

Assistance and support for Palestinian Public Employees



Public employees in Palestine have not been paid salaries for the last 8 months because of the political embargo imposed in particular by the United States and European Union. The Union of Public Employment, the federation of public sector unions covering public employees in health, education, social services, public utilities, transportation, and agricultural departments, is calling upon the PSI and its affiliates to send letters of protest to the Palestinian Authority and to the donor community to call for an end to the embargo on international assistance to Palestine which has resulted in the non-payment of public sector employees' salaries. Given the critical humanitarian situation, PSI has opened a special fund for Palestine and is appealing to its affiliates for contributions. This fund will be used to provide essential food and medical services to public sector workers and their families and will also be an important source of moral support. These actions were fully endorsed by the PSI Executive Board at its meeting on 10 November. See www.world-psi.org/urgentaction.

ITUC/GUF Joint Delegation at the Korean Embassy in Geneva



As part of the International day of action in support of South Korean unions, PSI General Secretary Hans Engelberts, participated in a high-level delegation to meet with the Korean ambassador in Geneva.

The Korean Ambassador refused to meet with the delegation on the grounds that a previous delegation ([view report](#)) had met with the Korean Ministry of Labour prior to the 14th ILO Asian Regional Meeting, held in Busang, Korea.

The delegation included Sir LeRoy Trotman, Spokesperson of the ILO Workers Group, Marcello Malentacci, General Secretary of the International

Metal Workers and other representatives of the International Union of Food and Agricultural Workers; the Building and Woodworkers International, UNI and the ITUC. Sir Leroy delivered letters from the delegation to protest at the continuing repression of trade unionists and reiterated its commitment to monitor the situation in Korea until such time as the South Korean government respects international labour standards.

➡ [International Day of Action - background information](#)

➡ [Video on KGEU's recent repression](#)

Philippines: Stop the Killings



November 16th was the International Day of Action against trade union repression and political killings in the Philippines. PSI had already launched an Urgent Action appeal in support of Annie Geron, PSLINK General Secretary (see the October issue of PSI World News and www.world-psi.org/urgentaction). PSI affiliates around the world have sent letters of protest to President Gloria Arroyo and messages of support to Annie Geron. As part of the International Day of Action, representatives from the PSI office in Tokyo met with the Consul and Labour attaché of the Philippines embassy in Tokyo to express their deep concern over the situation. A number of well-known companies, including WalMart, Ralf Lauren and GAP also wrote to President Arroyo calling on her government to ensure respect for workers' rights in the export processing zones of Manila. More information [here](#).

PSI Executive Board meeting



The PSI Executive Board met in Geneva, 8-10 November. The Board had a full agenda, including the preparations for the next World Congress which will take place in Vienna, Austria in September 2007. Participants studied the Constitutional amendments, and General Secretary Hans Engelberts took them through the preparations for the Congress, which is expected to welcome 1,000 delegates, representing all PSI's affiliated unions. The Congress will be preceded by a 2-day Forum for LGBT members and a Youth meeting. The minutes of the Executive Board meeting will be made available for all affiliates on the PSI website.

Climate change: a trade union issue



Climate change affects us all. It is a priority for trade unions because it is a global threat requiring global action. We can already see the effects of global change – prolonged warm summers in Europe, droughts in Africa, floods, melting ice in the Antarctic show us that a reaction is more than urgent. Unions have to be involved: winning workforce commitment, pushing reluctant employers and making sure that far-reaching change is fairly negotiated. Making workplaces sustainable is the key to making jobs sustainable.

The TUC in the UK has published an informative and practical booklet, ***First steps to a greener workplace***, available online at <http://www.tuc.org.uk/economy/tuc-12460-f0.cfm>. We would be interested to know your union's policy on climate change and sustainable development. Please send information to communications@world-psi.org.

PSI Mission to Algeria



PSI carried out a mission to Algeria 4-6 November to meet with its affiliate organisations in gas, electricity, health services and public administration. The purpose of the mission was to strengthen cooperation with public sector trade unions in the area of trade union training, to share perspectives concerning the role of the public sector in the delivery of essential services, and to support unions in their demands concerning terms and conditions of employment, social security, public sector restructuring and the exercise of trade union rights. The mission heard with concern of the continuing and constant administrative and legal actions taken against trade union leaders and members of Autonomous Trade Union in Public Administration (SNAPAP) and other autonomous trade unions in secondary and higher education and in the para-medical and public health sectors. The PSI representatives felt that these actions constitute clear violations of the international norms to which the Algerian government is a signatory, in particular ILO Conventions 87 and 98 and the UN Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. See PSI's media release on the mission [here](#).

Public Sector Forum: shaping the world



The first workshop of the PSI Public Sector Forum was held on 15-17 November. The focus was on the future of public services: how to identify the current and likely trends that will shape public services, and how unions should act in consequence. Using the current challenges to neoliberal policies in Latin America and the work being done on the MDGs as examples, affiliates described possible scenarios that need to be kept in mind. Participants found the three-day schedule of fast-paced and directed workshops both challenging and enormously fruitful. We will be able to produce some material from this Forum of enormous benefit

to PSI and its affiliates, especially in the lead-up to next year's Congress. The updated document *Stop the World? No, Shape It!* is available on the PSI website: see www.world-psi.org/stoptheworld.

Water, Women and Workers



PSI's World Women's Committee adopted a proposal to mark International Women's Day on 8 March 2007 with the theme Water, Women and Workers: Sources of life. As March 22 is World Water Day, it has been agreed to propose a series of activities between 8 and 22 March. The key message will focus on the negative impact of privatisation of water, which

disproportionately affects women, claim the right to water as a human right and call for governments to publicly own and manage water supplies. Materials are in preparation, including background information, a poster and postcards, a model media release and letter to governments and municipalities, website materials, a film list, documentaries and other resources. PSI encourages all its affiliates to plan activities around this very important theme. For more information, contact Catherine.Laflamme@world-psi.org.

Beyond scarcity: Power, poverty and the global water crisis



The UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) has published the 2006 Human Development Report, ***Beyond scarcity: Power, poverty and the global water crisis***. People need clean water and sanitation to sustain their health and maintain their dignity. But water also sustains ecological systems and provides an input into the production systems that maintain livelihoods. The report studies two distinct themes in the global water crisis: water for life (delivering clean water, removing wastewater and providing sanitation); and water for livelihoods (as a productive resource shared within countries and across borders). See <http://hdr.undp.org/hdr2006/report.cfm>

EU Development Policy on Public Services



PSI, Oxfam International and the Finnish Public Service Unions hosted a seminar in Helsinki on 14 November to call for EU support for public services in their policy on overseas development. The speakers stressed the important role of public services had played in the social and economic development of Finland and many other European countries. The Oxfam International representative, Tom Noel, used evidence from the recent Oxfam publication, "In the Public Interest" to show that the lack of essential public services in the South was seriously undermining their ability to meet basic needs of citizens. Alan Leather, PSI (far left), called for an EU development

policy that recognised the important role that public service workers could play in shaping their own future. Heikki Kehalinna, speaking on behalf of the Finnish unions, made a strong case for European models for social dialogue to be used in all development projects.

Portuguese public workers on strike



Public sector workers in Portugal held a two-day strike on 9-10 November, opposing the government's plans to reduce the 700,000-strong workforce by 75,000 and its economic policies and attacks on public service workers. The strike was supported across a wide range of services. Workers in water supply, the fire service, primary schools, kindergarten and in general administration took part with 100% support from refuse collection workers in many areas. The unions are intent

on maintaining their campaign with, as the next step, a national demonstration on 25 November supported by the CGTP-IN federation.

Lithuanian unions protest for a European wage



Trade unions in Lithuania held protests on 10 November against the working conditions imposed by the government. Salaries in Lithuania are very low, and the government plans to expand the working week from 48 hours to 60 hours. The wages are not incentive to workers, and are likely to increase and encourage the brain drain from Lithuania to the rest of Europe, rather than keeping skilled workers inside the country. PSI wrote a letter of protest to the Lithuanian Government and employers' federation.

Costa Rica says No to CAFTA



Thousands of Costa Ricans held a national protest strike and demonstrations on 23-24 October against the Free Trade Agreement between Central America and the US (CAFTA). President Oscar Arias intends to speed up its approval in Congress before the end of this year. Teachers, health and transport workers, students, environmentalists, and members of cooperatives are demanding that CAFTA be definitively eliminated from the Legislative Assembly. The population is drawing international attention to the fact that the treaty will worsen their lives, intensify poverty and unemployment, and put sovereignty at risk, adding the administration negotiated the deal behind the backs of the people. They see a paradox in the President's security forces' repressive and violent reactions to their demonstrations, while Arias was actually awarded the Nobel Peace prize in 1987.

See more on <http://www.plenglish.com/article.asp?ID=%7B04A21086-F56C-407C-807B-5A07D5D7F1CD%7D&language=EN>

Young workers for Quality Public Services and decent work



PSI South-East Asia held a QPS workshop for young workers in Thailand, 30th October – 1st November. Twenty-eight participants from Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand participated.

The objectives of the workshop were to understand PSI structure, policy and programs with the aim of making recommendations to increase Quality Public Services, to understand the problems and challenges facing young workers in the world of work; to develop plans and strategies of the unions on the promotion and protection of young workers rights and interests and to organise and develop a Youth Network in the South East Asia sub-region. At the end of the workshop, the participants put forward a number of recommendations including the creation of a youth committee and the need to promote quality work life for young workers.

Re-building public services in New Zealand



New figures show the success of the necessary re-building of the New Zealand public service. The public service has increased every year for the last six years after its dismantling due to the dominance of neoliberal ideology during the 1990s. The total number of public servants increased by five percent in the last year, mainly in Inland Revenue and the Department of Corrections. "The increased number of staff was necessary to ensure that the government can deliver important social policies such as Working for Families," said Richard Wagstaff, National Secretary of the Public Services Association (PSA). "These increased number of public service staff play a critical role in the economic and social success of New Zealand, both now and in the future." The PSA has

launched a report, Re-imagining Government - putting people at the heart of New Zealand's public sector, by UK based think-tank Demos which outlines a new vision for New Zealand public services.

See the report here: www.psa.org.nz/FreshPerspectives/congress2006/demos%20-%20full%20report.pdf.

New WHO Director-General praises health workers



Dr Margaret Chan of China has been appointed as the next Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO). After her appointment, she told the World Health Assembly she wanted to be judged by the impact WHO's work has on the people of Africa and on women across the globe. She underlined the importance of strong systems to deliver health care to the people who need it. "All the donated drugs in the world won't do any good without an infrastructure for their delivery. You cannot deliver health care if the staff you trained at home are working abroad." She especially praised the people who deliver health care. "The true heroes these days are the health workers with their healing, caring ethic. They

are determined to save lives and relieve suffering, and they work with impressive dedication, often under difficult conditions. The world needs many, many more of them," said Dr Chan. See www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2006/pr66/en/print.html.

Tanzania privatisation draws criticism



Since the early 1990's 322 state-owned companies in Tanzania have been privatised, with only 35 companies still owned by the state, and they are to be privatised by December 2007. The government's privatisation body, the Parastatal Sector Reform Commission, presents the programme as a success, but criticism

from trade unions and some academics shows that there have been many failures. Some new owners have not done better than the former state managers and some investors have simply mortgaged the companies' property, instead of injecting new money to finance revival and growth. Air Tanzania was bought back by the government because the partnership with South African Airways did not work out. The telephone company Tanzania Telecommunications Co. Ltd. had to advertise for new managers after its owners (the government and a private investor) disagreed on how the company was run. In 2005 the government cancelled its deal with Biwater, which was contracted to bring clean water to the capital. However, privatisation has improved one service in Tanzania. It is now a lot easier to buy beer. See http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2006/10/20/business/AF_FEA_FIN_Tanzania_Privatization.php.

Code of Practice for health workers in the Pacific



The Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), and the World Health Organization (WHO) have developed a draft "Code of Practice" for recruitment of health workers in the Pacific region. The Draft Code of Practice will be presented to the Pacific Ministers of Health meeting in Vanuatu in March 2007 for their approval. "The code will provide a mechanism to facilitate bilateral recruitment of health workers within a framework based on mutuality of benefits, transparency and fairness for all involved," said Dr Juliet Fleischl, Technical Officer, Human Resources and Health Systems for WHO.

"The Regional Code of Practice for the recruitment of health workers, once approved by the Ministers of Health of the Pacific, will provide a mechanism that will assist Pacific Island countries and territories to better manage their health workforces' dynamics since it relates to international migration," said SPC Director-General Dr Jimmie Rodgers.

See http://www.spc.nc/AC/crga2006_PR_Day3_health.htm

Ratify the new UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities



On International Day of Disabled Persons on 3 December, PSI encourages its affiliates to join forces and lobby their Government to sign and ratify the new UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which is to be formally adopted in December: see <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/>.

The convention specifically prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities in all areas of life and this will help to put pressure on countries whose work on disability rights could be improved (Article 27 on work and employment will be of particular interest to trade unions and disabled workers). Countries that formally sign up to the convention will also have to report regularly to the UN about the steps they are taking to protect and promote disabled people's rights, thus ensuring a better future to persons with

disabilities.

Disabled Persons International (DPI) has produced a toolkit on ratification of the Convention: see <http://www.icrpd.net>

World AIDS Day 1 December



1 December is World AIDS Day. Around forty million people are living with HIV throughout the world - and that number increases in every region every day. Ignorance and prejudice are fuelling the spread of a preventable disease. 1 December is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV and AIDS. This year, it's up to all of

us to stop the spread of HIV and end prejudice.

This starts by taking action: Wear a red ribbon - Talk to people - Get involved in events.

World AIDS Campaign, with the support of UNAIDS, facilitates the international theme for World AIDS Day, which this year is **Stop AIDS, Keep the Promise**. Visit the World AIDS Campaign to post events or to find out about events around the world. See

<http://www.worldaidscampaign.info/>.

16 days of activism against gender violence



The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence is an international campaign originating from the first Women's Global Leadership Institute sponsored by the Center for Women's Global Leadership in 1991. Participants chose the dates, November 25, International Day Against Violence Against Women and December 10, International Human Rights Day, in order to symbolically link violence against women and human rights and to emphasize that such violence is a violation of human rights. This 16-day period also highlights other significant dates including November 29, International Women Human Rights Defenders Day, December 1, World AIDS Day, and December 6, which marks the Anniversary of the Montreal Massacre. Since 1991, approximately 1,700 organizations in 130 countries have participated in the 16 Days Campaign. For details on how you can

participate, see <http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu/16days/home.html>

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