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Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
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27/04/2011

Dear Prime Minister,

OLME, the Greek Federation of Secondary Education State School Teachers condemns the repeated delays in the trial of 31 public sector unionists from the teacher union Egitim Sen and the Confederation of Public Employees' Unions (KESK). We also urge the Turkish authorities to allow Gülcin Isbert, Women Secretary of Egitim Sen, to travel abroad in order to participate in international trade union activities, and more specifically to enable her to attend the 6th EI World Congress where she is to receive the EI Mary Hatwood Futrell Award on Human and Trade Union Rights on 25 July 2011.

The 31 public sector unionists from Egitim Sen and KESK are charged since November 2009 for allegedly belonging to an illegal Kurdish organisation. Over 16 months later, no verdict has been issued and the defendants have still not been informed of the precise facts they are prosecuted for.

In June 2010, the Commission on the Application of Standards of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), noting the important restrictions placed on freedom of speech and of assembly of trade unionists, urged the Government to take all necessary measures to ensure a climate free from violence, pressure or threats of any kind so that workers could fully and freely exercise their rights.

Despite the above ILO recommendations and the many actions taken by the international trade union movement, the court case is still ongoing and has already been postponed five times since November 2009. The next court hearing is scheduled for 29 April 2011.

OLME urges your Government to:

- Lift the ban on travel and other restrictions preventing the union defendants from participating in trade union activities;
- Secure a fair and rapid trial to the 31 defendants from Egitim Sen and KESK;
- Abide by its international obligations to secure the human and trade union rights and freedoms of workers and to ensure a climate free from violence, pressure or threats against trade unionists.

On behalf of my organisation, I sincerely trust that your Government will act swiftly on these requests. OLME has asked our national diplomatic representation in Turkey to follow up on this serious matter.

Yours sincerely,

For the E. B. of OLME

The President

The General Secretary

The image shows two handwritten signatures and two official circular seals. The left signature is in Greek, with the name 'Δimitris Peppas' written below it. The right signature is also in Greek, with the name 'Nikos Papachristos' written below it. Between the signatures is a circular seal featuring a profile of a man, with the text 'ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ' and 'ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΟΝΙΚΟ ΚΕΝΤΡΟ ΟΛΜΕ' around it. To the right of the seal is another circular seal, partially obscured, with the text 'ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ' and 'ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΟΝΙΚΟ ΚΕΝΤΡΟ ΟΛΜΕ'.

Dimitris Peppas

Nikos Papachristos