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Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP
10 Downing St
Westminster
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Friday, 11 October, 2019

Dear Prime Minister,

On behalf of UNISON's 1.3 million members, working in public services in the UK, I am writing to urge you to take immediate and decisive action to halt the government of Turkey's invasion of north east Syria.

This latest attack is already causing major suffering for the Kurdish community and other minorities, and further destabilizing this extremely fragile region. Tens of thousands of people have been forced to leave the area, exacerbating a conflict which has resulted in the displacement of over 12 million people.

The UK government has made great efforts to deepen the UK's relations with the government of Turkey in recent years. Whilst the Foreign Secretary has expressed his disappointment at the military action, and confirmed that the UK does not support it, we urge you to use your good offices to condemn the invasion and work with the international community to take the strongest possible action to bring peace and stability to the region.

In recent years the government of Turkey has become a significant buyer of UK manufactured arms. Considering the high probability of these weapons being used in the invasion of Syria, we urge the government to follow the lead of other European governments and review and suspend the arms trade with Turkey, until international law and human rights standards are respected.

As you know the government of Turkey has an appalling record for detaining many of its citizens who have called for peace, in previous conflicts, for alleged terrorist offences. As such, we are extremely concerned for the safety of trade unionists and other human rights defenders in Turkey, who have spoken out against the invasion. We request that you urge President Erdogan to take steps to protect the rights of those opposed to the invasion.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent matter.

Yours sincerely,



Dave Prentis
General Secretary

Cc. Rt Hon Dominic Raab, Foreign Secretary
Rt Hon Jeremy Corbyn MP, Leader of the opposition
Rt Hon Emily Thornberry MP, Shadow Foreign Secretary