

HIS EXCELLENCY MR  
ABDURRAHMAN BİLGİÇ  
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10 December 2015

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Dear Ambassador

I am writing to you on behalf of UNISON's 1.3 million members in public services in the UK because of our concerns over the treatment of trade unionists in Turkey, and because of the lack of progress by your government in ensuring trade unionists have access to their rights.

Today is the UN designated day for human rights. As a member of the ILO and the United Nations, your government has a legal obligation to ensure workers' rights are implemented, and workers in trade unions are not subject to harassment in pursuance of their legal rights. International treaties, including ILO conventions, grant workers rights that must be upheld by member states. The right to join a union and to freedom of assembly are recognised as basic rights to which your country subscribes. Despite this, Turkey continues to be a human rights' violator rather than a protector.

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) in its annual survey of rights ranks your country as one of the worst violators of trade union rights. This can only serve to damage Turkey's standing in the international community.

Amnesty International said the authorities became more authoritarian in responding to critics. They undermined the independence of the judiciary, introduced new restrictions on internet freedoms and handed unprecedented powers to the country's intelligence agency.

Your government has repeatedly banned trade unions from taking strike action, and has restricted numerous protests. They have displayed a growing intolerance towards critical journalists, arresting many, as they attempt to censor information on a number of issues, including the plight of the Kurdish people. Trade union confederations DISK and KESK have been subjected to particular harassment.

On 10 October a peace rally supported by two of Turkey's trade union confederations DISK and KESK was attacked by suicide bombers resulting in the loss of over 100 lives. We call on your government to conduct a full, transparent and independent investigation into all the circumstances of this attack and its aftermath.

As we mark Human Rights Day, I urge your government to respect the rights of its own citizens. Turkey has an international obligation to protect the rights of workers. It has an obligation to ensure that its citizens can realise their rights through freedom of association and assembly.

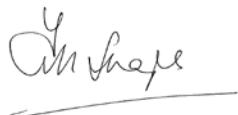


General Secretary Dave Prentis President Wendy Nicholls

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

We will continue to support the rights of workers in Turkey to access their rights, and therefore call on your government to respond to their legitimate demands for freedom of association, assembly and for peace.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Liz Snape". It is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

Liz Snape MBE  
Assistant General Secretary UNISON  
President Trades Union Congress (TUC)