



Public Services International  
Internationale des Services Publics  
Internacional de Servicios Públicos  
Internationale der Öffentlichen Dienste  
Internationalen för Offentliga Tjänster  
國際公務勞運

# AP NEWS

Public Services International

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## Asia Pacific Regional Organisation

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## Fiji: Withdrawal of check-off system for public sector unions

Since the Fijian government was taken over by the military in December 2006, PSI affiliate trade unions have been doing their utmost to maintain workers' rights in difficult circumstances. The military has made clear it is willing to take repressive measures against workers. The regime has adopted intimidation tactics to instill fear in workers and trade unions; the ability of unions to represent workers has been severely restricted. Fiji has just decreed that public service workers are to be denied the right to equal employment opportunities, the right to freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining. On July 29, Fiji Attorney General announced the imposition of an amendment decree to the Civil Services Act which immediately ceased check-off facilities for all public sector unions. PSI affiliates charged that "this is another attempt to bash unions in the public sector and to make the unions ineffective." No doubt this will have serious consequences for these unions and has the potential to have seriously affect other sectors. It seems clear that the government intends to ensure the demise of unions. On 4 August 2011, PSI wrote to the Fijian Prime Minister protesting the government's plan to withdraw the existing check-off system for public sector trade unions. Read more [here](#).

## Vanuatu: Reforming labour legislation

Vanuatu is reforming labour legislation. The Employment Relations Bill have been drafted by tripartite constituents. The Bill will replace the existing Employment Act, the Trade Disputes Act and the Trade Unions Act. The Bill had originally been drafted in 2006 but progress had stalled over a number of issues. However, the launch of Vanuatu's tripartite labour advisory council in May 2011 has created a new impetus for consultations to be revived. From 3-5 August 2011 constituents and other key stakeholders came together for a workshop in Port Vila. The ILO office for Pacific Island Countries facilitated the discussions. Paul Mackay from Business New Zealand and Ross Wilson from the New Zealand Council of Trade Unions provided mentoring assistance to their respective counterparts in the Vanuatu Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Vanuatu Council of Trade Unions.

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This was an extension to the mentoring model piloted in Samoa in May 2011. Key areas of discussion during the workshop included; fundamental principles relating to workplace conditions such as maternity leave, annual leave, sick leave and dismissal procedures and new provisions to ensure that workers and employers have access to a simple, timely and low cost system for resolving disputes. Click [here](#) for full text on ILO website. Please contact Mr. Mike Ingpen, PSI Oceania Sub-regional Secretary: [mike.ingpen@psa.org.nz](mailto:mike.ingpen@psa.org.nz)

## **Pakistan: Tragic workplace accident**

Ten workers of the Pakistan WAPDA Hydro Electric Central Labour Union died by electrocution while performing their official duties in the power sector this past month. These deaths are heart-breaking and have left many families without support. This accident also signals how hard the unions have to fight for occupational health and safety, and the importance of putting procedures into place to safeguard the workers and prevent such tragic accidents. PSI's regional office has sent messages of condolence and solidarity to the families and assured them of our continued help and assistance.

## **ILO ACTRAV/ITUC-AP Asian Regional Conference: Ratification and Application of ILO Conventions 87 and 98**

Eight countries representing members of the International Trade Union Confederation-AP participated in the regional conference to follow up on the campaign for ratification and application of International Labour Organization Conventions 87 and 98 in Kathmandu, Nepal 17- 19 August 2011. The conference was held to review and evaluate the significant progress made since the 2009 conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Trade unions have become even more active in undertaking campaign activities targeting various levels. However, the degree of violations of trade union rights is still high, especially in countries where all the core conventions have been ratified such as Bangladesh, Indonesia and Cambodia. In line with the ILO goal to achieve universal ratification of the ILO Core Conventions by 2015, the promotion of human and trade union rights in the region through sustained and coordinated campaign activities is becoming increasingly important. The conference participants believe that much more needs to be done in order for the campaign to achieve better results. Involvement and international solidarity support is also vital in this campaign. PSI, together with other GUFs, participated in this conference and committed to involvement and solidarity support to ensure the desired campaign outcomes. For more information, please contact Mr. Norman Grecia, TUR Project Coordinator: [norman.grecia@world-psi.org](mailto:norman.grecia@world-psi.org)

## **Collective bargaining a priority in Macau**

In a joint statement on 9 August 2011, PSI Asia Pacific Regional Secretary Ms. V Lakshmi and President of the Macau Civil Servants Association Mr. Jose Coutinho said: "The collective bargaining mechanism should be one of the priorities of local authorities to regulate. Without a collective bargaining mechanism and a trade union law it's easier for employers, both in the public and in the private sector, to exploit workers, especially on overtime compensation." The eight ILO Conventions on Core Labour Standards have been ratified by and apply to the Macao Special Administrative Region. Both the ILO Core Convention on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise and the ILO Core Convention on the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining apply to Macao. Freedom of association and the right to organise are guaranteed by law. However, workers are not sufficiently protected against anti-union discrimination and for collective bargaining. Therefore, PSI and ATFPM urged government to take necessary measures to ensure that the legislation protects workers rights on collective bargaining. Please see PSI and ATFPM press conference link [here](#).

## **Korea: Stop the prosecution and harassment of public sector workers**

The Government of South Korea has prosecuted almost 1400 public servants and teachers, members of the Korean Government Employees Union and the Korean Teachers and Education Workers Union for alleged violation of punitive laws which make it unlawful for public workers to either support or criticise political parties. Thousands more teachers and public servants are facing indictments and prosecution. The KGEU and the KTU are affiliated to the global union federations Public Services International and Education International respectively. PSI and EI, jointly with the KGEU and KTU urgently request that trade unions and concerned citizens write to the Korean government now to demand an end to the persecution of KGEU and KTU members and to urge the government to guarantee human rights and democracy. Join the online campaign [here](#).

## **PSI/ILO Training Workshop for Korean Public Sector on ILO Conventions Numbers 87 and 98**

A two day workshop was jointly organised by Public Services International and the International Labour Organization 20-22 July in Seoul, South Korea. Korean trade unions are repressed and harassed through sustained attacks on the rights of public sector workers to organise and bargain collectively. Despite the long struggles against these vicious attacks, PSI trade unions are mobilised to campaign and promote the ratification of ILO Conventions 87 and 98. The workshop helped to develop new campaign strategies to strengthen the existing actions. The unions decided they should consider adapting “out-of-the-box” strategies including: bargaining with the government using Trade Agreements (e.g. Korea –USA Free Trade Agreement); focusing issues currently reflected in the OECD report on the poor performance of Korea in many areas such as low wages, significant wage gap, and increase in irregular workers to raise public interest; and continue to build international alliances and networks with stronger unions affiliated to PSI and allied GUFs and the ITUC. For more information, contact Mr. Ian Mariano, Project Coordinator: [ian.mariano@world-psi.org](mailto:ian.mariano@world-psi.org)

## **Petition on improving the treatment and employment stability of employees**

A petition calling for law reform to improve the treatment and employment stability of temporary and part-time employees has gathered 1,593,545 signatures. The petition and signatures have been submitted to the Japanese Ministry of Internal Affairs. Read more on the JICHIRO website [here](#).





## People First – Quality Public Services Are Key

Nearly 200 participants registered to participate in the forthcoming PSI Asia Pacific 12<sup>th</sup> Regional Conference that will be held in Sydney, Australia 17-21 October 2011.



“The 12th APRECON is held during these periods of economic downturn which were brought on by marketplace principles. What we must do now is to create a new paradigm. Investing in public services should be a priority over investing in a casino economy. The Great East Japan Earthquake has made us recognize the importance of public services at the time of disasters. Expressing our heartfelt gratitude for the kind support from all over the world, I look forward to having a fruitful discussion in the APRECON,” said Mr. Hideaki Tokunaga, JICHIRO President and APREC Co-chair.

“We live in truly challenging and shameful times. Years of corporate-led globalization, unbridled capitalism, liberalization, and privatization have begot crises upon crises, with the most vulnerable and marginalized among us bearing much of the burden. Our current development models have only led to further exclusion, poverty, forced migration, precarious work, and climate change. We need a shift in paradigm. We need alternatives. We need to break this cycle of injustice and madness. People must come first—not profit, not corporations. And in this struggle towards a better world, public sector trade unions play a key role.” said Ms. Annie Geron, PSLINK general Secretary and APREC Co-chair.



*People First–Quality Public Services Are Key* is the theme that will bring together public service unions in this region. “People First” denotes that the region prioritises the needs and welfare of its citizens. PSI believes that quality public services are key elements to meet those needs.

Several sectoral and thematic workshops will be organised prior to the conference to help develop an action plan that will be carried out at the union, country, regional and global level to sustain and strengthen public sector unions in this region. Please see APRECON Blog (in English) for an update: <http://psi12aprecon.wordpress.com/>