



# TÜRK-İŞ

## TÜRKİYE İŞÇİ SENDİKALARI KONFEDERASYONU

CONFEDERATION OF TURKISH TRADE UNIONS  
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### CONFEDERATION OF TURKISH TRADE UNIONS – TÜRK-İŞ

Dear Brothers and Sisters

I would like to share with you the TÜRK-İŞ perspective on “*Operation Peace Spring*” launched by the Turkish Armed Forces on 9 October 2019.

The conflict in Syria has created a breeding ground for various terrorist organizations, posing a wide range of threats to Turkey and the Syrian citizens in the region. In particular, PYD/YPG units close to Turkish borders in the northeast of Syria, continue to be a source of direct and imminent threat as they opened harassment fire on Turkish border posts, by also using snipers and advanced weaponry such as anti-tank guided missiles. Among other terrorist activities, they have been smuggling explosive devices, weapons and ammunition into Turkey with the aim of empowering PKK-affiliated units inside not only Turkish territories, but also in Afrin and El-Bab region to commit deadly terrorist attacks against innocent Syrian and Turkish citizens.

As a result of war and conflicts, 5.7 million Syrian refugees were forced to leave their homes. Our country was left alone with the burden of the biggest migration flow in history. The number of Syrian refugees living in Turkey has reached 4 million. Our Confederation shares the position of ITUC and the ETUC within the basis of human rights. Despite its negative effects on the work life, we have always advocated that the right to decent work and decent life of the Syrian refugees must fully be respected. Our Confederation organized a visit to the Refugee Camps with a delegation from the international trade union movement. The treatment of the refugees in these camps were appreciated by ITUC General Secretary Sharan BURROW. However the refugees cannot be kept in these camps forever. It has become impossible both in terms of Turkish economy and in terms of human rights.

To counter the imminent terrorist threat, to ensure Turkey’s border security, to neutralize terrorists especially the PKK PYD / YPG and ISIS starting from along the border regions adjacent to Turkish territory, Turkey has initiated Operation Peace Spring on October 9 to ensure the return of refugees including 300 thousand Syrian citizens of Kurdish origin.

As in previous anti-terrorism operations, Turkey has announced that it would carry out the operation in a proportional, prudent and responsible manner and within the framework of the international law, UN resolutions and UN Charter's Article 51 in accordance with the right

to self-defense. Turkey shows sensitivity at the highest level to avoid damage to civilians and targets only the terrorist groups.

Turkey's struggle against terrorism and efforts to resettle the displaced Syrians to their homes or other place of their choice in Syria safely and voluntarily in accordance with international law and in coordination with the relevant UN agencies should be supported by the whole international community.

Once again I want to stress that Turkey launched the Operation Peace Spring with full respect to Syria's territorial integrity. Turkey aims to contribute and promote these fundamental principles. This operation also targets all initiatives that threaten the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria.

Our citizens and non-governmental organizations, who have lost more than 40,000 citizens to terrorism and have paid the entire bill of the Syrian refugee crisis have united and support the Operation Peace Spring.

Since October 9, when the operation began, the towns of Nusaybin, Ceylanpınar, Kiziltepe and other settlements close to the Syrian border of our country were attacked by terrorists. The importance of the operation is evident considering the citizens who lost their lives and injured as a result of hundreds of mortar shells and rockets. It is important that our trade union colleagues know all the realities and support Turkey in its fight against terrorism and its effort to find a permanent solution to the Syrian refugee crisis.

It should not be forgotten that terror is blind; we cannot predict where, when or who it will struck. Terrorism is therefore the problem of humanity and the fight against terrorism is the responsibility of all countries.

Best regards,

  
Ergün ATALAY  
President