Statement on the November 29 Istanbul Rally

For an independent, international movement of the working class against war, poverty and the capitalist oligarchy!

Build rank-and-file committees, prepare for a European general strike!

Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi – Dördüncü Enternasyonal
27 November 2026

The following statement will be distributed by the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi – Dördüncü Enternasyonal (Socialist Equality Party – Fourth International), the Turkish section of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI), at the November 29 rally in Istanbul's Kartal Square called by unions affiliated with the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Türkiye (D?SK).

Thousands of people are filling Kartal Square in Istanbul under the slogan "for a humane life, against corruption, poverty and imperialist war policies." These urgent demands arise from the daily reality of millions.

According to the pro-government Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (Türk-??), as of October the hunger line for a family of four stood at 38,024 lira (about $750) per month with the poverty line at 123,856 lira (about $2,450). The net minimum wage is 28,075 lira (about $555 a month), while the minimum pension is just 23,552 lira (about $465). According to the D?SK Research Center (D?SK-AR), broadly defined unemployment stands at 30.9 percent. Health and Safety Labour Watch (?S?G) counted at least 1,930 workers killed on the job in the first 10 months of 2026. Nineteen workers lost their lives on November 9, in a preventable massacre at the HABA? iron and steel plant in Alia?a, ?zmir.

While the working class is being driven into growing misery, immense wealth is accumulating at the other pole. According to 2024 figures from the World Inequality Database, the richest 1 percent in Türkiye own 31.7 percent of total wealth, and the richest 10 percent own 65.6 percent. The 187-billion-lira (about $3.7 billion) investment fund scandal—in which 214 individuals and companies are alleged to have reaped that sum from several funds—is just one aspect of how this wealth has been amassed.

As in other NATO countries, Türkiye's 2027 budget exposes the real priorities of the ruling class. Of the planned 27.3 trillion lira (about $540 billion) in spending, 3.98 trillion lira goes to interest payments and 3.45 trillion lira to defense and internal security. Together, these two items exceed the combined allocations for education, central government health care and social assistance.

The European NATO powers, allies of Türkiye's ruling class, are escalating the war against Russia over Ukraine. Having struck Russian ships in the Black Sea, Ukrainian naval drones are now hitting them in the Baltic and the Mediterranean. European governments are preparing to send troops to Ukraine. Moscow, moreover, warned at the end of September that it could respond to a blockade of Kaliningrad with nuclear weapons. In mid-November, the US bombed Iran again. The Zionist state's genocide against the Palestinians continues, and the Saudi regime is waging war against the Houthis (Ansarullah) in Yemen with the backing of the United States and Israel.

Türkiye stands at the very center of these fronts of a developing global war. On November 5, parliament ratified the Mecca Joint Defense Agreement with the votes of President Recep Tayyip Erdo?an's Justice and Development Party (AKP), its fascist ally the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) and the Kemalist Republican People's Party (CHP). The agreement has brought Türkiye, together with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, into a military alliance linked to the US war against Iran and its allies. This is being done against the will of the population in Türkiye. A poll published by Areda Survey in March 2026 showed that 93.2 percent opposed the US-Israeli war on Iran.

The source of all this is the global capitalist profit system and the reactionary interests of a ruling class umbilically tied to imperialism. Mired in a deepening crisis, the imperialist powers are setting out to redivide the world by force, and their capitalist allies are scrambling for a share of the spoils. Workers are being made to pay the bill for rearmament and debt through wage cuts, price hikes and social devastation.

From the United States to Europe and Türkiye, ruling classes are building authoritarian regimes to impose unpopular policies. This

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is what lies behind the steady elimination in Türkiye of press freedom and of the right to organize, to engage in politics, and to vote and stand for office, as well as the political arrests and the mounting repression against workers.

In France, more than 10,000 people, among them many high school students, have been detained in the protests that began in September. In Ukraine, socialist political prisoner Bogdan Syrotiuk was sentenced in August to 15 years in prison for opposing both the war waged by NATO and the Zelensky regime, and Putin's reactionary invasion, and for defending the unity of Russian and Ukrainian workers. Bogdan Syrotiuk and all political prisoners must be released immediately and unconditionally!

As the youth revolt that began in France spreads across the continent, the working class is stepping ever more clearly onto the stage. On October 30, dockworkers at 113 ports declared, "We will not work for war," demonstrating their potential to bring the imperialist war machine to a halt. Nationwide strikes have taken place in France, Spain, Italy, Belgium and Greece, and on November 20, young people in more than 20 countries marched against war and conscription.

In Türkiye, too, an explosive class struggle is developing. The establishment parties, government and opposition alike, and the trade union bureaucracy have tried every means to block it or divert it into blind alleys. One in every four young people in Türkiye is neither in education nor in employment. The capitalist system is condemning youth to a future with no prospects. MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli warned young people, "Don't be tempted by France!" His warning reflects the ruling class's fear that the movement in Europe will spill over into Türkiye. From Europe to Türkiye and beyond, workers and youth face the same social problems, and these demand common solutions.

The November 29 rally is a product of the growing anger within the working class. But one-day weekend protests will not solve a single fundamental problem. Nor will one-day national strikes like those in European countries, or appeals to governments and parliaments. The same applies to putting another capitalist government in office. No fundamental problem can be solved without targeting the power and wealth of the capitalist oligarchy, whose interests run counter to those of the majority of the population.

All the capitalist parties defend the interests of the ruling class, NATO and the alliances with imperialism. For decades, the trade union bureaucracy, whether aligned with the government or with the bourgeois opposition, has helped suppress the class struggle. It has either acquiesced in or directly taken part in the rollback of social gains and in war policies.

Against this, the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi – Dördüncü Enternasyonal calls on the working class to organize as an independent political and social force, building rank-and-file committees in every workplace, school and neighborhood. These committees must be independent of the trade union bureaucracy and the capitalist parties and must reject every form of division that serves to split the working class. A movement built from below in this way can prepare a general strike that mobilizes the industrial power of the working class ahead of the minimum wage and budget negotiations in December. This must be part of preparations, together with our class brothers and sisters in Europe, for a continent-wide general strike.

In this struggle, we offer the following urgent demands:

• Raise wages and pensions every month in line with real inflation (a sliding scale of wages)! No household's income can fall below the poverty line!

• Reduce working hours with no loss of pay! Secure jobs for all, end the subcontracting system!

• Amend the pro-corporate Occupational Health and Safety Law! Elect workers' health and safety committees in every workplace, with the power to halt production the moment they see danger!

• No to paying the state's debts to the financial oligarchy! Redirect resources from interest payments and war to health care, education, jobs and the construction of earthquake-resistant public housing!

• Transform the banks, major corporations and key industries into public utilities under the democratic control of workers! Expropriate the massive fortunes amassed through plunder, starting with those of the fund profiteers!

• Annul the Mecca Agreement! End Türkiye's NATO membership, close the US and NATO bases and dissolve NATO! End NATO's war against Russia, the US-Israeli war against Iran and all other imperialist wars!

These demands can be realized only if the working class becomes conscious of its own interests, takes power and reorganizes society to meet human needs rather than profit. This is necessarily an *international* and *socialist* struggle against the global capitalist system. This means fighting for the United Socialist States of Europe and the Socialist Federation of the Middle East.

The Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi in Türkiye is fighting for this perspective together with its sister parties of the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI) in Europe and around the world. We call on you to build the Sosyalist E?itlik Partisi as the revolutionary leadership this struggle requires, together with its student and youth organization, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), and to build the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC), the means of uniting workers' struggles globally.

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