



Asia Pacific Regional Organisation

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New Campaign to Combat Forced Labour of Nepali Migrant Workers in the Gulf



Anti-Slavery International and ITUC (International Trade Union Confederation) are launching a campaign to highlight the forced labour of Nepali migrant workers to the Gulf States and to call for an improvement in the fundamental rights of workers across the region.

The campaign is aiming to improve the working conditions of Nepali migrants by protecting workers from unscrupulous recruitment agents, persuading governments to allow the freedom of association and ending the abusive 'kafala' sponsorship system. An estimated six million Nepali workers live abroad. Every day, 600 migrants leave Nepal legally, with as many again estimated to migrate illegally. Around 700,000 Nepali migrants work in the Gulf States, with 125,000 in UAE, where at least 45 per cent work in the construction sector. Many also work in hospitality, as security guards and as domestic workers. In Dubai, some Nepali migrant construction workers are trapped in conditions of forced labour after not being paid by their employers following the economic crisis. They have no choice but to leave their work to scrape a living illegally. They are known as 'khaliballi', which means those without status. One Nepali 'khaliballi' said: "I'd cancel my visa, get a ticket and go. I'm

only hanging around here because I haven't been paid. Friends who get money from home to go back are better off than suffering in a foreign land." Many Nepali migrant workers fall victim to unregulated recruitment agencies who promise a good living overseas. To afford the agent's fee, many migrants take out huge loans, only to find on arrival in the Gulf that their agreed salary fails to materialise. Most are paid half of what they are promised and many are not paid at all. Anti-Slavery International and ITUC are calling on better regulation of recruitment agents in Nepal and the Gulf States and an end to the illegal practice of migrant workers paying fees to agents, who in law are only entitled to receive payment from the employer for successfully recruiting a worker.

Both organisations are also calling for the UAE to end the 'kafala' sponsorship system, which aside from Bahrain, exists across the region. Under this system migrant workers' visas are linked to one employer or 'sponsor', and in most countries they have no right to seek alternative employment. Combined with the low pay this method traps many thousands in exploitative conditions and even forced labour. Anti-Slavery International and ITUC are also demanding all migrant workers in the Gulf States to be given the freedom of association and collective bargaining. Currently in the UAE migrant workers are not allowed to join a trade union and do not have the right to strike. Workers who protest against unfair working conditions or unpaid wages can face imprisonment and deportation. Read more of this article, please see: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/new-campaign-to-combat-forced.html>

Efficient public transport system in Delhi, India



DTC Workers Congress held a Quality Public Services campaign on the 24th December 2010. 1185 office-bearers of the union, the President of National TU centre, 100 management representatives and the Delhi State Transport Minister attended.

The union reiterated the commitment of the union to provide quality services, raised the issues /hurdles in providing better service to the commuters and demanded workers involvement in management.

The Minister and Chairman of Delhi Transport Corporation committed on safeguarding the workers interest and also assured to discuss on the issue of workers role in policy making.

After the campaign meeting, the union called for negotiations. Talks are ongoing for signing a Memorandum of understanding between the Workers Co-operative society and DTC management for transforming DTC into a profit centre.

In the year 2005, when plans were made to privatise inter-state bus services of DTC citing loss, this union proved that interstate bus services is not a loss-making service.

It provided an alternate model by managing a bus depot for one year and showing increased efficiency and considerable revenue addition forcing the government to drop the plan of privatization.

For more details contact Mr. Ramesh Vats, President, DTCEC @ dtcec11@yahoo.co.in

India: Protest march demands for workers rights



Tamilnadu Government Basic Servants and Office Assistants Association held a protest march on the 29th Jan 2011 at Chennai. The charter of demands includes:

- a) Filling up of all vacant posts;
- b) Regularising the part-time, daily wages and those on consolidated wages;
- c) Pay parity with central government;
- d) abolishing the policy of reduction of manpower;
- e) Municipal and Local Body employees to be made government employees;
- f) fair wages to pump operators who provide public water;
- g) facilities for women employees

Over 25,000 members took part in the protest march. Later the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu had a meeting with Bro. K.Ganesan, President of the Association and promised to settle the demands early. For more details, please contact Mr. Raman Kannan, South Asia Sub-regional Secretary: raman.kannan@world-psi.org

Public Services Award 2011



Accepting the **Public Service Trade Union Award 2010** on behalf of Peruvian affiliate FENTAP is PSI's sub-regional secretary for the Andean region, Juan Diego Gómez Vásquez. To the left, general secretary Peter Waldorff

Public Services International presents an award each year to a PSI affiliate or a local union which has taken initiatives contributing to the advancement of public services. We are now accepting nominations for the Public Service Trade Union Award 2011.

Please nominate a PSI affiliate (or its local union) that has contributed to strengthening public services by the April 30, 2011 deadline. The initiatives must have resulted in local progress and improvement. The PSI Steering Committee will make its final decision in May 2011; the award will be presented to the winner on 23 June, UN Public Service Day. We are looking forward to receiving a wide range of nominations that show how PSI affiliate trade unions are leaders in developing quality public services in the best interests of citizens.

The nominees' activities should highlight best practices and demonstrate how our trade unions are actively contributing to public services and their improvement. Submit your nomination to: rolv.hanssen@world-psi.org

Japan: campaign for employment stability



Part-time and temporary workers are estimated to rise to 600,000. JICHIRO, All Japan Prefectural and Municipal Workers Union, is working on realization of employment quality and stability.

Employment society has changed with increasing number of temporary employment, outsourcing and contracting out. This situation leads to increasing of precarious employment in which workers could be defined on “atypical”, “non-standards” or “flexible” employment arrangement.

Therefore the union believes that the issues of the adequacy of employment protection through the legal system and improving and protecting the rights of workers in relation to a standard employment relationship should be addressed.

From now until the end of May, the union is running a campaign to collect signatures to improve working condition and stabilize employment for part-time workers in local government.

More detail of this campaign, please contact Ms. Yoshiko Inagaki, East Asia Sub-regional Secretary: inagaki@jichiro.gr.jp or please see: <http://www.jichiro.gr.jp/news/2011/01/110120.html> (Japanese)

PSI solidarity with Australian Unions



PSI has sent a message of solidarity to affiliates in Australia who are dealing as workers and citizens with the unprecedented flooding affecting their country.

Numerous members have suffered the loss of loved ones, livelihoods, homes and workplaces. While the public cost of rebuilding infrastructure such as roads, bridges, hospitals, water services, power generation and railways will amount to billions of dollars, the personal costs can never be fully accounted for.

Thousands of state public sector workers are working around the clock to save lives, help the homeless and protect the public infrastructure.

PSI General Secretary Peter Waldorff says, "We acknowledge and admire the professionalism and dedication of our members in Australia as they struggle with the elements and risk their own lives to protect others."

For more details, please see: <http://www.world-psi.org/Template.cfm?Section=Home&CONTENTID=26909&TEMPLATE=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm>

At long last, civil servants in Thailand get the right to unionise

Public Services International welcomes the news that a new law is in the works that will

allow civil servants, ministry officials, department officials and provincial officials to unionise in Thailand.

Public Services International has for many years advocated for recognition of trade union rights for civil servants in Thailand, and welcomes this historic announcement.

The draft royal decree will be submitted to the Cabinet for endorsement before it is enacted. The proposed legislation allows for four types of unions for civil servants, ministry officials, department officials and provincial officials. According to news reports, when the prime minister was asked if he was worried such unions would boost permanent officials' bargaining power against ruling politicians, he responded: "It is their right."

When asked to comment on the possibility of civil servants pressuring their politician bosses, the premier said it would be dealt on a case-by-case basis. "But at this stage, the OCSC has to guarantee the bureaucrats' Constitutional rights and liberty," he added. For more details, please see: <http://www.world-psi.org/TemplateEn.cfm?Section=Home&CONTENTID=26853&TEMPLATE=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm>

Never ending struggle



Arif Islam, union leader of Angkasa Pura 1 Union. The management dismissed him after lead the members to take part on the union strike on 7-8 May 2008

The Angkasa Pura 1 Union has long struggle freedom of association and collective bargaining. Indonesia has ratified the

Conventions No. 87 and 98, however violations against workers and trade union on exercising their rights still rampant in practice.

“We could not denied that the ratification of ILO Conventions has brought about significant changes to make positive progress toward promoting freedom of association and collective bargaining for the public sector workers, it has changed the nature of employment relations and the old one has been replaced by democratic industry which has to consider/involve workers through their union. However the management is not ready for such change”, said Itje Julinar, the union president.

For the union, it is really clear that the change has vast implications for workers and its unions to fully exercise their rights, putting them on an equal basis with their employer by involving the workers and union in matters and/or decisions affecting their overall well-being at the workplace. Nevertheless, the workers are still facing barriers in exercising full rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining, therefore it is undeniable fact that violation against workers and their union is rampant in Indonesia.

In May 2008, employees of Angkasa Pura I held massive strikes in several Indonesian airports demanding allowance and leave which were agreed in their Collective Agreement. The strike was as a result of failed negotiation. The union attempted numerous efforts to resolve the dispute through negotiation, including mediation, but the management refused to implement the Collective Bargaining Agreement in full. Furthermore, the management has placed increasingly tighter restrictions on the union’s activity, intimidating and threatening union activists.

Eight union leaders of the Angkasa Pura 1 Union (Serikat Pekerja Angkasa Pura 1) have been victimized as the result of their participation in strike action in May 2008. Following the PSI global appeals, seven suspended leaders went back to work, but the Chairman of the union, Arif Islam, has still not been reinstated.

The union submitted a complaint to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on the allegation of several violations of freedom of association on the part of the state-owned enterprise PT (Persero) Angkasa Pura 1, including the following: (1) refusing to implement in full a collective bargaining agreement; (2) causing an unreasonable delay in concluding arbitration proceedings aimed at resolving the dispute; (3) intimidating and harassing workers protesting against the refusal to implement the collective bargaining agreement; (4) dismissing and suspending workers for taking part in legitimate strike action; and (5) establishing or actively encouraging the establishment of a new, company-controlled union for the purpose of ousting SP-AP1 as the representative union.

In November 2010 the Committee Freedom of Association has reiterated its recommendations in relation to the complaint acknowledged the violations, requested the government to take steps and ensure that the union and workers rights are fully implemented. One of recommendation stated that the Committee requests the government to ensure that Mr. Arif Islam is reinstated in the position he occupied in the company PT (Persero) Angkasa Pura 1 at the time of dismissal, with compensation for lost wages and benefits. However, the recommendations so far are still not being implemented, therefore the union is now continuing their campaign. For more info, contact: srijogja@gmail.com

Public Services International is an officially recognised non-government organisation for the public sector within the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and has consultative status with ECOSOC and observer status with other UN bodies as UNCTAD and UNESCO. PSI Website: <http://www.world-psi.org/>

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