



26 September 2016

International Union solidarity mission supports Korean public sector workers

A 10 strong international trade union team will speak out tomorrow to explain the goals of their solidarity visit to South Korea.

The team is from the ITF (International Transport Workers' Federation) and PSI (Public Services International) global union federations, plus representatives of their affiliated unions: the CGT General Union of Civil Servants and CGT Cheminots (France); the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE); the Rail Tram Bus Union of Australia (RTBU) and the Rail and Maritime Transport Union (RMTU) of New Zealand.

They have travelled to South Korea following an earlier mission that investigated government repression against trade unionists (see <http://goo.gl/pCQfJm>) and in response to an invitation to observe and show solidarity during a major public strike this week. They will be speaking about this and be available for interview at a press conference tomorrow, Tuesday 27 September, at 13:00 at Seoul Station Plaza, Seoul Station, Seoul, where a major rally will then take place. You are invited to attend.

ITF assistant general secretary Stuart Howard stated: "We are here to stand side by side with our Korean colleagues as they embark on this powerful public sector protest, and to see that this lawful act is recognised and respected. The world will not stand by if the government once again moves unjustly to crush trade unionists and their rights. This strike is about defending quality public services for the public and workers alike, but it is also about defending democracy in South Korea."

PSI Trade union rights and national administration officer Camilo Rubiano explained: "We're visiting South Korea because of the severe deterioration of trade union rights

and civil liberties in the country. Right now, there's only one place in the world where our affiliates are imprisoned for conducting legitimate trade union activities: South Korea. We see this and the imposition of a performance-pay system as a clear attempt to punish and get rid of those who obstruct the government's agenda, paving the way for the sell off and privatization of public services and infrastructure in detriment of all the citizens of South Korea"

The delegation will express international solidarity* and observe the strike, which is being held against the illegal imposition of a discriminatory performance-related pay and termination system on public institutions – part of a wider government attempt to liberalise and privatise the public sector, lower wages, and undermine both job guarantees and the right of trade unions to defend their members.

The mission members will explain that global trade unions have been especially concerned about the situation in Korea since the violent police suppression of the Korean people's mass mobilisation in November 2015, and the subsequent crackdown on trade unionists. They are concerned that KCTU president, Han Sang-gyun, KPTU vice president, Cho Sung-deok, and several other union officers and members remain in prison in relation to this and other recent protests and will call for their immediate release, as well explain plans to respond to any repressive actions taken against the upcoming lawful public sector strike.

The international mission will also express its support for Korean trade unions' call for negotiations with the government and a seat at the table in the development of a fair pay system and public sector policy that will ensure that the Korean people have access to the essential public services that are their right.

You can follow this story on Twitter using the hashtags #KoreaStrike4Justice and #UnionRightsKorea

*See <https://goo.gl/YSUXZN>

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For more details please contact

In Seoul:

Wol-san Liem, KPTU (Korean Public Service and Transport Workers' Union) international officer. Email: kptu.intl@gmail.com. Tel: 010 5103 8419

PSI: Trade union rights and national administration officer Camilo Rubiano.

Email: camilo.rubiano@world-psi.org. Tel: +33.4.50.40.11.51

In the UK:

ITF: Press and editorial manager Sam Dawson. Email: dawson_sam@itf.org.uk.

Direct line: +44 (0) 20 7940. Mobile: (0) 7850736146