.

5 months since that coup attempt,

- more than 125,000 public servants, other workers and citizens have been dismissed or suspended from their jobs without any prior investigation/proofs;
- legal action have been taken against 92,607 suspects, 39,378 of whom have so far been arrested without any trials;
- 166 media outlets were shut down, over 140 journalists were arrested;
- elected parliamentarians of the HDP have been imprisoned; 43 trustees have been appointed in the 103 municipalities won by the HDP at the last local elections of 30 March 2014 in the South-eastern Anatolia Region;

- credible evidence has been gathered that detainees in Turkey are being subjected to beatings and torture, including rape, in official and unofficial detention centres in the country;
- lawful strikes have been suspended – de facto banned;
- thousands of trade unionists have been intimidated, suspended, sacked, or put in jail.

The critique has been shared by numerous International authorities and institutions (ILO, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN Special Rapporteur on the right to freedom of opinion and expression...), European bodies (Council of Europe's Human Rights Commissioner, the CoE Venice Commission (documents attached, see below) and [the Council's Parliamentary committee PACE and assembly](#), the European Commission, European Parliament,) and Turkish institutions (EU-TR Joint Consultative Committee JCC), trade unions (ITUC – ETUC and their 4 Turkish members, by EPSU/PSI, ETUCE/EI (education), the EFJ (journalists), many affiliated unions, the International Centre for Trade Union Rights, ..) and NGO's (Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Committee to Protect Journalists....). There is no progress to change the situation. Many fear that the referendum of April 16th could lead to making the state of emergency measures permanent.

The Human Rights Joint Platform (IHOP) has published a [very detailed account](#) of the many violations 23 February 2017. The list of violations is long. And most recently the [UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reported](#) to the UN Human Rights Council that “ In Turkey, bombs and other shocking terrorist attacks against civilians continue to claim lives, which I condemn, and I fully understand the authorities are operating in a challenging environment in many respects. However, I am concerned measures taken under the state of emergency appear to target criticism, not terrorism. The fact that tens of thousands of people have been dismissed, arrested, detained or prosecuted following the attempted coup – including numerous democratically elected representatives, judges and journalists – raises serious alarm about due process guarantees being met. It will be particularly crucial for the credibility of April's referendum on amending the Constitution that space for open debate, free of intimidation, be guaranteed. The human rights situation in south-east Turkey remains deeply troubling. Without access to the area, the remote monitoring procedure engaged by my Office has established credible indications of hundreds of deaths, suggesting disproportionate security measures in response to violent attacks. A report detailing this and other indications of serious

violations will be released soon.

ETUC's Executive asked the European institutions in December to tell **the Turkish government** that it condemns the upsurge in violations of fundamental rights and freedoms over the last months. We want the European Commission, Council and Parliament to say that Turkey should return to respect for the rule of law, democracy and justice. We asked that they call on Turkey, as an EU candidate country, to comply with European Charters and Conventions. Rather than weaken the measures taken after the attempted coup should have further strengthened democracy, civil rights and social cohesion, respecting universal fundamental rights, the independence of the judiciary and the rule of law.

For a [previous report](#) on Turkey.

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