

A Labour Star Campaign

Turkey: Leather workers sacked for 'occupying' factory

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Savranoglu Leather and Kampana Leather are two factories owned by same employer. Savranoglu is situated in Izmir and Kampana is situated in Istanbul. For over 6 months Deri-Is has been waging an intense struggle against the anti-union attitudes of the employer.

The union organized the Kampana plant - and the employer fired 16 workers in May 2011. Workers initiated a picket line and it has been continuing for over 220 days.

The employer shifted production to Izmir but the union organized workers in 3 different companies operating in the same factory. The employer dismissed 3 workers and they initiated a picket line-resistance there.

The employer decided to shut down the Izmir plant and called on the workers to come to Istanbul. They thought the workers would not leave their families. But in order to save their organizational power, 38 workers accepted exile and came to Istanbul on October 3.

The employer didn't let them to use a day off to find a place to reside. So the workers didn't leave the factory for one night. The employer claimed that this was an occupation and tried to provoke police forces to intervene. But the police didn't intervene because there would be a general strike in the Zone in case of intervention.

The employer dismissed 36 workers on October 13 without severance pay by claiming that they occupied the Istanbul plant. Also, he tried to re-open the Izmir plant by changing the name.

The workers in exile went back to Izmir to continue resistance and are not letting the "new company" to produce.

The workers were suffering from diseases caused by chemicals, and there were no safety and health measures. They work long hours, until 2-3 AM. They earn the minimum wage which is 220 Euros per month. The employer also poisons the environment by pouring chemicals into the soil.

The workers demand that the employer respect their basic rights and accept their union.

Letter

To Mr. Faruk Çelik, Mr. Savranoğlu, Mr. Kocaoglu and Mr. Sahin, Mr. Kılıçdaroglu

I have been informed about the anti-union attitudes of the employer of Kampana and Savranoglu

plants. It is clear that organizing in unions and making collective bargaining agreements are universal and constitutional rights of workers. However we are deeply shocked about the various attitudes of the employer to force workers to give up their rights. Since May 2011, a total of 58 workers were dismissed, 38 workers were sent to exile from Izmir plant to Istanbul plant, police forces were provoked, etc. Additionally, we have great concern about the health of both people and the environment because the company does not apply the necessary health and safety measures.

I kindly request from you to end the tragedies of these workers and to take the necessary measures so that workers could work in a better environment while enjoying their basic rights.

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