



19th PSI Steering Committee - 18 November 2015

Emergency Resolution on Terrorism

On Friday 13 November 2015, simultaneous attacks were carried out at six sites around the French capital, killing 129 people and wounding at least 300 others. Public Services International expresses our deepest sympathy with the victims killed and wounded in the attacks in Paris and their families, and our revolt at this senseless and extreme use of violence. We stand in solidarity with the French people, its trade unions, and with all the workers of the emergency, health and security services who are on the frontline of these bloody attacks. The fearlessness of the medics and hospital staff, the ambulance crews, the police and fire fighters is testament to the essential role public services play in society. It is during atrocities like this that we witness how crucial public services are, and the need to strengthen rather than weaken their provision. Emergencies like this remind us of the importance of public governance and the provision of public services to ensure the security and safety of people.

As a trade union organisation, PSI reiterates its stand against all acts of violence towards civilians and deplors the violent attacks perpetrated all over the world. On 18 March 2015, three terrorists attacked the Bardo National Museum in the Tunisian capital city of Tunis, killing 23 people and injuring 50 others. On 26 June, 38 people were killed and at least 39 others were wounded in Sousse, a holiday resort in Tunisia. An attack on a Russian charter plane on the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt killed all 224 aboard on 31 October. These attacks clearly also have as their objective to further weaken already fragile governments and economies by damaging the tourist industry and worsening unemployment.

Brutal bomb attacks in Ankara on 10 October killed 96 people and wounded 250 peaceful demonstrators. PSI affiliates, members of the DISK and KESK confederations, participated in a peace rally calling for an end to the renewed violence between Kurdish rebels and Turkish security forces. On 12 November, one day before the French attacks, two suicide bombers killed 43 people and wounded 239 more in the Lebanese capital in an ISIS-propagated murder. We also strongly condemn the ongoing terror by Boko Haram in Nigeria and Cameroun, as well as the extreme violence used against civilian populations in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and elsewhere.

These attacks are meant to inspire fear and hatred, pushing towards a spiral of ever more violence. The perpetrators of these heinous crimes, and those who support them, have to be identified and brought to justice, but we must also tackle the root causes of this terror. At a time of heightened tensions, and the continuing instability in Syria and beyond, it is crucial that we do not make scapegoats and jump to ill-conceived conclusions. We need to come together and strengthen our resolve to work for a peaceful solution to the conflicts that are seeing the ever-growing exodus of people from war-torn areas.

There cannot be justice without peace, but equally there can be no peace without justice. We call on governments to pursue the diplomatic route and reach political decisions that can ensure both peace and justice. The deaths of thousands of innocent people cannot be a justification for a renewed arms race and a clamp down on civil and political rights, both in the North and South. We have to remain vigilant that freedom of speech and freedom of association are not curtailed under the banner of the fight against terrorism. Instead, we call for more investment in education, health and other essential public services that are fundamental to building inclusive societies.

PSI and its affiliates around the world stand united and in solidarity for peace, tolerance, justice and a better future for all.