

To the kind attention of Ms Zehra Zümrüt Selcuk,
Minister of Family, Labour and Social Services
Office of the Private Secretary
Email: ozelkalem@ailevecalisma.gov.tr

Ref:JWG/se

Brussels, 4 June 2020

Dear Minister,

We have been informed that 3 members of SES, the Turkish union for medical workers affiliated with the confederation KESK, in the province of Batman (Mr Hasan Adan, Mr Salah Aydın Bavli and Mr Hasan Isil) have been punished for their trade union work. They received internal exile or “sürgün”. These workers were arrested Friday, 29 May and following protests released. **We ask for the immediate cancellation of the “surgun” measures and for the reinstatement of those union workers.**

As you know social workers have a special function in these coronavirus days. They serve the public. Despite serious risks, they relentlessly work to help the community. They need to be able to do this safely. SES and KESK have shared their concerns with the relevant authorities. For the particular case of the workers referred to above, these workers were appointed to a group called Vefa. The group is in charge of visiting households with people over 65 and those households where chronically ill live. The group provides food and other materials to the households in questions. Those older than 65 and those that suffer from chronic illnesses are amongst the most vulnerable in the ongoing pandemic caused by SARS-Cov-2. The 3 trade union members demanded therefore the relevant personal protective equipment and hygiene products. This to protect themselves, in line with advice of the World Health Organisation, the ILO and Scientific Committee under the Ministry of Health. This Committee states that health officers and/or any officer who contacts with such risky groups should be provided with required PPEs. And to prevent that they would infect those vulnerable people. Petitions to this effect were submitted to the provincial directorate of health affairs in Batman. But rather than recognizing the workers for alerting the authorities for the grave risks to the vulnerable and to workers, they were informed of administrative punishment. They have to pay an administrative fine (1/30 of their monthly salary) and they received “sürgün”, being transferred from Batman to other provinces.

- Mr Hasan Adan Yozgat was sent to the province of Yozgat,
- Mr Salah Aydın Bavli was sent to the province of Osmaniye and
- Mr Hasan Isik was sent to the province of Erzurum.

This seems to us a violation of their professional and legal rights. When other union members like KESK female Secretary Gülistan Atasoy Tekdemir, SES VQA Member Selma Atabey, EĞİTİM SEN General Secretary Velat Kaya, BES General Secretary Aziz Özkan, SES Batman Branch Co-Chair Deniz Topkan, Branch Secretary Erdal Doğan, Salih Bayat, Member of the Supervisory Board, and member Yunus İzmir organized a protest press briefing they were taken into custody. Due to protests they were released.

Yours sincerely,



Jan Willem Goudriaan
EPSU General Secretary