

PSI Urgent Action



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Support needed for public sector unions in South Africa

PSI has received a request for political support from its affiliates in South Africa. Public sector trade unions in South Africa called a general strike on 1 June following a break down in negotiations with the government. The unions are asking for a 10 per cent salary increase (originally 12 per cent), whilst the government is proposing a possible rise of 7.25 per cent. Meanwhile, proposed salary increases of 57% for the State President and 37% for Members of Parliament have fuelled the union's disillusionment.

The government has retaliated to the strike action by issuing letters of dismissal to more than 600 "essential-service" workers, mainly health care workers, and threatening to dock the pay of many others. The government has also deployed police and defence forces in attempts to curb the strike action.

Many more public sector workers, including municipal and transport workers, joined the strike in a day of action on Wednesday 13 June.

PSI is asking affiliates to show solidarity with public sector workers in South Africa by:

- Sending letters of protest to the South African government demanding the reinstatement of the sacked workers and the resumption of negotiations in good faith;
- Sending messages of support to affiliates in South Africa.

Please find a model letter below. Please send copies of the urgent action to PSI at rights@world-psi.org, and to the South African public sector unions at administrator@publicservices.co.za as well as a copy to the South African mission in your country.

Or you can send this online at www.world-psi.org/urgentaction.

Model Letter

President Thabo Mbeki
Union Buildings
West Wing - Second floor
Private Bag X1000
Government Avenue
PRETORIA 0001

Fax: +27 12 323 8246
E-Mail: president@anc.org.za

Dear President Mbeki,

Public sector unions on strike

[Name of your organisation] is writing to express its dismay over the escalation of the dispute between public sector workers in South Africa and the South African Government.

The trade unions are calling for a 10% increase in base salaries together with improvements in housing and medical subsidies.

[Name of your organisation] has been informed that your government has responded to the general strike called by public sector trade unions on 1 June by issuing letters of dismissal to over 600 workers, including nurses and teachers, and by threatening to dock the pay of many others. **[Name of your organisation]** has further been informed that the government has deployed police and defence forces in attempts to curb the strike action.

Public sector workers are the backbone of government at all levels and proper recognition of their work - reflected in decent pay and working conditions - is essential to the delivery of public services and the development of public policy.

[Name of your organisation] strongly urges your government to:

- Withdraw all letters of dismissal issued as a consequence of the strike
- Reinstatement those workers who have been dismissed for taking part in the strike
- Resume negotiations in good faith as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely,

[Name]

cc PSI rights@world-psi.org
administrator@publicservices.co.za
South African mission in your country

Public Services International (PSI) is a global trade union federation that represents 20 million women and men working in the public services around the world. It has some 600 affiliated unions in almost 150 countries. PSI is an autonomous body, which works in association with federations covering other sectors of the workforce and with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). PSI is an officially recognised non-governmental organisation for the public sector within the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and has consultative status with ECOSOC and observer status with other UN bodies such as UNCTAD and UNESCO.