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Dear Minister,

In defence of Fire-fighters-Rescuers in Georgia!

We are writing to you on behalf of Public Services International (PSI) and the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU), representing more than 28 million public workers around the world, to express our concern about the situation faced by Fire-fighters-Rescuers in Georgia.

We have been informed by the Tbilisi Firefighter-Rescuers Trade Union, affiliate of the Georgian Public Servants Trade Union (PSTUG), our Georgian affiliate, that the situation of Fire-fighters-Rescuers in your country is utterly unacceptable. These workers risk their lives, but have no adequate equipment and are faced with daily abuse by their employer.

According to Georgian law, strike action is forbidden and there is no mechanism for mediation or mandatory arbitration. Since only protest action is allowed, over sixty current and former employees are currently gathering in front of the Emergency and Urgent Services' administration building to protest for their rights since 12th February 2014.

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ЕВРОПЕЙСКАЯ
ФЕДЕРАЦИЯ
ПРОФСОЮЗОВ
ОБЩЕСТВЕННОГО
ОБСЛУЖИВАНИЯ

Some of the protesters started a hunger strike, which rapidly grew up in number and, by the ninth day, 16 workers continue their actions.

The protesters have presented the following demands:

- Dismissal of the Director of the Emergency and Urgent Services Agency and investigation into the management's decisions;
- An end to persecution of elected union leaders and intimidation of union members;
- Annulment of the termination of employment of the workers who have been fired on the basis of false accusations;
- Improvement of working conditions and safety at work, including special uniforms and tools;
- Stop regular practice of "kickbacks" to management;
- Stop using the labour of fire-fighters and rescuers during working hours for private purposes by management;
- Pay the 13th month and overtime pay that workers are entitled to.

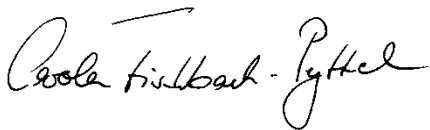
Georgia has gone through a difficult reform process of the labour code in recent years. We call on your government to foresee effective instruments for conciliation for those employees who do not have the right to strike and to create an appropriate dialogue platform for public service unions and the government – both at local and national level. The Tripartite Social Partnership Commission should be an effective platform for dialogue.

We express our deepest solidarity with the Georgian trade unions and will continue to support them in their struggle.

Yours sincerely,



Rosa PAVANELLI
PSI General Secretary



Carola FISCHBACH-PYTTEL
EPSU General Secretary