



PSI INTERAMERICAS ACTIVITY REPORT (2010 - 2015)

One of the strongest aspects to be mentioned in any political balance made on the situation in the region in recent years, no doubt, is the impact caused by the global economic crisis in our country, albeit in different times. After a period of development and democratic consolidation in many countries, it is possible to notice a period of setbacks with low levels of growth accompanied by the strengthening of the neoliberal agenda as an alleged formula to overcome the crisis. From Canada, through the United States, the Caribbean to Latin America, the crisis has caused unions to enter, one by one, in a period of resistance seeking to decrease the damage.

In addition to this, democracy was frontally attacked by threats to democratic elections and even coups d'état, as in the Paraguayan case, favoring, with exceptions, the election of more conservative governments in many countries. Even those governments initially considered as progressive, recently began acting unwillingly, not to say in a reactionary way, in terms of civil and trade union rights, as in the cases of Ecuador and Peru.

Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) negotiations have become openly supported in the region. These agreements were always very favorable to transnational companies affecting union rights as well as imposing controlled development models, affecting us all, workers and the population as a whole. Tax injustices such as tax exemption and the use of tax havens to avoid paying taxes over the profits make it increasingly difficult to guarantee adequate funding to public services with the quality we have always advocated.

In 2010, in Cartagena, PSI Americas, following a decision taken by its affiliates, rightly adopted as priorities in its struggle plan to: advocate trade union rights, promote fairness and inclusive unions, act on global governance, especially in what concerns the fight against privatization and FTAs and to fight for adequate funding for the public sector in order to enable it to offer quality services. Thus, it proposed to organize around sectors and strengthen our capacity for action in each country through the National Coordinating

Committee. These proposals were much strengthened after the resolutions of the Durban World Congress and Rose Pavanelli's election as General Secretary.

The consequences were that, even though our staff had to be reduced due to financial problems and many of our affiliates had to undertake national resistance actions due to the crisis, we have grown through the union work we performed in the region. We became more visible and improved our responsiveness in these last 05 years.

There is still a lot to be done, specifically in what concerns the ability to consolidate, once and for all, in every union's agenda, the discussions about FTAs, Tax Court, the insurance of trade union rights and many other issues that allow us to act globally in response to actions that are also orchestrated globally.

It is our challenge to solve problems such as those arising from the different models of trade union organization while we seek to regionally organize sectors. We must stay focused and work on having a stronger impact on the unfolding of the global governance institutions' agendas in the region.

After this brief introduction, we hope that the summarized report that comes next, with information on the activities that took place in this period, according to the Regional Action Plan adopted in Cartagena, can be of support for analysis and also point the best direction to be followed by the region in the future.

I TRADE UNION ORGANIZATION

Continuing the organization by sector undertaken in the region since 2010 as adopted at the last IAMRECON, we continued to support, in the last 05 years, the organization process of CONTUA (Universities Administrative Workers Confederation), CLTPJ (Latin American Confederation of Workers of the Judiciary), CONTAGUA (Confederation of Workers in Water), ULATOC (Latin American Union of Workers in the State Control) and FRASUR (Customs Federation). The organization by sectors worked so well that in 2012, the PSI World Congress in Durban reaffirmed the strengthening of this line of work already adopted in the Americas.

In the latter period, the efforts around the organization of the Municipal, Health, Central Administration, Legislative, Electricity and Education Administration sectors stood out.

As for the municipal sector, during a meeting in Mexico, in August 2014, Contram-PSI (Confederation of Municipal Workers of the Americas) was founded, after three years of seminars to discuss its organizational model and approve its work plans. The struggle for union rights in the public sector is to be emphasized, especially the regulation of collective bargaining and decent work, once among governments precarious employment often prevails.

The Health sector is still a vulnerable point in the region's organization, although an important meeting with the sector was held in 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, with the participation of representatives of the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Honduras, Costa Rica, Colombia, Ecuador, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina and Brazil. This meeting was held right before the ITUC Second Trade Union Assembly on Work and Environment (between June 11 and 13), which made possible for those who were in the sector meeting to participate in the Rio + 20 Summit, that carried many debates on climate change.

The unions under the Central Administration sector, in turn, met several times, three of them in 2013: in Bogota, in May; in Panama, in October; and finally, in Mexico, in December. They formed a network and maintain regular meetings on Skype. They stood out in what concerns the fight for trade union rights, quality public services and against corruption.

The Water sector made improvements through the Water Workers Confederation's strengthening project, which main point is the fight against privatization.

The Legislative sector organized recently. Holding sub-regional meetings organized by APL-Argentina and PSI. During IAMRECON, they will hold their first regional meeting.

The Electricity sector has targeted PSI negotiations concerning transnational corporations, particularly ENEL and Suez. Representatives of the Electricity sector in the region also participated in a global meeting in September 2013, in Luxembourg. Besides that, they also promoted a meeting with Brazilian ENEL workers, in 2014.

Education Administration, a recent sector at World PSI, has also grown in the region, led by CONTUA and AFT-USA. After preparatory local meetings, they held their first global meeting in 2014, in Buenos Aires.

The challenge posed by the organizational model for regional structures remain in all those sectors: **how can United States, Canada and the Caribbean integrate these sectoral structures** - a priority theme to be analyzed during IAMRECON. **How to overcome language barriers? How can such different structures be represented in a sectoral organization**, e.g. unions gathering all servants or those organized around a single sector and others representing only a fraction of a sector? Complex issues for which we keep on building answers, step by step.

Another area in which we made progress was towards the **National Coordinating Committees (CNC)**, which is now a reality in most countries in the region. These committees made it possible for PSI to structure global campaigns at national level, develop joint actions for Tax Justice and corruption, fight against FTAs, advocate trade union rights and resist neoliberal policies.

As for the search for a balanced budget in each sub region, we made progress, but only to a certain extent. PSI overall financial situation required cuts in administration costs in the region, which occurred after

intensive discussions in all our forums. **How to balance expenses and have a lean and efficient administration model? Where and how could we maintain sub regional offices and at the same time meet the ever more intense sectoral demands? These issues are still under debate.**

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE II

We are still after some level of formal relationship between **IDB, the Inter-American Development Bank** and the labor movement. Even though, PSI usually radically opposes the privatization policies proposed by the bank, we've unsuccessfully sought to build a formal space for dialogue and criticism. The idea of organizing discussions within the unions was well regarded during the visits made to the IDB Executive Directors by Brazilian, Jamaican, Argentinian and Uruguayan representatives, held in Washington on the occasion of IAMREC, in 2013. Presently, our Washington office counts on the support of the International Union Federations and ITUC and remains in touch with the bank seeking to create this opportunity every year or two, in order to discuss the bank's loan policy. Nowadays, when the World Bank itself discusses the possibility of adopting labor clauses to lend money, it is expected that this issue makes progress also at regional level. Furthermore, PSI has been represented at IDB meetings with civil society, even though we concluded that those debates are too generic and don't necessarily meet trade union's demands. The good news is that the African Development Bank approved the adoption of the basic ILO conventions to fund projects in Africa. Meanwhile, in the Americas, the regional bank forges ahead without answering the trade union movement.

Regarding OAS (Organization of American States), the established priority was to participate in the Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor (ICML) – which is the main forum OAS shares with the labor movement and where PSI has continuously counted on the highest attendance compared to all trade unions. ICML presents an important moment to advocate for trade union rights in the region and most specifically to press governments, as in the cases of Peru, Guyana, Paraguay, Chile and others. Still on OEA, we'd like to focus on the struggle endured by PSI in order to adopt the conventions against racism and discrimination, which are already in force – emphasizing that PSI was the only international trade union organization to work for the approval of conventions A68 and A69.

Another organization with which we started working in this period was the BRICS. This was an action proposed by some Brazilian affiliates that culminated in a meeting held in Brasilia, in August 2013, with South African, Indian, Russian and Brazilian affiliates. During the meeting, our affiliates drew up a work plan to monitor BRICS policies and agreements. This meeting was also attended by affiliates of the Municipal sector of several Latin American countries.

About UNASUR, governments started discussing a monitoring structure led by society, creating national councils and a Regional Council - called Citizen Participation Forum - in which trade unions and NGOs participate. PSI's participation at this forum's first meeting was regarded by the rest of the organizations as excellent, taking clear proposals to strengthen a common, plural

and democratic space for social participation in the UNASUR structures. We must also mention that in 2012, in a clear contrast to the previous bloc, the Pacific Alliance was created to gather governments with a political identity that was closer to the United States.

Mercosur is another bloc in which PSI seeks to act. The Venezuelan decision to join the bloc created conflicts, which were apparently overcome, particularly with Paraguay, despite the different interests shared between these two countries - which hinder the strengthening of this bloc.

Finally, PSI has sought to follow the debates at CELAC and at the **Summit of the Americas** - in which, along with TUCA, we have always advocated a favorable development model to the population, as well as trade union rights for all workers.

Regarding Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), fighting them has become a true priority in the region. Thanks to PSI, discussions on Tisa, TPP (Transpacific), TTIP (Transatlantic) and CETA (Canada-EU) are increasingly present in the trade union agenda in the region. Affiliates from Chile, Brazil, Costa Rica, United States, Canada, Paraguay, Uruguay, Colombia, Panama, Peru and Mexico successfully participated in PSI forums such as those held in 2014, in Washington and Geneva - to expand actions against these treaties in their countries. The bad news, however, is that, despite the opposition of unions and civil society, Ecuador signed a FTA with the European Union.

At the time of this report, TiSA, the Trade in Services Agreement, had already reached its tenth negotiation round, held in Geneva, in February 2015. The main concern in the region is the possible accession of Uruguay - which already signaled its intention to participate in the agreement. Besides that, in our region, the following nine countries already participate in the negotiations: United States, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay and Peru. In order to join forces in the fight against TiSA, PSI has developed a campaign along with OWINFS (Our World Is Not For Sale) and other organizations in order to keep our affiliates updated on the negotiations, discuss a strategic plan to fight the approval of this agreement and boost national activities in every country of the region. Therefore, PSI has participated in conference calls that brought together representatives from dozens of countries to discuss action plans. Our challenge is to withdraw our countries from TiSA, and renounce the agreement.

In the last period, considerable progress was made to the TPP (Transpacific Partnership) negotiations, that on this side of the world gathers Chile, Peru and the United States, whereas Canada and Mexico are also soon to access. TPP combines the worst in "free trade" proposals with numerous guarantees to transnational companies and attacks on labor and union rights. Under TPP, public services become mere commodities focused on generating private profits. PSI is a member of the NoTPP Network, composed of NGOs of the Americas (in Spanish only), whereas some of our affiliates participate in the PSI Working Group on the TPP (in English only), which brings together members of the Americas and Asia. The TPP negotiations are held secretively, in places that make them hard to reach and to mobilize for. Nevertheless, in 2013,

negotiators stated that they had not yet reached an agreement due to important differences concerning issues such as patents and drug costs, subsidies in agriculture and others.

In contrast, TTIP, (the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership) between the European Union and United States, which began in July 2013, have remained a secret discussion. Concerning CETA, the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between the European Union and Canada, despite the expectations of having it enforced by 2016, at the time of this report it still waited for the European Union Council and Parliament's approval. This agreement, once implemented, should supersede NAFTA (a treaty between Canada, USA and Mexico) as the biggest cross-border agreement in Canada.

Another TLC that has mobilized PSI and its affiliates is the possible agreement between **the European Union and MERCOSUR**, which is also discussed secretly and it is likely to be signed, presenting a front attack to public services.

As for the **financing of the public sector and taxation**, the debate on Tax Justice was the issue that has mostly intensified in the last period - a discussion that also articulates with the **fight against corruption** in the region. Indeed, the fact that large corporations do not pay taxes and the way they use tax havens in order to do so was discussed more intensively within trade unions. Regional seminars aimed at capacity training and debating were organized in 2014 in Argentina, Chile and Colombia, counting on the constant presence of more than 120 leaders from many countries in the region and the support of UITOC, former ULATOC. The same thing happened during the ILO ILC in Geneva, in 2013. The next seminar is being planned for June 2015, in Canada.

PSI also conducted anti-corruption forums on December 7, the International Day against Corruption, in Mexico, in 2013 and in Colombia, in 2014, to discuss transparency in public services.

Regarding the Tax Justice campaign, we kept the fight for the **Tax on Financial Transactions (TFI)** - known as the Robin Hood Tax in Canada and in the US - as well as for fair taxes. During the Rio + 20 meeting and then in Washington, in 2013, demonstrations in favor of the TFI were held after IAMREC.

The issue around Tax Justice and the FTAs remain as a top priority in the new period of the PSI regional action plan, as well as in the world stage. Therefore, we expect to obtain more concrete results that enable adequate funding for quality public services.

III HUMAN AND TRADE UNION RIGHTS

According to ILO world reports, the Americas and specifically Latin America is the region where public sector union rights are most violated.

Presently, Guatemala has become the most dangerous country in the world for unionists, with numerous murders - a reality that has strongly affected our affiliates. Anti-union laws were implemented in Peru, Honduras, Ecuador, and Paraguay and in parts of the United States, just to name a few places. To this end, progress was made in Uruguay and Colombia.

In response to this, the participation of affiliates from this region at the ILO International Labour Conference (ILC/ILO) has increased. Today, our action comprises the organization of such conferences by answering previous queries, the participation in preparatory meetings that decide priority cases to be discussed in the conference and we also send dozens of representatives of the region to the ITC. Mobilizations were held in Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, Argentina, Panama and Mexico, reproducing the Route of Shame simultaneously to the one promoted by PSI in Geneva visiting the embassies of those countries that most violated trade union rights.

It is also worth mentioning the campaign developed by PSI for the ratification of Conventions 151 and 154, which mobilized thousands of trade unionists in many countries of the Americas, creating a more favorable environment for the ratification and implementation of collective bargaining in the public sector, in the region.

Together with ACTRAV, we promoted capacity training seminars for leaders of the public sector. Another relevant action happened in August 2013, when PSI and ACTRAV organized a bipartisan meeting with governments and trade unions in the region, which spread, among other materials, the Collective Bargaining Manual for the Public Sector published by the ILO, with PSI's consent, in 2012.

Also in 2012, PSI, TUCA and ACTRAV jointly promoted a distance learning activity in order to better support knowledge acquisition on ILO Conventions 151 and 154 and strengthen the capacity of trade unions in contributing to these Conventions' report forms. In 2015, capacity training will be held on May 1st; this time, the aim is to create a support network for the public sector collective bargaining in the region.

Another important point was the demonstration in defense of trade union rights in the public sector in Wisconsin, United States, which was able to mobilize thousands of workers and received strong international support.

Another relevant action was the PSI participation in the ILO Regional Conference in October 2014, in Peru, supported by TUCA, which enabled the defense of trade union rights in the region, including in the public sector.

Regarding the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, complaints about the violation of rights in Ecuador are still underway. Besides that, PSI is currently addressing the issue around Haitian citizens in the Dominican Republic under the same Commission, which has already expressed a contrary position to the decision of the Constitutional Court of the Dominican Republic.

Despite all the attempts to further develop trade union rights in the public sector, the main results achieved in this period are, in fact, the **acknowledgement of the fact that resisting setbacks ended up taking more time from our schedules than the time spent on what could have made the difference**. Whether as a result of the economic crisis, neoliberal cut policies, FTAs or of any other factor, the truth is that **we have never seen so many attacks on trade union rights as we saw in this last period**. We gained visibility as public sector, but we are still far from winning and securing rights in the sector and, therefore, the issue remains a priority for the next five years.

IV EQUITY, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

On the gender issue, the main theme in this period was the struggle to **end violence against women**, especially at the workplace. Whether in the Caribbean or anywhere else in Latin America, this remains a priority topic for the region. In 2014, more than 80 women from almost all countries of the Americas gathered in Chile - where courses of action to be integrated into the plan for the next period were approved. The president of the country, Michelle Bachelet, attended the meeting and thanked PSI for the constant struggles on behalf of gender issues and urged all present to further strengthen actions to end violence against women by taking action within other institutions such as ILO, emphasizing the elimination of violence against women at the workplace and in public service.

In the Caribbean and in Chile relevant local experiences expanded the fight to end violence against women beyond trade unions.

In addition, there is a growing participation of women leaders in the region at the **the UN Comission on the Status of Women (UNCSW)**, as well as in the ILO International Labour Conference.

A new project on gender was initiated in the Southern Cone and in Brazil including the **Salary Equity** theme, bringing this subject back with stronger emphasis.

The region also held the presidency of the PSI World Women's Committee, with Juneia Batista's election.

As for the public sector **youth**, the outsourcing/precarious work issue remains one of the main problems faced in the region. Due to the crisis, unemployment worsened in almost all countries. Nevertheless, the Regional Youth Committee was consolidated and has proved to be very dynamic, editing newsletters and organizing periodic Skype meetings, despite the difficulties brought by the language difficulties posed to those who speak Spanish, English, Portuguese and French. The youth has won two effective positions within the Regional Executive Committee, IAMREC. The goal is to move on and strengthen this committee in the next 05 years.

With regard to **fighting racism and xenophobia**, PSI struggled to approve two OAS conventions, A-68, which deals with racism, racial

discrimination and related intolerance; and A-69, opposing all forms of discrimination and intolerance.

We have also sought a closer relationship with INSPIR (InterAmerican Institute for Racial Equality) and with TUCA in the fight against racism and xenophobia. As a final result of this partnership, both organizations together with TUCA produced material (a video, a brochure and a poster) for a signature and ratification campaign of the two above mentioned OAS agreements.

Representatives of the Southern Cone, Brazil, the Andean countries, the Caribbean, Central America and United States participated in the last PSI Regional Committee meeting to Combat Racism and Xenophobia in Bogotá, Colombia. The approval of the OAS Convention against Racism, Racial Discrimination and Related Intolerance advocated by PSI in recent years was among the important points covered by this meeting, as well as the exchange of good practices and the situation of citizens of Haitian descent in the Dominican Republic, assaulted by the loss of the right to citizenship due to the decision held at the Constitutional Court of that country.

Regarding the LGBT theme, the PSI LGBT Regional Committee was formed in June 2013, at a meeting held in São Paulo, with the participation of representatives from Brazil, the Southern Cone, the Andean countries and Central America. This project counted on the support and participation of FNV/ABVAKABO. The central points of this meeting englobed the defense of equal rights, the participation in the *Out Games* and the joint work with ILGA. It is worth pointing out that a delegation from the region participated in the *OutGames* in Antwerp, in July-August of the same year. PSI signed a three-year cooperation agreement with ILGA-LAC, a regional subdivision for Latin America and the Caribbean of the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex, on the occasion of the 27th ILGA Conference, in October 2014. Finally, through the support of a project in partnership with ABVAKABO, material is being published on LGBT workers' rights and policies to guarantee those rights.

Regarding migrants, the Inter-American region supported the participation of its affiliates, especially the US, at the United Nations High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development, held in September 2013, in New York. In 2012, PSI's priority in the region was to analyze the anti-migrant laws in Arizona and Alabama and to study possible legal action. In Arizona, the law has already been amended by a decision of the American court.

V INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

As a result of the deterioration of human and trade union rights in the region, we arrive at the 2015 Conference with seven priority countries to receive international solidarity in the region, even though in 2010 we had only approved four - **Haiti, Colombia, Honduras and Guatemala**. To these, we have added **Ecuador, Peru and Paraguay**.

Regarding **Haiti**, during IAMREC 2012 the new CTSP headquarters and the health clinic were opened counting on the support of Canada and US affiliates and PSI.

PSI also attended the ITUC meeting in December 2013, in Port au Prince, in which they discussed the monitoring of the international trade union support to Haiti. Contact with CTSP continues to be made through the PSI Caribbean office. During PSI World Congress in Durban, in November 2012, a parallel meeting was organized on Haiti's recovery and the actions promoted by PSI and its affiliates.

Most recently, the dominant theme in the international trade union agenda, specially for PSI, was the decision of the Constitutional Court of the Dominican Republic to deny citizenship to thousands of citizens of Haitian descent i.e. children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of Haitians born in the Dominican Republic, who now suffer severe discrimination in this country. The international trade union community, OAS and other organizations condemned the decision. PSI has promptly spoken up, followed by TUCA and our Dominican affiliates, but so far the issue has not been solved. The PSI Regional Committee against Racism and Xenophobia proposed that PSI and ITUC support a global campaign to boycott tourism in the Dominican Republic.

Regarding **Colombia**, advances were made in the dialogue with the government, but it lacks more positive conclusions. Threats are still being made. An example, among others, is the case of Margarita Lopez (SINTRACUAVAL), which apart from suffering union persecution has put her life at risk to fight against the privatization of the water company in the region.

The regulation of collective bargaining in the public sector in Colombia advances at the prospect of new legislation. The unified bargaining in the public sector goes on, which is a significant progress when compared to the previous situation. But there are no satisfactory conclusions. There were also opportunities during the second bipartite meeting between governments and unions in the Andean countries, held in Bogota, in August 2012 - organized by ILO and PSI and counted on broad support from the Colombian government.

As for **Guatemala**, which has become the most dangerous country in the world for trade unionists, an important PSI mission visited this country from 12 to 15 August 2013, holding hearings with the president, ministers, UN local officers, ILO and other organs. In 2014, IAMREC presented another opportunity to speak with the president and other government officers.

Through international pressure, campaigns, missions and actions during the ILO International Labour Conference (ILC) it was possible to reduce the murders of trade unionists, but the danger and frequent threats remain present. PSI's support was important to guarantee Luis Lara's presence in the ILC and provide him, along with Dora Regina Ruano, both from the Guatemala affiliate SNTSG, with the opportunity to speak at the European Parliament.

However, the attacks and murders of union leaders continue in Guatemala. PSI has followed the activities that the TUCA Human Rights Network performs in support to trade unions and other social movements in Guatemala,

especially with regard to allegations of harassment of union leaders and violations of trade union rights, seeking to press the government for the necessary changes in this country. To this end, it is worth highlighting the complaints addressed to the government of Guatemala and to international human rights organizations on the murder of Ovidio Ortiz, in March 2012 and on the attack suffered by Melvy Lizeth Camey Rojas, both SNTSNG leaders, through reports sent by PSI and members of the TUCA Human Rights Network.

Another point was the ITUC/TUCA Campaign - "Guatemala: decent work for a decent life". The global campaign was launched on April 30, 2011, as a result of the 2nd International Conference against Impunity in Guatemala, conducted by ITUC, in June 2011, in Guatemala City, where PSI was represented. This was the first campaign for priority countries of the TUCA Human Rights Network, which featured a logo brand, a video and a Facebook page. As part of the campaign, TUCA held a solidarity and evaluation activity on the 2nd Conference against Impunity, in late July 2012, in Guatemala.

As for **Honduras**, another priority country, the Americas Global Unions Council meeting was held (Tegucigalpa, 13 - 14 February 2012), as part of the Decent Work Agenda in Honduras (DWAH), in order to involve global union federations in this process. PSI also joined the trade union presidential election observation mission in this country, in November 2013. Unfortunately, despite the strong indications of fraud in the electoral process, the Electoral Committee declared as winner the right-wing candidate, who had the support of the same people who ousted President Zelaya, democratically elected. A new mission took place in 2014. Still on the ILO and OAS Conferences, we have pressed the new government of Honduras to respect trade union rights and the contact will follow through the PSI office for Central America. It is important to support local affiliates in the fight for democracy and full rights in the country.

The Decent Work Agenda in Honduras is the result of a process of building a union influence strategy supported by TUCA, with the participation of the three Honduran national unions (CUTH, CTH and CGT), and allied organizations at national and international level . The initiative acknowledges the need to resume the path of dialogue and the improvement of the decent work agenda in Honduras - which was interrupted by the coup. Furthermore, considering the role played by trade unions in the resistance to the coup, this is also an opportunity for unions to gain a new role in the country where the path laid on the unity of action of these three trade unions is a very positive element.

As for **Ecuador**, pointed by IAMREC as a new priority country after so many trade union violations, regrettably, the government refuses to establish a dialogue with workers and at the same time chases independent leaders, which has been systematically denounced both by ILO and OAS. As a result of this, in January 2015, the country received an ILO technical mission to assess trade union rights, which was the direct result of all the years PSI dedicated to the reporting rights violations in the country. This mission's report will be released later, in 2015. PSI has organized several trade union visits to Ecuador in recent years, one of them coordinated by our Health sector affiliates, in 2012. Another solidarity display was the offer of financial aid to three union leaders persecuted in Ecuador. It is important to mention that President Correa was re-elected.

As for **Paraguay**, despite not being one of the priority countries assigned by IAMRECON, it ended up getting a lot of attention in the period, due to the legislative coup on June 22, 2012 - a turnaround that forced the entire US and world labor movement to react against the interruption of democracy in this country. PSI followed the local situation since its beginning, along with TUCA and other global union federations, and issued a declaration of repudiation of the coup.

A positive aspect was the reaction of Mercosur and UNASUR to the coup in Paraguay. Suspending the country's participation in their structures stabilized these blocs as a support to democracy in the region. However, a share of local unions didn't manifest against this political backlash in the country.

The unelected government proposed to the Parliament a new regulatory framework for the Electricity sector, in which, among other things, the state monopoly in the sector is broken and the way for privatization is opened - not only regarding this sector, but many others. This generated strong reactions from unions that counted on PSI's support. Electricity is the main export product of Paraguay and adds more than 750 million dollars a year to the national budget. PSI continues to support its local affiliates in the fight against privatization.

Finally, we must talk about a country that requires more attention from PSI, which is **Peru**. The government pushed through the Parliament a new Public Service Act, which prevents the public sector unions from negotiating wages and determines how the sector should be organized. At an international workshop organized by PSI in partnership with ILO, the rupture between the law and the ILO Conventions was easily demonstrated. PSI and LaborStart campaigns were able to mobilize, within the trade union world, over 10,000 messages directed to the Peruvian government against the new arbitrary legislation. Mass demonstrations were held across the country in defense of trade union rights. Debates on this arbitrary law are being held in Peru as PSI affiliates try to recover their rights. Most recently, one of our local leaders, Louis Isarra (Secretary General of FENTAP and a IAMREC member), had his union license repealed by the government, a fact that prompted new international campaign against this arbitrariness.

In order to express international solidarity, IAMREC now decides the location of its worldwide meetings based on the region's fights. This is why we went to Chile in 2010, after the earthquake; to Haiti in 2012, to inaugurate the new headquarters and the health clinic; to Washington in 2013, for the IDB ad OAS meetings during IAMREC; and to Guatemala in 2014 to combat the murder of trade unionists and advocate trade union rights. To this end, the decision on where to gather PSI top leadership became a political decision whereas before, this decision was based on different reasons.

To amplify international solidarity and fight for each of our affiliate unions whenever necessary remains one of the most valuable roles of our organization.

***Jocelio Drummond
Regional Secretary***

