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PSI speaks out against corruption



PSI affiliates were active at the UN Conference on the Convention Against Corruption held in Bali, Indonesia at the end of January. Along with civil society participants from Transparency International and our partner organisation

UNICORN, two PSI members spoke out about the importance of protecting whistleblowers who expose corruption. Annie Geron of PSLINK in the Philippines and Mourad Tchiko of SNAPAP in Algeria, both PSI affiliates, have courageously spoken out to condemn corruption in their countries. Both lost their jobs and are still fighting, with support from PSI, for justice at the ILO and other fora. Annie and Mourad were key activists in pushing for the establishment of an international network to support and protect whistleblowers. Annie was one of the keynote speakers at the civil society side event at the Conference. In addition, along with Svend Robinson of PSI Head Office, PSI pushed the UN agency responsible for the Convention to have an effective monitoring mechanism and to include reports on whistleblower protection in the reports that member states file with the UN. Trade unions must be key partners in the fight against corruption, as every dollar paid in bribes or lost through corrupt practices is a dollar less for quality public services, and breeds loss of trust in the public sector. See more [here](#).

PSI Campaign: Water, Women and Workers



Following last year's successful campaign on **Water, Women and Workers: sources of life**, PSI is renewing the activities leading from International Women's Day on 8 March to World Water Day on 22 March. This year, we are adding a focus on

climate change and sustainable development to the main message: *Women and trade unions call for safe, affordable and efficient water for all*. Affiliates are invited to participate in the campaign and to inform us of your activities. PSI has developed a dedicated website in English, French and Spanish where you can download a leaflet, sticker, poster and postcard. In addition, affiliates and regional and sub-regional PSI offices have been supplied with campaign kits. For more details see www.psiwater.org. Contact equality@world-psi.org.

NO TO OVERCROWDED PRISONS
28th February 2008



Say NO to overcrowded prisons in Europe

Prisons in the European union are, on average, at 125% of their capacity. In some countries, the level is nearly 200%. Conditions for both prisoners and prison staff are unsustainable, with prison staff under huge pressure. Overcrowding leads to absenteeism, aggression between prisoners and against staff, higher

rates of illness and even suicide. The European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU) has named 28 February as the action day against prison overcrowding. They will be holding a demonstration in Brussels, with activities in other European venues. For more information, see <http://www.epsu.org/a/3538>.



Australian power workers to strike over privatisation

Delegates from seven unions representing electricity workers in New South Wales (NSW), Australia, have voted unanimously in favour of industrial action for 26 February over the State Government's plans to sell off electricity retailers and lease the power generators to the private sector. A rally on that day will coincide with the first day of State Parliament. The unions include PSI affiliates in Australia ASU, CEPU/ETU and SPSF. Unions NSW is coordinating the unions actions through their web site at www.stoptheselloff.org.au.

Unions NSW assistant secretary Matt Thistlethwaite says electricity workers want to send a strong message to the Government. "We do not believe it's a done deal," he said. "It is never too late for the Premier to listen to the people of NSW, who are overwhelmingly opposed to electricity privatisation."

For the full article and an audio interview of Matt Thistlethwaite visit:

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/02/06/2155537.htm?section=business>.

USA: Union activist speaks out against talking ban



The American National Labor Relations Board has issued a complaint against Resurrection Health Care (RHC), the second-largest health care system in the Chicago metropolitan area, for attempting to silence a union supporter at West Suburban Medical Center, an RHC-affiliated hospital. In October 2007, a supervisor told Torrence Shorter, a union activist, that he could no longer speak to his co-workers in the Food Service department.

The order came a week after Shorter had spoken at a union event.

Since 2003, Resurrection has settled 14 unfair labor practice charges alleging interrogation, harassment, interference in organizing activities, and the prohibition of the distribution of union literature.

"Time and again, Resurrection employees have faced harassment and intimidation just for exercising their right to organize," said Henry Bayer, executive director of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council 31, which is working with RHC employees to form a union. "It's past time for this employer to respect the rights of its employees." The hearing on the complaint has been scheduled for 12 March.



Global Labour University - 1 April deadline for Germany and India

The Global Labour University, previously described in PSI World News and FOCUS, offers Masters Programmes for trade unionists in four venues: the University of Kassel and the Berlin School of Economics in Germany; Wits in South Africa; the University of Campinas in Brazil ; and at the Tata Institute for Social sciences in Mumbai, India. The deadline for the next courses in Germany and India is **1st April 2008**. Students have the possibility to attend courses at more than one of these campuses, so that their masters in Globalisation and labour will be truly a globalised degree. The courses are taught in English, and applicants should preferably not be more than 40-years-old. Information on the GLU is available on <http://www.global-labour-university.org/>. PSI is offering a scholarship for a young worker under the age of 35 to attend the university.

End impunity in Guatemala



Arturo Ruiz, representing PSI affiliates in Guatemala, presented a speech during the conference

Under the slogan "End Impunity," an international trade union conference on the role of trade unions in the fight against impunity was held in Guatemala City on 31 January. Various ITUC member unions in the region, as well as the ITF, IUF and PSI, attended the conference. The conference was opened by the President of Guatemala, Ing. Alvaro Colom, who not only pledged to combat existing problems of impunity, but also the corruption and growing poverty in the country. He made a commitment to support the exercise of freedom of association and respect for human rights, and to build a solid foundation for effective social dialogue and strengthening of the Ministry of Labour.

The conference aimed to develop and implement policies and strategies that promote core labour standards, strengthen the ability of trade unions to combat impunity and to clarify and punish the murders of union leaders Pedro Zamora, Marco Tulio Ramirez, Raul Castro Bosel and Rosalío Gonzalez Villatoro, who were cowardly murdered at the hands of strangers.

At the end of the conference, a statement was presented to the Minister of Labour, which can be read here: http://www.ituc-psi.org/IMG/pdf/declaration_guatemala_conf_310108.pdf

Labour Dynamics inside China: Key union approaches and priorities



A seminar was held on 25-26 January in Hong Kong, with participants from Hong Kong trade unions, NGOs, civil groups and representatives from Global Union Federations. PSI was represented by Katsuhiko Sato, Asia Pacific Regional Secretary, and Katherine Loh, South-East Asia Sub-regional Secretary. The seminar opened with an overview of the latest trends in Chinese union legislation,

including the new Labour Law provisions. It was anticipated that the new laws would strengthen the position of the trade unions.

The ITUC/GUF/HKCTU Hong Kong Liaison Office presented the findings from the SASK-sponsored project "Mapping of Union Activities and Strategies on China", which noted the rise in foreign trade union initiatives and interest in China, and work with NGOs. The Play Fair 2008 campaign presented its programme to push for respect of labour rights at the 2008 Olympics, "Catch the Flame" (see www.playfair2008.org). The Global Union Federations discussed their roles in China and agreed to establish contacts, especially with the All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), and to work in collaboration with the ITUC and the ILO. PSI will hold a special meeting on China prior to its Asia Pacific regional executive committee, 10-11 April, in Bali.

Pakistan earthquake fund

Following the earthquake which hit Pakistan in October 2005, PSI created a solidarity fund to help the unions and the approximately 3.5 million people who were left homeless. The quake decimated large areas of northern Pakistan and northern India. In Pakistan, 73,000 people were killed and more than 120,000 were injured.

PSI has made a contribution of EUR 90,947 to the International Federation of the Red Cross Pakistan Earthquake Emergency and Recovery Appeal. See www.ifrc.org. We would like to thank those unions that contributed to the appeal.

Mauritius: Violation of trade union rights



Trade unionists in Mauritius are under attack by the Government and face prosecution for participating in protest marches. PSI wrote to the Mauritius Government last November, urging them to drop the spurious charges against Radhakrisna Sadien and Toolsiraj, who face prosecution for taking part in a public gathering. PSI affiliate the Government Servants Association (GSA) has informed us that the authorities have lodged a further case of prosecution against brother R. Sadien and five other trade unionists for participating in another protest march in July 2006 against the closing

of a Parastatal Body.

The trade unionists have had their passports confiscated and may not travel without prior authorisation.

PSI vigorously condemns these violations of human and trade union rights and has written to the Mauritius Government, reminding it of its obligations under international instruments, in particular ILO Conventions 87 and 98, to guarantee the right to freedom of association for trade unionists, including the right to peaceful protest. Read more [here](#).

Ireland: Anger at HSE jobs 'vanishing act'



PSI affiliate in Ireland, IMPACT, took the country's Health Care Executive (HSE) to a Labour Court hearing in January, for an assessment of whether the HSE had breached national agreements by imposing a recruitment freeze.

Of IMPACT's 57,000 members, 28,000 are clerical staff, administrators, care workers, nurses or therapeutic workers in HSE services. An HSE circular stating that only "critical front-line vacancies" would be filled angered staff and union officials. IMPACT national secretary Kevin Callinan (pictured left) said that this policy "means posts are suppressed even if they are within budget, within complement and approved as recently as last autumn."

IMPACT is awaiting answers on a number of questions asked of HSE's head of human resources, including some on job sharing, career breaks, and staffing of badly needed new initiatives on disability, mental health, primary care and care for the elderly. Read the [full article here](#).

New web site: Public sector unions fighting against AIDS



Southern Africa remains the epicentre of the global HIV epidemic. The new Public Sector Unions Fighting against AIDS (PSUFASA) website is part of the PSI/UNISON project to address HIV and AIDS in the workplace.

Faced with the great challenges of AIDS, it is in the interest of both unions and employers to take action on behalf of workers. This web site provides useful information, tools and links to assist unions in their response to HIV and AIDS and is an opportunity for sharing good practices, experiences and lessons learned. A regular electronic newsletter is also available.

There are currently 31 trade unions affiliated to PSUFASA in nine Southern African nations. For full information, visit: www.psufasa.org.

Caribbean: Review of EPA Negotiations



On 16 December 2007, member countries of CARIFORUM (the Caribbean Community and the Dominican Republic) concluded negotiations for a full Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the EU. The negotiations were conducted on behalf of CARIFORUM by the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM). Interestingly, the Caribbean is the only grouping within the ACP to have concluded a full EPA. The agreement is due

to be signed by CARIFORUM Ministers on 15 March and to be provisionally applied from 1 April.

For the full text see www.normangirvan.info and <http://www.cpdcngo.org/>

During the negotiations, PSI's Caribbean affiliates joined with NGOs under the umbrella of the Caribbean Policy Development Centre (CPDC) demanding a fairer trade deal, a stronger focus on development issues and especially full public disclosure. With the initialling of the agreement, the calls are even louder. Consequently, CARICOM's Council for Trade and Economic Development (COTED) in late January called for "a review" of the negotiated agreement. The new government in Barbados has signalled its concerns saying it will carefully analyse the agreement before signing.



On 13-14

November 2007, the PSI Inter-American Committee against Racism and Xenophobia met for the first time in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic. Committee members are elected from each subregion to participate in a yearly meeting. Bill Lucy, AFSCME, chairs the committee. The main resolutions from the meeting concerned the identification and spread of good practices related to the promotion of equal opportunities in public services and of initiatives aimed at including minorities in trade unions. The committee is also undertaking actions to obtain the approval by the Organisation of American States of a draft convention against discrimination, as well as the ratification of ILO Conventions 111 and 139. The committee also discussed the situation in Haiti, the poorest country in the hemisphere, focusing on the status of Haitian citizens living in the Dominican Republic. For more information, please contact psi.americas@verizon.net

Appeal over sacking of Tongan public servant



Tonga's Public Service Association (PSA) is suing the government and prime minister over what they say was the unfair dismissal in 2006 of Mele Amanaki, PSA secretary-general. The Tonga Public Service says she was sacked for breaching a public service code of conduct which bans political activities. Amanaki says her sacking was politically motivated and stemmed from her submitting a petition signed by PSA members calling on the government to honour its commitment to public servants over pay and conditions.

PSI is supporting Mele Amanaki in her fight with the government over her sacking. PSI's Oceania sub-regional Secretary, Mike Ingpen (pictured left), recently gave a radio interview; to listen to the interview click [here](http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/pacbeat/stories/s2150337.htm):

<http://www.radioaustralia.net.au/pacbeat/stories/s2150337.htm>

Concern about nuclear power station plans for Lithuania



The Lithuanian government is planning to build a new nuclear power station, and is under pressure from rich businessmen to change the law, thus allowing private sector investors to take over the Lithuanian energy sector. The Lithuanian confederations have issued a joint declaration about the situation and organised a picket of the Seimas, the Lithuanian parliament, on 15 January. The energy trade unions in Lithuania, the Baltic region and Ukraine also raised concerns over the risks to security and public health if a private investor got involved. The private investor, NDX Energija, also pursues an anti-trade union policy. PSI and EPSU have made a joint statement, see <http://www.epsu.org/a/3485>.

Trade and Climate Change



As a part of its series on “New thinking on Trade Policy and Development”, the Socialist Group in the European Parliament has just released its fourth pamphlet entitled, “Trade and Climate Change”. The pamphlet covers some of the complicated issues, tensions and conflicts surrounding ‘food miles’, environmental goods, and the WTO. It concludes that the fight against climate change can only be won if it is based on global solidarity and a paradigm shift away from Europe’s current short-sighted policies and resource-dependent lifestyles.

The pamphlet is available in English, German, Spanish and French from:

<http://www.socialistgroup.eu/gpes/publist.do?lg=en>



The Trondheim model

In Trondheim, Norway, the “red-green coalition” was re-elected in September 2007, with the Labour Party mayor, Rita Ottervik, obtaining over 40% of the votes. The Labour Party and the trade unions in Trondheim have enjoyed successful collaboration for years - and their unique system of cooperation has its own name: The Trondheim Model.

The story of Trondheim, Norway’s third largest city, started in the 1990s, when public health care and education became the highlight of the labour party programme, together with a ‘radical programme to reclaim the public sector’ and reject all privatisation of public services.

See more on the TNI website http://www.tni.org/detail_page.phtml?act_id=16819

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