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September 29, 2020

BY E-MAIL

The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, MP
Minister of Foreign Affairs
House of Commons
OTTAWA, ON K1A 0A6

Re: Immediate Release of Cihan Erdal from detention in Turkey

Dear Minister Champagne:

On behalf of the 700,000 members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), we call on the Canadian Government to demand the immediate release of Cihan Erdal from detention, and to guarantee his safe return to Canada.

Cihan Erdal, is a queer youth activist, PhD student at Carleton University in Ottawa and member of CUPE Local 4600. He was detained in Turkey on September 25 along with 81 other pro-Kurdish activists, academics, and politicians. He is currently being held in a detention centre in Ankara.

Erdal is a permanent resident of Canada who was in Turkey visiting family and conducting his doctoral fieldwork. It appears he, and the other 81 detainees, have been targeted for detention because they signed a letter in 2014 calling on the Turkish government to help the Kurdish Syrian town of Kobani, which was under attack from ISIS. The government is accusing signatories of inciting protests in southeast Turkey, which were met by police violence that resulted in deaths of 37 civilians. At the time, Erdal was an executive member of the People's Democratic Party (HDP), a pro-Kurdish and Turkey's third largest political party in the parliament, whose members have been persecuted by the Turkish government. He has not however been involved in Turkish politics since he moved to Canada to study at Carleton University in 2017.

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MARK HANCOCK

National President/Président national

CHARLES FLEURY

National Secretary-Treasurer/Secrétaire-trésorier national

DENIS BOLDUC, PAUL FAORO, FRED HAHN, JUDY HENLEY, SHERRY HILLIER

General Vice-Presidents/Vice-présidences générales

This arbitrary mass arrest is garnering national and international attention, and we have reason to believe and are deeply concerned that it is politically motivated. We call on the Canadian Government to demand Erdal's immediate release, and to guarantee his safe return to Canada.

Sincerely,



MARK HANCOCK
National President



CHARLES FLEURY
National Secretary-Treasurer

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Encl.

cc: R. Oliphant, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs
M. Morgan, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
C. MacLennan, Associate Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
M. Chong, Shadow Minister of Foreign Affairs
H. McPhearson, NDP Foreign Affairs Critic;
Embassy of the Republic of Turkey to Canada
Embassy of Canada to the Republic of Turkey
Canadian Labour Congress
Public Services International