



Brussels and Geneva, 15 October 2018

Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan  
President  
Republic of Turkey  
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Turkey  
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**IndustriALL Global Union and industriAll European Trade Union call on the Government of Turkey to release and drop the charges against the arrested trade unionists and workers, reinstate the fired workers, and stop the permanent surveillance of the site**

Dear Mr. President,

We are writing this letter to you on behalf of [IndustriALL Global Union](#) and [industriAll European Trade Union](#), both representing millions of workers in mining, energy and manufacturing industries in Europe and worldwide.

In 2014, the construction of a giant third airport started in Istanbul. 32,000 workers are employed at the site. IGA is the main airport operator. Since the start of the project, workers have reported problems with safety, excessive working time, food and accommodation. Today, at least 37 workers have died and workers say the number could be much higher.

To protest against the rising number of fatalities and working conditions at the construction site of Istanbul's third airport, workers have gone on strike.

Military police forces were brought out to repress the strike action. A military police force of three to four thousand called the strike illegal and instructed the workers to disperse using tear gas. A water cannon has been brought to the strike area; entrances were locked down to prevent trade union leaders to come in. 600 workers were violently arrested. Most recently, we have been informed that now also Ozgur Karabulut, President of DISK/Dev Yapi-Is (Progressive Union of Construction Workers) was detained. In total, 27 trade union representatives and workers remain imprisoned, pending their trial. Reportedly, hundreds were fired just for protesting their bad working conditions.

Around 500 police and army officers remain at the site keeping the workers under permanent surveillance. Workers feel like prisoners.

The number of fatal accidents is outrageous. As the main contractor, we hold you and your company accountable for these crimes. The working conditions and labour relations at the site are unacceptable and amount to contemporary slavery. The repression of protests and the arrest of trade unionists constitute serious violations of the fundamental right to freedom of association. In addition, the project violates a range of international labour standards related to working time, occupational health and safety.

We urge your government to immediately release and drop the charges against the arrested trade unionists and workers, reinstate the fired workers and stop the permanent surveillance of the site. They have done nothing except exercising their legitimate right to organise and protest.

We request to be kept informed of the actions taken in response to our letter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Valter Sanches". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial 'V'.

**Valter Sanches**  
**General Secretary**  
**IndustriALL Global Union**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Luc Triangle". The signature is stylized with a large, circular initial 'L'.

**Luc Triangle**  
**General Secretary**  
**IndustriAll European Trade Union**