



Hon. William Clive Edwards  
Minister of Justice  
**TONGA**  
Via e-mail: [amafi@justice.gov.to](mailto:amafi@justice.gov.to)

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Contact Name: [rights@world-psi.org](mailto:rights@world-psi.org)

Honourable Minister,

I am writing to you on behalf of Public Services International (PSI) to express our serious concerns with the on-going threats and repression against the public servants of Tonga.

The Constitution of Tonga allows workers to withhold their services and this includes public servants. In addition, the Public Service Act and Regulations allow public servants to participate in industrial action after giving management written notice of no less than 15 working days.

PSI has been informed that the government has threatened to close down the Public Service Association (PSA) and that the Prime Minister and Minister of Justice have sued PSA's General Secretary for defamation. In addition, PSI has been informed that, in an interview with the radio, you confirmed that the Cabinet will activate emergency powers to prevent public servants from exercising their constitutional rights.

Please allow us to remind you that the prices of consumer goods in Tonga have risen by 40% since the last COLA in 2005. COLA adjustments ensure the welfare of workers and their families. However, since January, the government of Tonga has used different kind of threats to make sure that the cost of living allowance (COLA) for public servants is not granted.

On behalf of 20 million public sector workers and their trade unions worldwide, PSI urges you to withdraw all actions brought against union members for their strike activities and to immediately drop the charges against the PSA and its leaders. Please be assured that PSI and its affiliates worldwide are closely monitoring developments, and are ready to support the PSA in its fight. Finally, PSI urges you to follow the recommendations by the recent ILO mission and to respect fundamental workers' rights for all workers in Tonga.

Yours sincerely,

Rosa Pavanelli  
PSI General Secretary