

WSWS readers and left press in Türkiye demand the release of Bogdan Syrotiuk

Our reporters
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Protests are mounting in Türkiye, as in the rest of the world, against the August 10, 2026 sentencing of Ukrainian socialist Bogdan Syrotiuk to 15 years in prison on charges of “high treason under martial law.” Readers of the Turkish edition of the *World Socialist Web Site* have sent letters of protest to the Pervomaisk City District Court and the verdict has been reported in sections of the Turkish left press.

In little more than a week since the verdict was announced, some 1,000 more people from dozens of countries have signed the petition demanding Bogdan’s immediate release, bringing the total number of signatories to 6,300. The 27-year-old Trotskyist, a leading member of the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists (YGBL), was convicted for authoring six political articles published by the *World Socialist Web Site*, without any evidence of espionage, sabotage or collaboration with any military force having been produced against him. The court ordered the confiscation of his property and the destruction of the socialist books, pamphlets and programmatic documents seized from him.

Readers in Türkiye sent copies of their letters to the court and to the WSWS.

Ömer pointed out that the case file contains no criminal acts whatsoever, stating, “The sole basis of the charge against Bogdan Syrotiuk is his published political writings and articles.” Recalling that the 65-page expert report by Yuri Irkhin, one of Ukraine’s leading criminologists, established that these writings contain no statement supporting the armed aggression of the Russian Federation, Ömer stressed that the conviction is a grave violation of Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Ömer noted that the order to destroy socialist books and programmatic documents “recalls the methods of fascist regimes.” He added that for Bogdan, whose health has seriously deteriorated in pre-trial detention and who has been denied urgent medical treatment, a 15-year sentence is “equivalent to a death sentence.”

Süleyman stated that Bogdan has been punished “solely for articles in which he expressed his political views,” and that the verdict constitutes a grave violation of the European Convention on Human Rights and of international law. He demanded that the sentence be immediately overturned and that Bogdan be released unconditionally.

Okan wrote to the court:

I strongly condemn the sentencing of Bogdan Syrotiuk to

15 years in prison for the articles he wrote and for defending the unity of Ukrainian and Russian workers against the war... We want you to know that until Bogdan Syrotiuk wins his freedom we will do everything in our power to mobilize workers and young people in Türkiye on this question.

Haydar sent a short message: “Bogdan must be released immediately.”

Mahir wrote in a similar vein: “I protest the attempt to punish our comrade in Ukraine, in defiance of all law, for his anti-war stand and for what he has said.”

“Bogdan Syrotiuk did not commit the crime he is accused of; rather, he defends the rights of the working class and calls for the international unity of workers against the war,” wrote **Emine**, who demanded Bogdan’s release, stating that the decision violated his democratic rights.

Erkan dealt with the content of the articles on which the conviction was based. He emphasized that the term in office of the Zelensky regime expired more than two years ago, that it has held no elections, and that it rules the country by decree. Drawing attention to the fact that Bogdan is being prosecuted for exposing Stepan Bandera and the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) as Nazi collaborators, he asked: “How can telling the truth be a crime in a European country, now that we have left a whole quarter of the 21st century behind us?”

Erkan noted that the accusation of being a Russian agent leveled against Bogdan when he was first arrested two-and-a-half years ago could never be substantiated because Bogdan in his writings openly opposes both the Russian invasion and the Putin regime. He wrote:

When it is clear that nothing in the file constitutes the elements of the crime of treason, and that all of his writings are political expression protected by Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights, the court’s decision to sweep this aside is unacceptable.

Stressing that Bogdan, whose health was already poor when he was arrested, has been denied the medical treatment he requires,

Erkan demanded that the sentence be annulled and that Bogdan be released.

Önsel wrote that no one should be imprisoned for expressing anti-war views or engaging in peaceful political activity:

The right to criticize war, government policy, and those in power is a fundamental democratic freedom, and protecting that right is especially important during periods of conflict, when dissenting voices are most vulnerable to suppression.

In his letter, **Emirhan** wrote:

As a member of the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists (YGBL), [Bogdan] condemned both the aggression of the Putin regime and NATO's proxy war; he defended the international unity of Ukrainian and Russian workers against imperialist war. This is not a crime. These are political views that must be protected under freedom of expression and thought.

Hakan, drawing attention to the political character of the verdict, wrote:

I call on the Ukrainian government to annul the verdict and release Bogdan immediately. I invite all workers and anti-war movements to support this campaign.

Prof. Dr. Esin Davutoğlu, a leading specialist in infectious diseases and clinical microbiology who previously gave an interview to the WSWs on the COVID-19 pandemic, helped publicize the verdict and the campaign by sharing the WSWs Turkish report on X with the call #FreeBogdan.

Despite the guilty silence maintained by the international bourgeois media, including in Türkiye, the sentence handed down to Bogdan found a rapid response in a section of the Turkish left press.

The daily *Evrensel* published a detailed report based on the WSWs editorial board statement on August 11. It reported that the only evidence in the case file consists of Bogdan's articles and his correspondence with WSWs editors; that the court was obliged to withdraw one article from the indictment after its own forensic panel found no criminal content in it; that the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) has been unable in more than two years to substantiate its claim that he was an "agent of the Russian government"; and that he has been denied necessary medical treatment throughout his detention. The report cited the roughly 20,000 criminal cases brought in Ukraine under the "treason and collaboration" laws. It also cited documentation by the United Nations Human Rights Office of torture and ill-treatment of

detainees, and the more than 300,000 cases opened since 2022 on charges of desertion.

A short report on the verdict was posted on *Özgür Dü? Postas?*, a Facebook page that describes itself as examining current issues from the standpoint of working people. The post drew nearly 500 responses, and nearly all of the more than 25 comments condemned the verdict. One commenter drew attention to the position of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's government, writing: "And the support from Türkiye for this fascist Ukrainian government continues."

The ETHA news agency reported the verdict on August 11, emphasizing that the court had treated Bogdan's criticisms of the war policy as a crime. The same day, *vicdaniret.org* published a report based on *Evrensel*'s coverage.

On August 12, *marksist.org* reproduced extensive excerpts from the WSWs statement calling for international solidarity and provided a link to the petition for Bogdan's freedom. *Sosyalist Gündem* and *Socialist Middle East* concluded an article published on August 13 with the call, "Bogdan Syrotyuk must be freed immediately!" The same day, *Enternasyonal Dayan?ma* reported the verdict.

The International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), its Turkish section, the *Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi*, and the WSWs will intensify the campaign for Bogdan's freedom. We call on workers and young people, trade unions, student organizations, civil liberties groups, intellectuals and journalists in Türkiye and internationally to take up Bogdan's defense: Sign and circulate the petition. Pass resolutions in your workplaces, unions and schools demanding Bogdan's release. Send letters of protest to the Ukrainian courts.

Write to the Pervomaisk City District Court at inbox@pm.mk.court.gov.ua and the Mykolaiv Court of Appeal at inbox@mka.court.gov.ua, with a copy to freebogdan@wsws.org, demanding that Bogdan's conviction be overturned and that he be released immediately.

The defense of Bogdan is inseparably connected to the fight against war, dictatorship and fascism. His freedom must be won through the mobilization of the international working class and all principled defenders of democratic rights.

Sign the petition here and join the fight to free Bogdan Syrotyuk.



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