

Dear colleagues,

As you know, we were taken into police custody on 25 June 2012 with the police raids to our houses and offices. Our trade union offices were searched by the police. Totally 50 members of KESK (Confederation of Public Workers' Unions) including the confederation's president Lami Özgen, were taken into custody. As 28 of 50 people, 15 members of Eğitim Sen, 13 members of KESK's other affiliate trade unions were arrested by the court and we've been in Ankara Sincan prison since then.

The indictments we are charged with are so far from being serious and having evidence that they can only be described as "comedy". We didn't bow our heads against the ones who imposed slavery on the society and we didn't remain silent. This is what the ruling powers can not accept. We had a strike on 21 December 2011 to demand a brighter future for our country. On 28-29 March 2012, we demonstrated against the reform bill destroying education and for our grabbed rights. On 23 May 2012, We pioneered the 2 million public workers' strike against the so called "collective agreement" which compelled public workers to live in miserable conditions.

In Turkey we're passing through times in which, lawyers, mayors, members of the parliament, journalists, students, namely all groups that belong to opposition can be imprisoned easily. Therefore, our imprisonment, rather than being a surprising event, is a part of the "fear empire" that's being found in Turkey.

As part of the same oppression, KESK affiliate trade unions, Tüm Bel Sen's (All Municipality Workers' Union), Haber Sen's (Media, Communication and Postal Employees Union) gender secretaries have also been arrested in Ankara Sincan Prison. Their struggle for the peace process to begin in Turkey, their opposition to the government's efforts to ban the abortion, their rejection of the prime minister's suggestion for women to have at least 3 children and stay at their homes, the first strike action of the public workers women in Turkey on 8 March ... All of them explain the reason of repressions and intimidations on KESK member women. However, we'll keep on being the supporters of legitimacy and justness. Our legitimate struggle will frustrate and impede the ruling powers.

In this context, the first court hearing of the women comrades' is increasing in importance. If struggle and solidarity constantly grows, we can be free. This is our expectation from all labour and vocational organizations and from our friends who have never lost their hopes. Struggle itself will determine the consequence.

We know that you've been in solidarity with us since we were taken by the police, because you also knew that the real aim of this assault was to attack KESK itself under different pretexts. In the coming days, visits to be made by EI and affiliate unions' representatives would make us stronger and be a warning message for the oppressing powers. With all the friends here, we express our most sincere gratitude for your solidarity. We hope to be able to see each other in the shortest time.

Best regards,

Mehmet Bozgeyik

Eğitim Sen
General Secretary

Sakine Esen Yılmaz

Eğitim Sen
Women's Secretary