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Turkey: Detention of Ms Seher Tümer



Image

We would like to bring your attention to the case of Ms Seher Tümer, Branch Secretary of PSI affiliate SES (Trade union of public employees in health and social services), Turkey.

Seher Tümer was arrested shortly after taking part in the celebration of International Women's Day on 8 March 2009 and the Newroz Spring festival on 22 March. She has also been active in denouncing a high mortality rate at Zekai Tahir Burak, the Women's Health Research and Education Hospital. PSI believes that her arrest is linked to these activities. She has now spent almost seven months in a high security prison with limited access to lawyers and there are serious concerns about her health and the conditions of detention.

PSI wrote to the Turkish Prime Minister on 22 October, the day before she was due to appear in court. However, she is still in custody and her next court appearance will be on 19 November. We are therefore asking PSI affiliates to write to the Turkish authorities asking them to release Seher Tümer. [Please find attached a model letter.](#)

Japanese firefighters may receive broader labour rights



Image

PSI welcomes the announcement by the Japanese Democratic Party government, elected on 30 August, that Japanese firefighters may at long last receive basic labour rights. At a meeting with PSI affiliate the All-Japan Prefectural and Municipal Workers Union (Jichiro), on 28th October, Internal Affairs and Communications Minister Kazuhiro Haraguchi said he had instructed his ministry to consider the matter of granting fire department workers the right of association.

"I've instructed the ministry to study the issue as we shouldn't ignore the ILO's repeated recommendations," he was quoted as telling Jichiro leader Hideaki Tokunaga and other union officials. "We should

proactively press forward with our plan while gaining consensus from the public and listening to the opinions of those concerned."

The ILO has recommended on four occasions that the Japanese government grant the right of association to fire department workers, including firefighters, clerks and technical workers, so the Minister's announcement represents a crucial departure from the policy of the previous administration. "By acquiring the right of association, we'd like to hold negotiations on working conditions and safety," said a representative of Firefighters' Network, one of the consultative bodies.

Argentina: 50,000 health workers demonstrate



putting the lives of workers and patients at risk."

The union described the "grave situation of public health in Argentina", which has been largely affected by influenza A and is now facing an epidemic of dengue fever.

Jorge Yabkowski, FESPROSA President, said "The situation of inequality and wage arrears faced by most of the provinces, residents and professionals in the community is worsened an increased level of job insecurity and lack jobs in the health sector. In addition, the level of retirement pension is around 50% or less of salaries, leading to a situation of gross injustice."

PSI demands justice for world's 200 million migrants



At the Civil Society Days of the Third Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) on 2-5 November 2009, PSI will call for wider access to quality public services, decent work, and economic policies that are fair to both workers and development efforts in their countries. On 4-5 November, government representatives will meet in an Interstate Dialogue to discuss and debate proposals. PSI has issued a [press release](#) and a [commentary](#) by general secretary Peter Waldorff.

"We can't afford to ignore this challenge," says Waldorff, alluding to the forum theme, *Integrating Migration Policies into Development Strategies for the Benefit of All*. "Industrialised countries are draining the best skills from the rest of the world. This is a particularly critical situation for the seven million social and health care workers we represent. Industrialised countries with aging populations bring in these workers to fill labour shortages without benefits or rights and then want to send them back."

There are about 200 million people living outside their country of birth, according to figures from the United Nations, generating more than \$300 billion in remittances that flow back to their home countries. PSI participants are concerned about the social and economic impact on families, communities and gender equity in the workplace and are advocating for fair migration laws and sustainable development policies.

Landmark anti-corruption treaty falters



<http://www....>

The future effectiveness of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, (UNCAC), the landmark global anti-corruption treaty, is in jeopardy as negotiations on a monitoring mechanism reach stalemate.

Strong opposition on transparency and civil society participation from a small but vocal group of countries that includes China, Cuba, Egypt, Iran and Pakistan, is threatening to undermine the global fight against corruption.

"This is a critical moment", said Annie Geron, PSI Vice President and leading anti-corruption activist. "Without a strong monitoring mechanism, UNCAC will have no teeth. Corrupt governments will have carte blanche to keep on plundering our public resources and trampling on our rights".

With only 10 days to go until the final negotiations in Doha, the civil society network that campaigns on UNCAC, the Coalition, is calling on trade unions and CSOs around the world to take urgent action and sign the Coalition Statement and send it to their governments.

Speak up and sign up against corruption!

Read the statement here:

http://www.uncaccoalition.org/index.php?option=com_petitions&view=petition&id=32&Itemid=54&lang=en

UNCAC Coalition: www.uncaccoalition.org

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V37jv-5NuM>

US: Obama declares Influenza A H1N1 a national emergency



Image

On 23 October, US President Obama declared Influenza A H1N1 a national emergency, allowing hospitals and local governments to set up alternate sites for treatment and triage procedures if needed to handle any surge of patients.

The declaration came as thousands of people lined up in cities across the country to receive vaccinations. Influenza is now widespread in 46 states, a level that federal officials say equals the peak of a typical winter flu season. Millions of people in the United States have already been affected, and unofficial figures count 1,000 deaths and 20,000 hospitalisations due to H1N1.

Mr. Obama's declaration means that hospitals that

are in danger of being overwhelmed with influenza patients can execute disaster operation plans, including where necessary transferring patients off-site to satellite facilities or other hospitals.

A few hospitals have set up triage tents in their parking lots to screen patients with fever or other flu symptoms.

Read more in the New York Times article here:

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/25/us/politics/25flu.html?_r=1

See the PSI health blog's page on tools and resources to deal with Influenza A:

<http://healthblog.world-psi.org/influenza-a-h1n1--swine-flu-information-and-resources.html>

New GLU short training course for trade unionists



PSI regularly publishes information about the Global Labour University and its one-year Masters Programme for young trade unionists.

Now, for the first time, the GLU will offer a new short term training course for trade unionists from Brazil, Europe, India and Southern Africa, entitled ENGAGE. It is a six-months training programme, to be held from April to September 2010.

The Diploma Course "Labour Policies and Globalisation" constitutes the core of the activities of ENGAGE. In addition, international conferences, e-learning modules, networking and alumni activities will be offered.

The application deadline is December 1st 2009. For more information, see <http://www.global-labour-university.org/216.html>

A user-friendly projects handbook for trade unionists

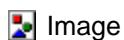


A writing team of GUF representatives including PSI have produced a user-friendly Projects Handbook for Trade Unionists. It contains instructions and suggestions on how to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate projects and includes the reporting guidelines of FNV, LO/TCO and SASK.

The handbook can help unions gain maximum benefit from a project, and offers a series of useful annexes, available in Word or PDF format. We encourage all affiliates to download the handbook and hope you will find it useful.

See www.world-psi.org/handbook

Romanian public sector workers strikes and protests



On October 5 up to 800,000 public sector workers struck in Romania to protest new legislation on salaries, including a freeze on public sector wages. The government of Prime Minister Emil Boc also plans to scrap many bonus schemes and introduce mandatory unpaid leave. During the one day strike a demonstration was held in the capital, Bucharest. With up to 30,000 people in attendance the protest was the largest in the city for a decade. Public sector workers are campaigning for a minimum salary of 155 euros a month in 2010. The current minimum wage is around 145 euros.

Many demonstrators demanded the resignation of the government

chanting slogans such as "Down with the government," "Shame on you" and "Thieves! Thieves!" The government is imposing a raft of austerity measures in order to slash its budget deficit. As well as attacks on wages, it plans to introduce a pension bill raising the retirement age to 65 by 2030. The current retirement ages are 63 for men and 58 for women. The measures are being implemented as part of an International Monetary Fund (IMF) and European Union 20-billion-euro rescue plan.

A further three-hour rally involving thousands of public sectors workers was held Bucharest on 7 October to commemorate the World Day for Decent Work.

WDDW in Colombia and Guatemala



The PSI Andean sub-regional office prepared a campaign kit especially in support of municipal sector employment rights on the occasion of the World Day for Decent Work. The kit comprises of a brochure that was distributed among workers of the municipal sector, posters, postcards, a calendar, and various banners.

In Guatemala, on 7 October more than 80 union leaders from various labour and peasant organizations from around the country of Guatemala, PSI affiliates and members of the Mario Lopez Larrave Foundation held a Forum entitled

"Challenges and Challenges of Decent Work in Guatemala." Union leaders in the energy sector in Latin America and the Caribbean also participated in the forum. That morning, Guatemalan PSI affiliates organised a major rally in front the National Congress of the Republic to demand better working conditions and occupational health for Guatemalan workers.

For more details of 7 October activities, see the dedicated website www.wwdw.org.

New ACTRAV website

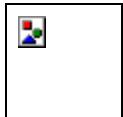
The mandate of the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) of the the International Labour Organisation (ILO) is to strengthen trade unions and enable them to play their role effectively in protecting workers' rights and interests.

The new ACTRAV website offers lots of information on how ACTRAV functions, including a list of upcoming meetings and resources. There is also a link to the ACTRAV Helpdesk on the Financial and Economic Crisis.

See <http://www.ilo.org/workers>.

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