



PRIVATIZATION WATCH

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“Privatization is when there is less public control, fewer regulations, and more governance by market forces.”

DONALD COHEN, IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

In the United States, the victory of Donald Trump in the presidential election, and the Republican sweep of legislative seats at the federal and state levels (and state governorships), presents the most serious threat to public services—both in the form of massive privatisation and deep cutbacks—arguably ever. All of the New Deal and Great Society major programs—Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, project labor and prevailing wage regulations are already targets for privatisation by Trump’s deep bench of right wing activists, who finally have a chance to put their agenda into practice. Obama’s Affordable Care Act is targeted for elimination. Trump has appointed an enemy of public education as Education Secretary. For an overview, listen to [an interview of Donald Cohen of In the Public Interest \(ITPI\)](#) and follow ITPI’s [Twitter feed](#) and [Facebook page](#).

[ITPI says](#), “These are dark and frightening times. Donald Trump has been elected president, posing a serious threat to working people, especially women, communities of color, immigrants, Muslims, and LGBTQ populations. Despite this, we will fight even harder for a government controlled by people, not corporations or Wall Street. Working people, no matter their political views, want a government that works for them. We want a say in what holds our communities

together, like schools, water, parks, and infrastructure. Democracy is the only way to do that. Commit today to stand with us. We stand with you. Together, we can make a difference, no matter the time, place, or mood.”

Fit for Whose Purpose? Private Funding & Corporate Influence in the United Nations

For a look at how the balance between public and private responsibility has shifted, and what this means in the real world in terms of adherence to international standards and norms, one needs to look no further than the United Nations itself. A new Global Policy Forum Report—[Fit for Whose Purpose? Private funding and corporate influence in the United Nations](#)—details how private corporations and corporate philanthropic organizations are increasingly paying to play there. Why are corporate-led solutions to global problems seen as the way forward? How is it that measures poorly aligned with UN values receive the UN stamp of approval? [Read more](#).

PPPs in Education questioned for human rights impact

The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights questioned the [education PPP in the Philippines](#) for its adverse human rights impact, which is one of the world’s landmark PPP schemes, often used as an example by PPP supporters. It adds to previous questioning by UN human rights committees of public funding of private actors in education in Chile and Brazil.

Africa & Arab Countries

Africa: [Stakeholders](#) say that [public investment, not privatisation](#), is necessary to plug gaps in water and sanitation public services, lamenting that “public sector solutions are notably absent from current policy debates even though they have been the mainstay of infrastructure development across the world.” They say **this should be a priority “at the next meeting of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. They wanted the November meeting of COP22 [in Morocco] to integrate issues related to water supply and sanitation with the climate change agenda. (...) As the limitations of water privatisation have become clear, there have been calls for innovation in private financing mechanisms. One example is the use of public resources to stimulate private sector investment through ‘blended finance.’ This is where the government provides subsidies and/or guarantees to encourage commercial financiers to invest in water. But a number of concerns have been raised with this approach. Private capital is not a substitute for public capital and is volatile and expensive. To date there seems to be little justification for diverting limited public resources toward trying to attract investors into the sector rather than investing government funds in water directly.”**

Africa: [Government cutbacks in the number of public service posts are clouding the future of graduates](#), especially black graduates. “A British Council report that looked into higher education in South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya and Ghana noted that this country’s **black graduates struggled to find work and were more likely to go for government jobs which were declining**. The Universities, Employability and Inclusive Development report stated: “While white graduates have increasingly obtained employment in the private sector, black graduates have increasingly obtained posts in the public sector.”

Algeria: Following a national conference at the University of Bouzareja, [the General Union of Free Students](#) states its “**categorical refusal of the privatisation of the sector [by] indirect means**,” and reiterates its support for a transition from indirect support of the student to direct support, with the involvement of students in the education reform process.

Cameroon: Questions resurface about the [wisdom of privatising Cameroon’s rail system](#) after an overloaded train derailed near the town of Eséka, **killing at least 79 people and injuring 551**. The network was privatised in a 30-

year concession in 1999. "Seventeen years later, none of the tasks assigned to the Office of the TransCameroonian railway in terms of construction and infrastructure renewal have been performed. Cameroonians would like to know how many new buildings were built, how many extensions were implemented by Camrail, why the separation of the Cameroonian rail remained that of the colonial era" says Jean Marc Bikoko, executive president of the Central Trade Union of the Public Sector. **"The responsibility of the company and therefore Camrail Group Bolloré Logistics, in this disaster is complete."**

Ghana: Opposition to the planned privatisation of the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) by the powerful Trades Union Congress, and a legal challenge, **forces the Millennium Development Authority to postpone a conference with bidders** interested in the system. "The TUC in a strong worded letter to the Flagstaff House, accused MiDA of betraying the Union by going ahead to announce a planned Builders Conference when **grievances by workers of ECG** are being addressed. The TUC warned that in line with a resolution passed at TUC's 10th Quadrennial Delegates Congress held in August 2016 at KNUST, **it will resist any attempt to privatise the ECG**. The TUC in the letter further impressed on government to stop MiDA from going ahead with the Bidders' Conference and to ensure that prompt measures are taken to consider the options proposed by the Union. According to the TUC, MiDA's action is **a demonstration of bad faith** since deliberations with the Public Utility Workers' Union (PUWU) of TUC who are opposed to the privatisation has not concluded its work." *Modern Ghana* columnist Lord Aikins Adusei has reviewed the history of privatisation in Ghana, comparing it to **similar bad experiences in Australia and the United Kingdom**. "The examples from Australia and United Kingdom indicate that privatising ECG could deepen socio-economic inequality because affordability rather than access and needs will be the rule."

Kenya: Dairy farmers are opposing the privatisation of New Kenya Cooperative Creameries. "We are shocked that **the privatisation is ongoing and dairy farmers across the country have been kept in the dark about it...** we are hearing that a team has been going round factories on a valuation exercise... they have been to Sotik and Kapsabet yet we were not involved," said Richard Tuwei, the chairman of the Kenya Dairy Farmers Federation.

Mauritius: Robin Nunkoo, a lecturer at the University of Mauritius, says **"when tourism policy leads to the privatisation of 'public goods,' the consequences are serious."**

Morocco: **Neoliberalism, police repression, and the privatisation of a fishery leads to protests**. Thousands of people have been protesting across the country after a fish seller was crushed to death in a garbage truck trying to retrieve fish confiscated by police. Miriyam Aouragh, an anthropologist and democracy activist, says what we are seeing in Morocco is "a very complex reality of the sort of privatisation and harsh control of the fishery. (...) We see sort of two or three different dynamics happening at the same time: the sort of call for democracy, police repression, and, at the same time, I think what is often missed out in the analysis, **a very important political economy that has to do with Morocco's extreme neoliberal transformations**, ongoing at present."

Privatisation is also affecting the education sector. **Samir Bennis, the editor-in-chief of Morocco World News**, writes, "of even greater concern to many Moroccans is the worsening of the country's education system with the incumbent government's strategy to expand the privatisation of education. Conducted over the past 15 years, **this policy has pushed the United Nations to remind the Moroccan government that education is a public good and urged it to abide by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.**"

Nigeria: The "Our Water Our Right" coalition, fighting privatisation of water in Lagos, stepped up the pressure by releasing a report called "Lagos water crisis: Alternative roadmap for water sector". This new publication critiques the history of poor public administration, picks apart the deficiencies of decades of World Bank driven privatisation policies, and presents the way forward for the city administration to implement human rights obligations by ensuring universal access to water for all Lagosians through a well-managed public utility.

Nigeria: [The Buhari government backs off from privatising publically-owned refineries—for now.](#) The Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Dr. Ibe Kachikwu, says the three refineries in Kaduna, Warri and Port Harcourt would fetch a low price currently because they need to be fixed and become operationally efficient. He also **bowed to the power of organized labour**, saying “**If you privatise in a hurry” you will “be sucked into union issues that close the place and it does not function for years.**”

Nigeria: The Director General of the West African Institute for Financial and Economic Management, Prof. Akpan Ekpo, who is also a former board member of the Central Bank of Nigeria, [pours cold water on the idea that privatisation can solve Nigeria’s problems.](#) “Well, my take is that **it doesn’t make sense to sell national assets because we are in an economic recession. It is a panic measure. It is what I call a fire-brigade approach in the sense that we have not been told that we have exhausted all the financing options.** And then, recessions come and go. It is part of being a market economy. So, if you sell assets now, when it comes again, what are you going to sell? So, it is not the way out. **Secondly, we have to do some analysis. What are the assets? Which assets are we going to sell? We need to know.** Who are those going to buy the assets? Take for example NLNG, government has 49 per cent stake in and it has been doing well. **It has been giving government a lot of money.**”

Nigeria: **Aliko Dangote**, one of Africa’s richest men, **surprises the business community by coming out against the privatisation of power sector assets.** “Speaking as a guest lecturer at the Senior Executive course 38 at the National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru, in Plateau State, Dangote was quoted to have [advised that the federal government reverse the privatisation of power assets](#) in the country because in his words ‘the buyers lack understanding of the complexities of the sector.’”

Nigeria: [The government’s main privatisation agency is facing corruption inquires.](#) The Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) “is presently **being investigated by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)**, an anti-fraud umpire, over alleged **fraudulent insurance related transactions in respect of a N27 billion, defunct Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN)** insurance payment in 2014.”

Nigeria: [Privatisation leads to confusion over who is owed money by the federal government, distribution companies or associations.](#) “The Minister of Power, Works and Housing, Mr. Babatunde Fashola (SAN), has warned electricity Distribution Companies (DisCos) in the country to stop blackmailing the federal government over **outstanding debts allegedly owed them by its Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDA)**, saying government would not succumb to blackmail and would only pay verified debts.”

Nigeria/Ghana: Issa Aremu, vice president of the Africa Industrial global union, says “[privatisation has caused us more harm than good](#)” in the energy sector. “You can see that in terms of power per capita, small population, but relatively small generation, and **this is the same with Ghana** with only a 27 million population. So how can our industries work without electricity, how can we create sustainable jobs for our teeming youths who go in search of jobs in Europe and get themselves killed in the Mediterranean Sea,” he said.

Senegal: The president of the University of Thies, Professor Matar Mour Seck, [calls for new strategies to fight poverty and secure sustainable agriculture.](#) “**Since the complete privatisation of the seed sector in 1990, a profound destructuring has occurred** with virtually nonexistent control of the seed production chain and **the appearance of actors whose professionalism is not always proven,**’ Pr Seck said. The result of this situation is ‘the unequivocal observation of the generalized insufficiency, in quantity and quality, of certified seeds produced for all plant species for several years,’ according to Matar Mour Seck.”

Sierra Leone: The new Resident Representative of the United Nations Population Fund, Dr. Kim Eva Dickson, is quoted as saying “we at the UNFPA will be working with the government, United Nations Country team and the civil society to [privatise investment in girls.](#)”

South Africa: Northern Cape workers join the country in a one-day strike to highlight their socio-economic challenges. Among their demands: **“Outsourcing and privatisation of public services should be stopped as it commodifies vital services and make them unaffordable to the unemployed and the poor.”**

South Africa: “Don’t privatise,” COSATU tells Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan. “Treasury must provide adequate funding to [state-owned enterprises] so that they can fulfill their developmental mandate. **Privatisation cannot be the route to solve their challenges.** Government must be commended for ending black outs. However **Eskom cannot be privatised. That will result in electricity becoming unaffordable for workers. Eskom must not be allowed to continue with its hyper-inflation increases.**” The union federation also says “government must act with speed to deal with the water crisis. Municipalities cannot be allowed to continue to neglect water infrastructure **nor must they be allowed to price water out of the reach of the poor.**” At the end of last month former Reserve Bank governor Tito Mboweni called for the privatisation of Eskom and Telkom.

South Africa: Organized labour and business say that consolidating border security and points-of-entry revenue collection offices **“would amount to the privatisation of a sphere of government and that it would be too risky and expensive.”**

South Africa: COSATU Free State calls on the government to use defence force trucks to deliver water in Qwaqwa because the use of private trucks is financially unsustainable **“as it will deplete the resources of the municipality,** which continues to accrue debt with institutions like Eskom which has now run into more than a hundred million rands.”

South Africa: The Roodepoort Record reports that public services delivery in the City of Johannesburg is improving. “After his election, [Executive Mayor Herman Mashaba] implemented a ten-point plan to kick-start the city’s revival and speed up the resolution of residents’ service delivery issues. Some of the points on this plan included creating a professional public service, ensuring corruption is public enemy number one, **extended hours at clinics** and fast-tracking the handing over of title deeds to residents, churches and businesses.”

South Africa: The Communication Workers Union demands that the government recapitalize the Post Office. “The failure of the state to intervene will mean failing South Africans, in particular the poor who rely on the services of SAPO. Secondly, over 19,000 workers are facing a chop. **There is a clear agenda to privatise Post Office, in order for the Stellenbosch agenda of taking over the Post Bank to benefit the rich majority.**”

Uganda/Kenya: Angelo Gavrielatos, Education International’s Director working against the commercialisation of education, has visited Uganda “celebrating a victory against Bridge International Academies which, as well as taking public money from Third World countries in which it operates fee-paying schools, is funded by powerful entities such as the American and British governments, **the Gates Foundation, the World Bank and edubusiness giant Pearson.**” In July the Ugandan government ordered the closure of Bridge’s 62 schools in the country, saying “its schools failed to comply with minimum requirements prescribed by the Ministry of Education and Sport.” He said **the fight against privatised education in Uganda had been “incredibly successful” and was going well in Kenya too.**

Uganda: Experts warn that President Museveni’s reshuffling of permanent secretary posts is detrimental to public service. “Evelyn Anite, a mass communication graduate is a Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance in charge of Investment and Privatisation.” In some cases, pensioners have gone without pay for 20 months—and **“the ministry of Finance stopped remitting money to Uganda Communications Employees Contributory Pension Scheme (UCECPS)—a government scheme where the workers’ benefits are channeled from the Finance ministry’s Privatisation Unit (PU)—in April 2015.”**

Asia Pacific

Australia: The New South Wales government's rush to privatise the Land and Property Information unit (LPI) **has led to confusion and disarray**. "More than 200 families unknowingly bought properties in the path of a future F6 freeway because of an administrative error between July and October. One owner's property will eventually be acquired for a tunnel. (...) Legislation to allow the sale of the one profitable unit, 'titling and registry services,' **was pushed through the lower and upper houses within a 24-hour period** in mid-September, **avoiding public scrutiny and debate**. (...) The error **has exposed the government to home owners pursuing it for a multimillion-dollar damages claim**, with legal firm Slater and Gordon considering a class action. Both Mr Langley and Mr McCormack left the LPI at the end of June before the "chaos" erupted. They say **a problem of this magnitude hasn't been seen in the land title registry's 150-year history**."

Australia: Doctors are protesting against the government's plan to privatise a 20-year old program to help people with gambling problems. "The AMA (SA) has serious concerns on this state government proposal to effectively privatise state gambling therapy services to the private sector,' Australian Medical Association SA president Dr Janice Fletcher said. **'Why would you make an ongoing public health service that has been delivering outstanding results subject to short-term tender?'** Dr. Fletcher said it was a leading program highly regarded interstate and overseas."

Australia: Youth transport and court custody services will return to the Department of Corrective Services, which Corrective Services Minister Joe Francis said would improve the continuity of care and support for young people. But a new contract has been let out for court security and custodial services. "Labor claims lack of transparency around the contract. The Opposition's **corrective services spokesman Paul Papalia** said there was a lack of transparency around the new contract. 'Are we getting value on behalf of taxpayers? We can't tell because **the Government won't release its public sector [comparison], which they use to justify these private contracts,**' he said."

Australia: Plans to privatise Western Power, which could become "the single-biggest policy issue of the election campaign," **are overwhelmingly opposed by the public**, a poll commissioned by the West Australian Branch of the Electrical Trades Union finds. [*Bunbury Mail*, 2 November 2016]

Australia: Concern grows that the Baird government is set to privatise Sydney's most lucrative bus lines "that have been run for decades by the heavily unionised State Transit Authority." Among other things, public bus drivers are concerned that privatisation will lead to safety risks. "The Government is just about to privatise and sell off Newcastle Buses so they need to make sure that our fleet is as safe as possible. The record of safety on private bus fleets is far worse than that of the government buses," says Wallsend's Labor MP Sonia Homery.

Australia: Anger spills over at conservative efforts to privatise public health services. "I am outraged that neo-liberal economists like Pru Goward and Angus Taylor—in fact, the whole job lot of the State and Federal Liberal Party—is hell-bent on destroying our socialised medicine system every chance they get. If it isn't the state Liberals trying to **privatise public hospitals or sell off public assets**, it is the Federal liberals trying to ruin Medicare or ruin it for those of us who are not in the one per cent economic category. Disgusting. Many Liberal Party members look at health from the perspective of wealth, power and privilege, and **never had to worry about a choice between paying a doctor's bill or getting groceries**."

Australia: Opposition mounts to the privatisation of Wyong hospital in New South Wales. Graham Paterson of Berkeley Vale says that **when government privatises publicly owned assets "it is effectively dealing in stolen**

property.” He writes, “**the only way that permission can be granted is through a referendum.** The only mandate any political party with a majority of seats ever has, is the mandate to form a government. It has no other mandate because a majority of the people never give any party the majority of primary votes. A government is elected to serve a public purpose, and effectively, the government becomes the caretaker of the public assets **with the responsibility to efficiently operate and maintain those assets for the benefit of the public.**” [*Central Coast Express Advocate*, 2 November 2016]

At a rally against the privatisation of Maitland hospital, “**NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association secretary Brett Holmes** read out a list of what he said the Baird government plans to privatise: **Hospitals, electricity networks, land property information, community services, housing, trustee and guardian, sport and recreation, prisons, powerhouse museum, TAFE, disability services, service first, funds administrator, court reporters, government records and public works.** He said nurses waiting to be migrated to the privatised Northern Beaches hospital, **see a two-tier system emerging within the hospital under construction.**”

Australia: The Rail Tram and Bus Union lays the blame for a huge disruption of Citytrain services on the government’s scheme to privatise the system. “The secret plans of (Tim) Nicholls and (Scott) Emerson **to privatise this publicly owned asset have backfired spectacularly** today with a train driver shortage causing delays on networks,” RTBU Queensland state secretary Owen Doogan said.

Australia: The Public Services Association (PSA) calls for an immediate inquiry into the Baird government’s “**contracting out vital public services replacing full time local jobs with overseas workers on 457 ‘temporary’ visas.**” PSA “fears this is the start of a new downward spiral in employment **that will flow through to the soon to be privatised disability sector and other outsourced areas.** ‘The Minister’s deliberately vague language in Parliament is the sound of a door opening to a nightmare for the people of NSW,’ **said PSA General Secretary, Stewart Little.** Skilled experienced local workers in full time employment are being thrown on the jobs scrapheap by the Baird Government **through its mass privatisation program** and replaced by foreign workers on ‘temporary’ visas.”

Australia: The Barnett government announces **it will privatise 51 per cent of the state’s power operator, Western Power.** “It will be a key state election issue [in March], with Labor vowing to keep the company in state hands.” Barnett thinks he can raise at least \$11 billion through the sale. “Labor leader Mark McGowan said selling Western Power would push up prices, drive down services, lose revenue and jobs. ‘Mr Grylls and Mr Barnett are financial and economic cowboys. They have wrecked the state’s finances, they have delivered us **the highest unemployment in the nation** and now they plan to flog off the family silver.’”

Australia: The Western NSW Local Health District is planning to add services using a third party private NGO provider. “When asked directly **if any jobs in community health or within the Panorama Clinic would be lost, Mr. Crisp did not provide an answer.** Mr. Crisp did not address whether the function of the clinic or the number of staff would change under the plan to add services. (...) A Western NSW Local Health District spokesperson, meanwhile, **said there were no plans to privatise Bathurst hospital.**”

Australia: The Institution of Surveyors NSW is calling on the state government to stop the privatisation of the NSW Land Title Registry. “**Outsourcing of jobs and the movement of oversight from public to private hands** shows that the Baird government is more interested in putting profits before people. The F6 bungle, **the loss of hundreds of skilled and dedicated staff,** the risk of title fraud and the prospect of price increases **make the case for privatisation impossible to defend.** What the government is doing is ignoring all of this in their pursuit of short term financial gain. **The NSW Land Title Registry is a world class service and must remain a public body.**” The *Central Western Daily* reports that “former NSW surveyor general Don Grant said while the Land Titles Office may be based in Sydney, **it props up Bathurst’s Spatial Services office—along with the almost 300 people**

employed there. 'They only want the cash cow and the government would have to find the \$35m to continue funding it [Spatial Services],' he said." [*Central Western Daily*, 18 November 2016]

Australia: [The Turnbull government is using the legal apparatus of the state to try and prevent the Labor opposition from warning the public about its plans to privatise Medicare.](#) The Labor Party "is holding out on the **ground it would curb free speech to stop Labor using the Medicare logo in a not-for-profit campaign fought in the public interest.** The dispute appears likely to end up in court and could help decide the shape of the next federal election, setting borders around what is an acceptable campaign tactic."

Australia: "[Shared services outsourcing](#) is a significant flop in New South Wales. "The migration has been hampered by errors in client transactions and **concerns about the ongoing security of sensitive data, auditor-general Margaret Crawford said.** In a report handed down last week, Crawford hinted that client transactions and data were compromised during the move between suppliers, and that inadequate controls over processes like payroll, invoice payments and data support **put agencies at risk of fraud or privacy breaches.**"

India: [Integrated Child Development Services \(ICDS\) will not be privatised,](#) the Minister for Women and Child Development, Ms. Umashree, tells workers. "Ms. Umashree, **who rushed to the venue of a protest organised by the Karnataka State Federation of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers** near the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha here on Wednesday, said that private services were never utilised under ICDS in the State in the past and it would not be so in the future also. **The State government would never encourage privatisation of services under ICDS.**"

India: **A prominent jurist says that Indian courts have played a key role in the commercialisation of education.** "Public funding of education has given way to private funding, which has led to government institutions becoming stunted, he said. Even the NEET examination is for the regulation of the private system, and not to restrict it, he added. Rapid privatisation of education has led to deterioration in the quality of education. **'Teachers in the private sector have no job security and they have to work for a lower salary. If at all they protest, they are removed from the job. And for a small salary, managements will not get experienced teachers.** The education imparted is thus mediocre. Therefore, **the need of the hour is free education and it must be made a fundamental right,'** said Justice Hariparanthaman." [*New Indian Express*, 27 November 2016]

Indonesia: The Bandung municipal administration is seeking [\\$4.6 billion in "public private partnerships"](#) to finance the development of infrastructure facilities in the city. "Among the potential projects to be executed under this partnership are **the construction of overpasses and other public facilities, including video surveillance.**"

Myanmar: Philippe Le Houerou, executive vice president and chief executive officer of the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, [pushes 'public private partnerships' in the country.](#) He says IFC will hopefully support **municipal PPPs.** He hopes the Myingyan 225 megawatt gas-fired power plant in the country's Mandalay region, **becomes a "role model for how PPPs are developed in the energy sector."**

New Zealand: In the wake of another powerful earthquake, [the government is considering turning over the assessment of claims to private insurers.](#) "Under questioning from Labour the Government **has admitted that they're in discussions to privatise a core function of EQC to decide how much a claim is worth, giving that function to the very businesses who have to pay out those claims.** Labour doesn't have a problem with insurance companies playing a role, but giving them the ability to define the value of claims creates a conflict of interest."

New Zealand: [Concerns grow that child and family protective services may be privatised.](#) "Moana Jackson raised concern about **this change being part of global changes to privatise core social services;** just like legislation to claim state ownership was followed in a matter of months by applications for offshore oil drilling. **He fears we will**

soon see **Serco and G4S running large parts of our child protection services** like they are planning in the UK. He rightly pointed out that we know Serco have been visiting CYF residences and we know Anne Tolley has met with them. I have been asking parliamentary questions trying to find out what overseas businesses and charities the Minister has been meeting with and she refuses to answer. **The first wave of legislation to enable privatisation of our child protection services is going through Parliament at the moment.** The risk is real, and it is a risk to all, but mostly it is to Māori, because more than 60% of children in care are Māori.”

Pakistan: [A Turkish organisation has been brought in to manage some of the Punjab's public hospitals.](#) “A top official of the Primary and Secondary Health department confirmed the decision of **outsourcing the management of government hospitals** after they received hundreds of complaints about mismanagement. (...) The officer said the hospitals **will not be privatised, rather outsourced**, only adding outsourcing of the management of Indus Hospital Bedian Road Lahore that resulted in improved service **prompted the provincial government to outsource hospitals in cities other than Lahore as well.**”

Pakistan: [The District Education Department has prepared a list of 200 primary schools for privatisation](#) after they failed to enroll students and showed poor results in the 2016 exams. Executive District Officer (education) Qazi Zahoorul Haq “said **schools mostly in the far-flung areas had been handed over to the private sector.**”

South Korea: Choi Soon-sil, who is implicated in the influence peddling scandal now rocking President Park Geun-hye's government, weighed in on privatisation decisions. “‘When I worked at the Blue House, people were telling me if you get near Choi Soon-sil ... you will quietly be gone,’ Cho Eung-chun, who was a senior presidential secretary in 2013 and 2014, told parliament on Oct 18. **‘I raised issues about privatisation of public power and opaque decision-making processes so was kicked out,’** said Cho, now an opposition lawmaker.” South Korean workers recently launched a major wave of strikes that attracted international support. “The truckers' strike is the latest event in an autumn of industrial actions launched by Korean unions. In late September, other [**Korean Public Service and Transport Workers' Union (KPTU)**] transport affiliates **began a general strike against the government's imposition of performance-related pay and a termination system.** Those actions will supposedly align the Korean economy with international practices but in fact provide tools for employers to easily get rid of excess and militant workers.”

South Korea: The Economist Intelligence Unit says “although diminished in political power since the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis, South Korean unions retain considerable ability to disrupt operations in key industries,” and “in reality, strikes rarely affect foreign companies, but **are more focused on domestic enterprises and opposition to the government's privatisation plans.**” [EIU, *South Korea risk: Alert - Risk scenario watchlist*, 3 October 2016]

Thailand: **The failure of a private contractor to do its job has led to the creation of an immense and smelly garbage mountain** that [the Koh Tao tambon municipality can no longer handle.](#) “The waste incinerator broke down in 2013 and has yet to be fully repaired, it said. At the same time, **SEM-BQ, the waste management contractor, has failed to dispose of the garbage by the amount required in the contract. The municipality did not renew the contract with the company when it expired on Aug 15.**”

Vietnam: [Ho Chi Minh City is seeking private investment to help clean up and develop some of its canals.](#) “architect Nguyễn Trường Lưu, chairman of the HCM City Architect Association, said **the city was continuing to struggle to seek funds for projects** to improve the areas near canals and rivers in the city. In the past, capital for such projects came from Official Development Assistance (ODA) loans and the state budget. But now the city has to call for investment from the private sector in and outside the country.”

Inter-America

Brazil: President Michel Temer is seeking Japanese support for his privatisation program. “Thirty-four state enterprises, including sea- and airports and oil and gas production assets, will be privatised to help bolster growth. (...) The president called Japan a longstanding economic partner to Brazil, as more than 700 Japanese companies have a presence in the South American nation. Temer’s government **hopes the privatisations will attract new Japanese investment**, he said.”

Brazil: The Senate has backed austerity measures despite massive public resistance. Opponents say the cuts will devastate public education and health services. “The reform, previously known as PEC 241, **freezes public spending rates for the next 20 years** by tying any increase to social assistance programs to the previous year’s inflation rate rather than GDP rates. This effectively **limits what all future governments can spend on health, education and social welfare**. Critics argued that the poor and marginalized in Brazilian society will disproportionately bear the burden of the cuts that will **significantly undermine rights enshrined in the constitution**. Despite massive protests, senators have furthermore rejected the possibility of holding a referendum on whether to accept the reforms or not. Protests continued while the vote moved through the Senate.”

Canada: Service workers at the University of Manitoba continue to work, but back the 1,200 faculty members on strike. “A spokesperson for Unifor, the union representing 450 cleaning, food and maintenance staff on campus, said while members are obligated to work, the union ‘fully supports’ the strike. ‘Right now we are advising our members to attend work because they don’t have any right to refuse to work,’ said Ken Stuart, Unifor’s Manitoba director. ‘We’re encouraging them to join them in the picket line whenever they have an opportunity to do so.’ (...) Sessional instructors, lecturers, teaching assistants and markers are also legally required to work, but **Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3909** is also advising its 1,200 members to support the strike when they’re not on the job. **A notice on the CUPE website says the presence of staff at the picket line ‘will be a big morale booster.’**”

Canada: A province-wide tour of Alberta organized by Public health advocate Friends of Medicare and the Canadian Union of Public Employees is defending the right to public long-term care and demanding that the province stop approving new private facilities. A recent report called “Losing Ground” found **public facilities provide more hours of direct care per resident per day than private facilities**, which means better patient outcomes.

Guatemala: Indigenous water protectors fight against the privatisation of their access to rivers by hydroelectric companies. “Residents along the river have also seen their access to the river limited by the construction project. “Now **no one can enter to swim, to fish and to collect water where they are installing the project because they are installing security fences**,” Caal said. ‘This has a psychological impact. Before, one could go down to the river to bathe, collect water and wash clothing. But now there are well armed private security officers along the river.’”

Mexico: The city of Querétaro has approved the privatisation of potable water, drainage, sewage, and the treatment and disposal of wastewater services. Last February, the mayor of Querétaro, Marcos Aguilar Vega, **privatised five services, including garbage collection**, and authorized the installation of private parking meters.

Mexico: Organizing continues over the issue of water privatisation in Mexico City. “Clara Brugada and Mardonio Carballo presented the initiative to reform the draft Constitution of the City of Mexico to establish **and ensure the Human right to Water.**”

Mexico: Health workers march in Mexico City against budget cuts and in defense of public health staffing. Members of the **Alliance of Health Workers and Public Employees**, led by representative, **Antonio Vital**, say the mobilisations will continue until the federal government **sits down with them to discuss privatisation**,

budget cuts and dismissals. They are also demanding **an audit of the sector** and the hiring of 32,000 additional staff.

United States: Youngstown, Ohio's mayor **unhesitatingly supports housing refugees in his city's privatised, for-profit prison.** "I'm very much in favor of having the opportunity to fill that facility up—not only with detainees—but also with employees," he said. **Carl Takei of the American Civil Liberties Union** has called Federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement's use of for-profit detention facilities "**mind boggling.**" For-profit prison companies are touting immigration detention **as a growth strategy to their investors.**

United States: [A new investigative report finds that public contracts with private companies are shrouded in secrecy.](#) "The government in Allentown, Pennsylvania, was desperate to find ways to fund its pension plan for city employees, which was about \$160 million short. Officials decided in 2012 that **selling off the city's public water system** was the best solution. They gave serious consideration to contracting with Suez North America, a private water company with headquarters in Paramus, New Jersey. With such a momentous decision looming, Mary Grant, of the advocacy group Food & Water Watch, said she thought **residents should have some say in the deal. She tried to get information from the city about the offers from bidders before a contract was approved. But then she hit a wall – one erected by Suez and the city itself.** The company had intervened and urged the city to turn down the group's request for financial information related to the deal, Grant said. It took the state's Office of Open Records to force the city to come up with some of the financial information that Grant was seeking. But it was six months after the city approved the deal on April 13, 2013, and a year after Grant's initial request, **rendering the documents essentially useless.**"

Europe

Europe: The European Investment Bank (EIB) is calling for a new framework to [boost the use of "public private partnerships."](#) **Two new reports** have been published by EIB—[Breaking Down Investment Barriers at Ground Level](#) and [Hurdles to PPP investments.](#)

European Union: Participants in **a conference on "the Privatisation of Health in the European Union"** produce a [manifesto for the recovery of privatised health centers.](#) [[Manifesto](#)]

France: Conservative presidential candidate Francois Fillon said he was [favourable towards privatisations of state shareholdings](#) in order to raise cash for investments in major infrastructure projects. Fillon has also come under heavy fire for proposing to transfer part of the coverage provided by social security to insurance companies and mutuals. **Marisol Touraine, Minister of Social Affairs and Health, expressed indignation at this "privatisation" of the health system.** [*Ouest France*, 1 December 2016]

Greece: Public **sector workers** [strike against the EU/IMF privatisation demands.](#) **Labour unions have strongly opposed the sale of energy utilities, including a stake at power company PPC.** But the shareholders of Greece's national power utility PPC have approved the sale of a 24% stake in PPC's fully-owned power transmission network subsidiary ADMIE [to China's State Grid International Development.](#)

Poland: The government [has outsourced curriculum development to a private provider.](#) In October, [thousands of teachers demonstrated](#) against so-called education reforms that would take curricula in "**a nationalist, xenophobic direction.**" Angelo Gavrielatos of Education International, says "we've got a big struggle ahead of us," says "but we know what needs to be done: organise, organise, organise!"

Spain: [Opposition to the ratification of CETA solidifies, with left parties demanding a referendum.](#) “On the part of Esquerra, Teresa Jordà has criticized that CETA ‘**favors the privatisation of public services**’ and will mean a reduction of labor rights,”

Spain: [The movement for water remunicipalisation gains steam.](#) Under the slogan “Water is not a Business,” the Madrid City Council has organized a meeting of Cities for Public Water in conjunction with the Public Water Network (RAP). Included were the mayors of Barcelona, Valencia, Zaragoza, Cordoba, Valladolid, La Coruna, Terrassa, Santiago de Compostela and Arganda del Rey, and Madrid Mayor Manuela Carmena. The meeting featured the participation of Celia Blauel, Deputy Mayor of Paris, who discussed **the experience of recovery of public water management in the French capital.**

Spain: The government of La Palma wants to unify street lighting throughout the island, [with the privatisation of the service over the next seven years](#) through an energy efficiency project. **Half of the municipalities are skeptical, and do not see benefits of this measure,** while others have agreed to participate in the initiative but **require clarification on the conditions of the contract documents, which do not yet exist.**

Spain: Luisa Lores discusses [the privatisation of knowledge in the National Health System.](#) “The industry **now aims to control information, research, innovation and teaching, that is, the essence of the system,** to redirect professionals and patients according to their interests.”

Spain: Public health advocates in Castilla and Leon [warn that health professionals are being drawn into the process of further privatisation of the health services.](#) They say the Clinical Management Units prioritize savings in health spending over health outcomes. Under the pretext of a greater involvement by health professionals in the organization and management of services, organized into units with supposed greater autonomy and independence, **they see an intention to make them accomplices of political power in health cuts.**

United Kingdom: [Public Finance International reports](#) that “British MPs have said **moves to quadruple funding for the UK aid agency’s private sector arm open the door to the privatisation of the aid budget and could divert funding** from the world’s poorest people at a time when the budget is set to shrink.” The proposals “**have outraged critics who point to the CDC’s chequered history.**”

United Kingdom: A leaked document outlines a major overhaul of Oxfordshire healthcare delivery, [with services consolidated under an American-style privatised system.](#) “Andrew Smith, the MP for Oxford East, said: ‘It’s stunning to see this popping up out of the blue. It’s called an “Accountable Care Organisation,” but its accountability has not got off to a good start, as **it’s not clear how it will be accountable to the public.** Coordination and integration of these services might well make sense but, especially **with all the legitimate fears about cuts and privatisation,** those planning change in vital NHS and community services need to take the public with them in explaining how it would work and how patients would benefit.’”

United Kingdom: [The outsourcing of tax credits administration to a for-profit American company, Concentrix, sees tens of thousands of claimants wrongly stripped of their benefits.](#) “**Public and Commercial Services union general secretary Mark Serwotka** said the ‘utter failure’ of the Concentrix contract showed **private profit should have no place in the running of public services.** ‘The Concentrix scandal should not just spell the end of the privatisation of tax credits work in HMRC, it should be the final nail in the coffin for the hiving off of our welfare state,’ he said.”

United Kingdom: [A disillusioned UKIP councillor has defected to the Labour Party](#) over the new UKIP leader Paul Nuttall’s **support for privatisation of the National Health Service.** “I think that is a drastic mistake. I think the NHS needs help - not selling down the river,” said Jack Parsons.

United Kingdom: More than 3,000 postal workers **go on strike** while their union and its supporters staged a deathly spectacle fitting for Halloween. “Workers at post office branches, admin departments and in supply chain units fear they will lose their jobs and that Crown branches would be put out to franchise. The Post Office said about 80 of its branches had been forced to close. Staff—who also went on strike [in October]—gathered outside the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy before hordes of people watched the sombre procession make its way through Westminster to the tunes of a brass band. **CWU general secretary Dave Ward** warned that the Post Office was at risk of demise. He said: “The Post Office is now at crisis point—it needs a new strategy as a matter of urgency.”

[Public Services International](#) *is a global trade union federation representing 20 million working women and men who deliver vital public services in 150 countries. PSI champions human rights, advocates for social justice and promotes universal access to quality public services. PSI works with the United Nations system and in partnership with labour, civil society and other organisations.*