

Geneva 17 June 2013

Prime Minister  
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan  
Via email [receptayyip.erdogan@basbakanlik.gov.tr](mailto:receptayyip.erdogan@basbakanlik.gov.tr)

## **IndustriALL Global Union in full support of General Strike in Turkey, Condemns Government violence**

Dear Mr. Prime Minister,

I am writing this letter to you on behalf of [IndustriALL Global Union](http://www.industriall-union.org), which represents more than fifty million workers throughout the mining, energy and manufacturing industries in some 140 countries worldwide. The Turkish trade unions are centrally important members of our global organization.

It is with deep outrage that we have followed the violent crack-down by your government on peaceful protestors since 31 May. This brutally authoritarian reaction from your government has been broadcast all over the world and IndustriALL members everywhere are disgusted and increasingly concerned about the safety of their fellow workers in Turkey.

We are very much aware that this is not a struggle just for a single environmental issue at Gezi Park, but also in a wider context, for fundamental rights, particularly the right of expression and freedom of assembly.

IndustriALL Global Union pledges its full support to the general strike called by five major trade union centers and professional organizations, DISK, KESK, TMMOB, TTB and TDB, taking place today, 17 June, denouncing your government's continuous brutal violence through the police force against peaceful demonstrations.

Under rampant pressure from civil society, you met with representatives of the Taksim Solidarity platform several times, the last time being on Friday morning, and the spokesperson for the government stated that they would respect the final court decision which already suspended execution of the Municipality's decision to construct a shopping mall in Gezi Park, and conduct a referendum if the final verdict would say otherwise. Following this meeting with you, Mr. Prime Minister, Taksim Solidarity called on all constituents to meet at Gezi Park to discuss the meeting and decide on how to move forward. It was finally decided on Saturday, 15 June, that the struggle in the park will continue until the demands are met.

In the meantime, you gave an ultimatum to the demonstrators to evacuate Gezi Park within 24 hours; otherwise the government would do the necessary. On Saturday night, contrary to early announcements, police forces came to the park, blocking all roads to Taksim Square, and began to attack the crowd with water cannons and tear gas fired by tanks. They charged into the park which was shrouded under white clouds of gas. While the news spread out, people of Istanbul took to the streets, on both the Asian and the European sides of the city, and began to walk towards Taksim, in large groups that blocked highway traffic. Police continued to gas bomb enclosed spaces, such as hotels and field hospitals.

The excessive violence resulted in deaths and injuries of many people. While 55 people have severe injuries, 91 are suffering from head trauma, and there are five people in critical condition in Ankara, Istanbul, and Eskisehir. Fifteen people have lost an eye, and one person had to have a spleen removal. According to the Association of Turkish Doctors, "a total of 7,478 people in 13

provinces have applied to public or private hospitals, medical centers, or makeshift clinics set-up close to conflict areas”.

Also concerning is that thousands of people have been taken into custody, and the whereabouts are unknown for many of demonstrators since police took them without giving any proper information. In all cities millions of people poured into the streets demanding the resignation of the government. The number of people to have joined this mobilization is estimated to be almost 10 million by the press but the figure may be higher. The Government halts any mobilization towards Gezi Park, and is labelling demonstrators as “marginal, illegal groups” and even “terrorists”.

On 16 June, five major trade union centers and professional organizations, DiSK (Confederations of Progressive Trade Unions), KESK (Public Employees Unions’ Confederation), TMMOB (Turkish Union of Chambers of Engineers and Architects), TTB (Turkish Association of Doctors) and TDB (Turkish Association of Dentists) decided to go on general strike to protest the government’s repressive attacks on peaceful demonstrations that clearly violate fundamental rights.

We sincerely expect that you will respond to the global calls for an immediate end to the violence and flagrant disregard for fundamental human rights of the Turkish people.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a vertical line on the left, a horizontal line at the top, and a diagonal line on the right that ends in a small hook.

Jyrki Raina  
General Secretary