

October 20, 2006

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Gloria Macapagal Arroyo
President
Malacañang Palace
JP Laurel Street, San Miguel
Manila 1005
PHILIPPINES

Dear President Gloria Arroyo:

Re: Annie Geron, President of PSLINK and six other TESDA workers

We are writing, on behalf of the Canadian Union of Public Employees' 550,000 members, to express our deep concern about actions that we understand have been taken against Annie Geron, the President of the Public Sector Labour Independent Confederation of the Philippines (PSLINK) and other members of staff at the Technical Education Skills and Department Authority (TESDA). We believe that these actions constitute a violation of the ILO Convention 87 on freedom of association.

CUPE is an affiliate of the Public Services International (PSI), which has informed us that on October 16th Annie Geron, the President of PSLINK, and other staff, were issued with transfer orders to very remote areas of the country. The unit that Annie Geron supervised was essentially dismantled and her husband was threatened with dismissal. Other staff members were also warned that they might receive transfer orders.

We understand that these acts of intimidation and harassment were taken because PSLINK has filed a complaint with the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission and Ombudsman, charging the Director General of TESDA with embezzlement and other corrupt practices. On October 10th, Annie Geron gave a radio interview where she outlined these charges. The Director General's actions appear to be a direct consequence of this interview.

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These threats have been continuing for a long period of time and date back to February 2003. CUPE supports PSI's call for the protection of all workers and PSLINK members at TESDA, including and in particular, the rights of Annie Geron, the General Secretary.

We urge your government to take immediate action to withdraw the transfer orders, to investigate the charges of threats and intimidation, and to ensure that the complaint before the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission and Ombudsman be fully investigated as required under Philippine law.

Sincerely,

PAUL MOIST
National President

CLAUDE GÉNÉREUX
National Secretary-Treasurer

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