

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
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Dear Foreign Secretary,

Re. Human and workers rights in Turkey

On behalf of UNISON's 1.3 million members working in public services in the UK, I am writing to express our deep concern over the continued violation of human and workers rights in Turkey.

Since the failed coup attempt one year ago, the government of Turkey has used the ongoing state of emergency to silence its critics and fundamentally undermined democracy, the rule of law and human rights.

We are particularly concerned at the dismissal of over 100,000 public service workers and the suspension of many thousands more under the state of emergency. Many have been accused of terrorist offences with little or no apparent evidence and denied the right to a fair hearing. We urge you to call on the government of Turkey to reinstate these workers immediately, unless there clear evidence of illegal activity.

Human rights defenders, including trade unionists, have come under particular attack from the government, including the arrest and detention of Amnesty International Turkey's chair on 6 June, and director and nine others on 5 July. We note the Minister for Europe's recent statement highlighting his concern about the detentions but call on you to go further. We request that the government uses its position, including as a member of the United Nations Human Rights Council, to call on the Turkish government to release and respect all human rights defenders, including trade unionists.

The detention of numerous opposition MPs, the purge of the judiciary and the failure to investigate irregularities during the recent referendum have all contributed to the further erosion of democracy and the rule of law. Freedom of the press has also been curtailed by the closure of 149 media outlets and arrest of almost 270 journalists, many of whom remain in detention.

The UK government has consistently condemned the attempted coup because it undermined democracy in Turkey. However, it has done very little to condemn the subsequent state of emergency, mass detentions and dismissals, and the erosion of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. We are particularly concerned that the UK government signed a major arms deal with Turkey whilst a major crackdown on human rights defenders continued. The government should now address this by suspending arms sales to Turkey until international human rights standards are respected.

UNISON is supporting trade unions in Turkey in defence of democracy, social justice and workers and human rights and we call on the UK government to ensure that these values are embedded in any future diplomatic and trade relations with Turkey.

I urge you to echo our calls for:

- The reinstatement of public service workers;
- The release of workers and human rights defenders, unless there is clear evidence of wrongdoing, in which case a fair and impartial trial needs to take place;
- And the termination of the state of emergency.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave Prentis." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dave Prentis
General Secretary