Build the HABA? Workers Rank-and-File Committee in Türkiye! Spread the struggle to Alia?a and beyond!

Statement of the HABA? Workers Rank-and-File Committee Initiative
13 November 2026

Workers of HABA?, their families, and our class brothers and sisters in the factories, ports, refineries and shipyards of Alia?a:

On November 9, we lost 19 of our coworkers in the explosion at the melting shop of the HABA? iron and steel plant. Dozens more were injured. This was no accident. It was social murder. The overhead crane fell into the arc furnace because maintenance was put off for the sake of profit, because equipment was kept running with temporary patches, and because a danger was allowed to grow in plain sight for years.

The company knew the danger. According to its own report, lost-time accidents rose from 147 to 229 in a single year, and among subcontracted workers from 38 to 83. Our coworker Hakan Do?an died on October 21, and Eyüp E?inli on November 5. According to figures reported in the press, at least 30 workers have lost their lives at HABA? over the past decade. Meanwhile, according to its own figures, the company made 145 billion Turkish liras in sales in 2025. Only 2 percent of that went to workers, and on top of it the company received 18.2 billion liras in state incentives. The fortune of HABA? Chairman Mehmet Rü?tü Ba?aran is almost $1 billion. That wealth was created by the labour and the lives of workers.

Four days after the massacre, management's first move was to try to confiscate our phones so that our voices would not get out. Workers report that production is continuing in some departments. They also say there is talk of clearing the debris and restarting the melting shop within 15 days, and that the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (TMMOB) is not being allowed to carry out an inspection. We are being prevented from finding out what is going on inside. Removing the debris before the investigation is finished means destroying the evidence.

On the morning of Friday, November 13, workers refused to enter the plant in protest against this. Individuals believed to be linked to the corporation or to the Türk Metal union tried to attack the spokesperson of Aegean Workers' Unity (Ege ??çi Birli?i). Workers drove them off, and they escaped by fleeing to the plant's security.

When workers blocked the road to demand an independent investigation and paid leave, the gendarmerie arrived with TOMA water cannon trucks and advanced on workers with shields. They beat us and detained nearly 20 of our coworkers.

Amid enormous public anger after the massacre at HABA?, the plant owner was taken into custody. He was not jailed, however, but rewarded with "house arrest." Meanwhile, workers are being clubbed for demanding a reckoning for their coworkers, who were sent to their deaths. The judiciary has imposed a publication ban. Police and gendarmerie have been massed in front of the hospital and the plant. The Justice and Development Party (AKP) and Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) rejected a motion for a parliamentary inquiry. The labour minister said, "No serious problem had previously been identified at the facility." And despite three fatal workplace homicides in three weeks, the Türk Metal union has not even called for production to be halted. We face not only the HABA? oligarchs but a single alliance of the ruling class. This capitalist order protects the profits, wealth and power of the ruling class, not the lives and well-being of workers. The Occupational Health and Safety Law protects the companies, not the workers.

Brothers and sisters, we cannot solve any of our problems by pleading with this order and its defenders or by waiting for them to change things. After the 2014 Soma mine massacre, officials made promises. Those promises are exposed as lies every year by our blood and our lives, as roughly 2,000 of our brothers and sisters die on the job. As the gendarmerie detained them on Friday, workers were shouting, "We want to live like human beings!" We can achieve this only through our own strength, through mass and independent struggle.

What is to be done?

Brothers and sisters, we must use the enormous social power that comes from our position in production and supply chains, and we must unite to organise that power. Let us build the HABA? Workers Rank-and-File Committee by electing coworkers we trust from every department and every shift, permanent and subcontracted alike. The committee must be independent of the union bureaucracy, which we know stands against us, and decisions must be taken at mass meetings of workers.

The committee should form workers' delegations to visit every workplace in Alia?a and the mines in and around Soma. In Alia?a,

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that includes from TÜPRA? oil refineries to ?zmir Iron Steel, from the shipbreaking yards to the ports, and Smart Solar, where workers are in struggle. The delegations should explain our demands and ask our class brothers and sisters for active support. In this country, about 2,000 workers die every year on the job, and every workplace is a potential deathtrap. Those in power, the corporations and their trade union auxiliaries have proven that they will do nothing about it. But we know it is possible to change this situation. That requires us to intervene as an independent class, and that is why we must build rank-and-file committees everywhere. Our families, the people of Alia?a, and the workers, students and intellectuals marching for us across the country stand with us. Let us call on them to organise around these committees.

Our struggle is international. Steelworkers in the Iranian city of Ahvaz sent us this message: “Your pain is our pain.” Let us be sure that workers around the world who have heard what happened at HABA? are with us in solidarity. Our interests and problems are the same as theirs, and the way forward lies in uniting on an international scale. That is why we need to build our committee in connection with the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC). Let us fight for the following urgent demands:

Our demands

1. We have no confidence in the authorities that turn a blind eye as some 2,000 workers die every year. To hold those responsible for the deaths of our 19 coworkers to account and to prevent further deaths, we demand an independent investigation carried out by workers we elect, together with engineers, doctors and lawyers we trust. The debris must not be removed until this investigation is completed. Risk assessments, maintenance records and inspection reports must be opened up.

2. Production at HABA? must be completely halted until the independent committee approves a restart, and all workers must be placed on paid leave, with no distinction between permanent and subcontracted workers. The phone ban at the plant must be lifted immediately. As long as a serious and imminent danger remains, we must exercise our right to refuse work under Article 13 of Law No. 6331. Our detained coworkers must be released immediately. The security forces’ unlawful attacks on workers demanding their legitimate rights must stop.

3. Friday’s attempted attack by individuals believed to be linked to the company and Türk Metal union is a warning. We must provide for our own security. We must never leave any coworker alone, we must act collectively, and we must document and expose every attempted attack.

4. We all know that a safety specialist paid by the corporation cannot stop production. The pro-company Occupational Health and Safety Law must be changed, and oversight by elected safety committees must be established in every workplace. These committees must be able to exercise the right to refuse work under Article 13 of the law the moment they see a danger. Our goal is to end the deaths of about 330,000 of our fellow workers around the world every year in preventable “accidents.”

5. Key industries, such as iron and steel, must stop being a source of profit for a handful of oligarchs. They must be put into public ownership under the democratic control of the workers. Only in this way can workers’ safety be guaranteed.

6. The independent committee must investigate press reports that HABA? has supplied steel to Israel, which is carrying out genocide against our Palestinian brothers and sisters in Gaza. According to these reports, the steel went “via Palestine” in official trade records. These allegations point to the shared interests of those who are sending both us and the Palestinian people to our deaths. We declare our solidarity with the dockworkers who walked off the job at more than 100 ports around the world on October 30 under the slogan “We do not work for war.” Our fight is the same all over the world. We refuse to die for the profits and geopolitical interests of imperialist and capitalist oligarchs, whether in genocides, in wars or at our workplaces. Let us put a stop to making us pay for war and for enriching the corporations through rising prices, taxes and social cuts. Let us unite our struggle with our student and worker brothers and sisters who are beginning to rise up in Europe and beyond.

7. In Türkiye, millions of workers and their families are trying to get by on a minimum wage below the hunger line (38,024 liras) for a family of four. Like workers’ deaths, this misery is not inevitable. Even Türk-?? confederation admits that, as of October, the poverty line for a family of four is above 120,000 liras. We have to reject poverty wages below this floor. We have to demand a sliding scale of wages that makes up for real inflation every month, shorter working hours with no loss of pay, secure and decent jobs for all, and massive public investment in social needs, including healthcare, education and housing. We should know that these demands can be won only if we unite as a class through rank-and-file committees across workplaces, industries and borders, and take power. Let us fight with that understanding.

Brothers and sisters, share this statement with your coworkers, discuss it among yourselves and build the committee! Take your future into your own hands! Join our WhatsApp group!

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