



His Excellency Lt General Seretse Khama Ian Khama
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Botswana affiliates
BOFEPUSU
ITUC Brussels and Geneva offices
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Dear Mr President,

Repression of public sector trade unions in Botswana

It is almost a year since Public Services International (PSI) wrote to you concerning government repression of public sector workers, who were exercising their legitimate right to take strike action.

We very much regret that since then your government's attitude to this legitimate action has hardened. Despite several meetings between PSI and government officials, and despite the intervention of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Botswana government has intensified actions designed to intimidate trade unionists and suppress lawful trade union action.

Those actions include:

- The mass dismissal of public sector workers who took part in the strike action;
- The selective re-employment of some of the dismissed workers, on terms and conditions less favourable than those they had originally enjoyed;
- The designation of almost all Botswana public services as essential services, contrary to International Labour Standards, as has already been pointed out by the ILO;
- The continued harassment and intimidation of trade union activists and the unilateral withdrawal of benefits that public sector trade unions had previously enjoyed;
- The denial of the right to organise and bargain collectively, as exemplified by the government's refusal to enter into wage negotiations for 2012-2013.

We are at a complete loss to see how this refusal by the Botswana government to entertain a meaningful social dialogue with public sector trade unions and to respect their fundamental trade union rights and

freedoms can benefit either the people of Botswana, who depend on the services delivered by the workers, or the economy of Botswana more generally.

We reiterate our condemnation of all acts of intimidation against public sector trade unionists in Botswana, as well as our call to your government take the necessary measures to guarantee that workers' rights, including the rights to freedom of association, collective bargaining and freedom of expression can be effectively exercised.

We take this opportunity to remind your government of its obligations as a member of the International Labour Organization and of the PSI's full and unequivocal support for all its affiliates in Botswana.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "P. Waldorff". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "P".

PETER WALDORFF
General Secretary