



**IMF IMB Fiom**  
**Fitim Fism**

INTERNATIONAL METALWORKERS' FEDERATION  
INTERNATIONALER METALLGEWERKSCHAFTSBUND  
FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DES ORGANISATIONS DE TRAVAILLEURS DE LA METALLURGIE  
INTERNATIONELLA METALLFEDERATIONEN  
FEDERACION INTERNACIONAL DE TRABAJADORES DE LAS INDUSTRIAS METALURGICAS  
FEDERAZIONE INTERNAZIONALE DEI SINDACATI METALMECCANICI

54 bis, route des Acacias  
Case postale 1516  
CH-1227 Geneva  
Switzerland

Telephone: ++ 41 22 308 50 50  
Telefax: ++ 41 22 308 50 55  
E-mail: [info@imfmetal.org](mailto:info@imfmetal.org)  
Website: <http://www.imfmetal.org>

President: Jürgen Peters  
General Secretary: Marcello Malentacchi

MM/kp

October 2, 2007

Recep Tayyip Erdogan  
Prime Minister  
TC Easbakanlik  
Ankara, Turkey  
Fax +90 312 417 0476

### **Worker deaths in Tuzla shipyard**

Dear Mr. Erdogan,

On behalf of the 25 million workers we represent in over 100 countries, the International Metalworkers' Federation is gravely concerned for the health and safety of Turkish workers in the shipyard area of Tuzla. I understand that between August 21, 2007 and September 3, 2007, five workers from Tuzla shipyard have been killed on the job, four of them electrocuted to death.

The workers are:

- Cabbar Ongun:** died on 21.08.2007. He was a worker of the subcontractor GİMSA Ship and Furniture Industrie which is working for TORGEM Shipbuilding Industries. The reason of death is electrocution. He was 42 years old. There is no investigation record for his death.
- Günay Akarsu:** died on 23.08.2007. He was a worker of the subcontractor of BORA Shipbuilding Industrie which is working for SALAH Machinery and Maritime Industries. The reason of death is electrocution. He was 27 years old. According to official records, the person who caused the death is unclear.
- Cengiz Tatlı:** died on 30.08.2007. He was a worker of the subcontractor UMUT Ship Building Company. The reason of death is electrocution. He was 29 years old. According to official records, the person who caused the death is unclear.
- Kenan Kara:** died on 31.08.2007. He was a worker of the subcontractor DERYA Shipbuilding Company which is working for TUZLA Shipbuilding Industries. The reason of death is heart attack due to very hot temperatures. He was 30 years old.
- Bekir Özmen:** died on 03.09.2007. He was a worker of the subcontractor EMRE Shipbuilding Company which is working for DESAN Shipbuilding Industries. The reason of death is electrocution. He was 41 years old. His death is suspicious, and has two perpetrators.

As you know, subcontracted workers, such as the ones who were killed in the Tuzla shipyard, generally have little or no social benefits, job security, proper safety equipment and training, or basic rights on the job. These workers often work extremely long hours, 10-12 hours regularly and sometimes 24 hours straight, under inhuman conditions with little to no protective wear (goatskin bottle, glove, goggles, safety belt,

etc.). According to our affiliate in Turkey, Limter-Is, the union representing workers in the Tuzla shipyard, two out of every three shipbuilding workers are unregistered and hired under precarious circumstances making them more vulnerable to dangers on the job.

We have reason to believe that some of the families of the five fallen workers have been pressured by the employers and subcontractors in an effort to prevent the families from opening an investigation into the cause of death, and taking legal action against the company. We are also very concerned that the companies and subcontractors involved in these deaths have coerced family members to accept money in exchange for their silence so that public prosecution of these cases will be withdrawn.

We are shocked to learn that a worker who witnessed the death of Bekir Özmen and spoke about the accident to the press was fired after his bosses demanded that he rescind his statements to the press and he refused. This intimidation and obstruction of justice is unacceptable.

We urge you to use your considerable influence to see that investigations into these deaths are carried out impartially and transparently, that those responsible for these deaths are identified and brought to justice, that the families of the workers killed are fully compensated for their loss, that recommendations for improvements in the health and safety conditions of the Tuzla shipyard are identified and implemented immediately, and that workers are free to join a union and collectively bargain without persecution or loss of employment.

The right to safe workplaces and to join unions and bargain collectively are guaranteed under internationally recognized labour treaties of which Turkey is a signatory, specifically Convention 87 and Convention 155 of the International Labour Organization. The IMF will use all international channels available to show our solidarity with the shipbuilding workers of the Tuzla shipyard and we fully support the efforts of Limter-Is to win basic worker protections and human rights on the job. The IMF will closely monitor the implementation of provisions outlined in ILO Convention 155 which your country should be submitting its first report this year. We hope that you will take all the necessary measures to avoid such terrible accidents in the future.

Thank you for your immediate consideration.

Sincerely,



Marcello Malentacchi  
General Secretary

cc: Limter-Is  
International Confederation of Trade Unions (ITUC)