

Teachers in Türkiye to launch an indefinite protest in Ankara

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Turkish educators in the private sector and teachers affected by the interview process organized marches and press conferences on June 1 in many major cities across the country, particularly in Ankara. The protests called for the appointment of teachers, improvements to their personal benefits and an increase in minimum wages in the private sector.

At the main protest in Ankara, it was announced that if their demands are not met, private-sector teachers and others from all across Türkiye will begin an indefinite protest in the capital on June 14.

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's government is preparing to roll out the red carpet for the imperialist war criminals attending the NATO summit in Ankara on July 7–8 and to effectively declare a state of emergency in the city. Under these circumstances, all workers must support teachers as part of the broader struggle against war, austerity and political repression and defend them against potential police-state repression.

The protests in early June were organized by the Private Sector Teachers' Union, an independent rank-and-file union, and the Platform for Teachers Affected by Interview Discrimination. The Platform represents teachers who, despite scoring high on exams, had their scores lowered during interviews and were not appointed.

The protests by educators are part of the growing international labor movement, taking place amid intensifying attacks on living and working conditions. Workers are turning to wildcat struggles independent of corrupt trade union confederations.

Educators around the world face similar conditions. Governments worldwide are cutting social spending and attacking wages and social rights, diverting resources toward military spending and large corporations. In response, a resistance is growing. In recent months, educators in many countries—from the United States to Australia, and from the UK to Canada—have gone on or

sought to go on strike against austerity measures and real wage losses.

As part of a global wave of attacks, teachers working in the private sector in Türkiye are facing significant losses of wages and benefits. With the amendment made to the Private Education Institutions Law in 2014, they were effectively left at the mercy of the capitalist market. This amendment repealed the provision stipulating that private school teachers could not be paid less than their public sector counterparts. Today, private sector teachers are largely paid the minimum wage. Due to informal, uninsured work and pay based on lessons or days, their income can even fall below the minimum wage.

While the monthly minimum wage in Türkiye stands at ₺28,000 Turkish lira (USD\$600), according to May 2026 data from the pro-government Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (Türk-İİSİD), the monthly food expenditure required for a family of four to maintain a healthy, balanced and adequate diet (“starvation line”) has risen to ₺35,000 lira (USD\$756). The total amount of other mandatory monthly expenses for food, clothing, housing, transportation, education, health and similar needs (“poverty line”) has reached ₺114,000 lira (USD\$2,462), which is four times the minimum wage.

Low wages, deteriorating working conditions and unemployment in the education sector are primarily the result of a deliberate official policy that has been in place for years, aimed at reducing the quantity and quality of education provided in public schools, diverting public resources to corporations and militarism and opening up profit opportunities for corporations by privatizing education and promoting the private sector.

According to data published in the pro-government daily *Sabah* in October 2025, while approximately 33,000 people graduated from teacher training programs in 2024, only 20,000 of them were appointed to public schools. Along with the hundreds of thousands of graduates who

obtained teaching certification through pedagogical training, the pool of unassigned teachers was estimated to reach 600,000 to 700,000. Teachers unable to find work are often forced to take on other jobs that are insecure and low-paying.

According to an article by Feray Aytekin Aydo?an, former chairwoman of the Education and Science Workers' Union (E?itim-Sen), in the daily *BirGün*, “The number of private schools has increased by 700 percent over the past 25 years. While there were 1,887 private schools in the 2001-2002 academic year, this number has reached a record high of 14,700 by the 2024-2025 academic year. The share of private schools among all schools has risen from 3.72 percent to 19.85 percent. Now, one in five schools is a private school.”

Aydo?an's statement amounts to an indictment against the bureaucracy of the education unions, of which she herself was once a part. For decades, unions organized in the public sector—such as E?itim-Bir-Sen, Memur-Sen, Türk E?itim-Sen, Kamu Sen, E?itim-??, Bire?ik Kamu-??, E?itim Sen and KESK—have completely ignored the privatization of public education, the plight of teachers in the private sector and unemployed teachers. The government's expansion of “contract-based” and “salaried” employment in the public sector—and the resulting deterioration of conditions for all teachers—is a product of this collusion.

Unions, whether they support the government or the bourgeois opposition, are trying to suppress any opposition from below. Teachers who resigned from the executive board of E?itim-Sen's Istanbul Branch No. 7 explained in a letter published on *sendika.org* on Tuesday, June 9, how they had been subjected to pressure by the union bureaucracy, writing: “Every effort we made to bring together salaried teachers, teachers without permanent appointments, teachers victimized by interviews, and private-sector teachers with the [E?itim-Sen] union first encountered resistance from within and was ultimately met with punishment.”

Under these circumstances, private-sector teachers have recently formed an independent rank-and-file union and organized various protests. In May and June 2025, in response to the Private-Sector Teachers' Union's protest in front of the Turkish parliament, the Erdo?an government made various promises, but none of them were kept.

Furthermore, following protests by teachers awaiting assignment, Erdo?an had promised to abolish interviews ahead of the 2023 elections, but no action has been taken

on this either. This demonstrates that it is impossible to achieve any gains by appealing to and trusting the governments and political establishment responsible for the dire conditions faced by workers.

The way forward for educators lies in organizing a united struggle that transcends divisions within the education sector—such as public, private and those awaiting appointment—reaches out to other sections of the working class and develops independently of the union bureaucracy. Based on the qualitative and quantitative development of public education, this struggle must also include parents and students. The problems faced by educators stem from the capitalist profit system and are international in nature. This means that any struggle waged within the framework of this social system and on a national basis is doomed to fail. The only viable path is to build the struggle on an anti-capitalist and a global perspective.

The International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) provides the necessary vehicle to unite the struggles of educators and other sections of the working class across sectors and national borders. The following demands must be raised in this struggle:

- Support and expand the teachers' protests on June 14.
- Build independent rank-and-file committees in schools and workplaces in coordination with the IWA-RFC.
- Privately-run schools must be nationalized; education must be removed from the realm of commodities, and all teachers must be employed in public schools with full pay, benefits and job security.
- Resources must be redirected from war and corporations to education, healthcare and other social needs.
- Oppose the imperialist war and the NATO summit in Ankara.
- Fight for an economy based on the needs of society rather than the private profits and wealth of a handful of capitalist oligarchs in Türkiye and around the world, i.e. for socialism.



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