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**International Workers' Memorial Day  
International Day of Mourning  
28 April 2014**

**No more excuses!**

**It is the duty of governments and enterprises to protect the health and safety of workers**

On this International Workers' Memorial Day that commemorates workers who have died or suffered injury at work, Public Services International speaks out against the governments and enterprises that persist in ignoring their obligation to protect the health and safety of workers in their workplaces.

Worldwide, workers are asked to get more done, work harder, faster and more intensely, regardless of their physical capacity and regardless of the environmental conditions, because global competition is imposing schedules and output quotas that severely affect their working conditions and pose an increasing threat to their health and safety.

The world will mourn today in memory of the more than 1 100 victims and more than 2 000 injured at Rana Plaza, the factory building that collapsed in Bangladesh a year ago (25 April 2013).

This event shocked the world, yet progress in protecting the health and safety of workers remains intolerably and painfully slow, even non-existent.

Countless employers persist in treating workers as a commodity, as a means to increase their profit, denying them their rights and preventing them from organizing so that they can have a trade union to support their claims and help them to fight for their rights, including the right to protection from disease and injury at work.

In the public services, working conditions are worsening because of austerity policies that cause cuts in public spending. This is having a strong impact on the health of workers, especially women workers.

In health and social care services, working conditions are aggravated by higher patient loads as workers are asked to provide more care with fewer staff. These conditions also cause more musculoskeletal damage to workers and provoke verbal and physical violence in the health workplace. Slashed budgets result in cost cutting on equipment which leads to needle stick injuries.

Health and social care workers are also exposed to increasing levels of stress and burnout in their frustration at having to meet the needs of patients with less time and fewer resources.

Privatization and outsourcing are also worsening the conditions of workers in this sector because requirements to protect workers' health are not passed on to the contractors, who feel no obligation otherwise to respect occupational health and safety standards.

Workers in the waste sector are most frequently unprotected and suffer many preventable injuries. Outsourcing has become the 'business model' whereby governments offload their responsibilities onto workers and their communities.

The energy sector, in particular in electricity, is fraught with dangers to workers. Both public and private employers are neglecting occupational health and safety measures as a way to cut costs. In some countries, the deaths and injuries are truly astounding.

Governments are misguided in cutting public services budgets; wisdom and a long-term view say that they should rather enforce the regulations and controls that ensure full respect for international labour standards to help avert the tragedy of workplace accidents, injuries and diseases.

The foundation for the protection of the health and safety of workers is, internationally, the recognition of trade unions rights.

A small minority of countries have ratified the three International Labour Standards on occupational safety and health considered fundamental (Nos. 155, 161 and 187). The failures of governments and of employers are shameful.

Public Services International proclaims today that disrespect for occupational health and safety is a crime, further delay in protecting workers is immoral, and the time to correct this violation of workers' rights is NOW!