

Public Services International

30th World Congress

Geneva, 2017



PEOPLE OVER PROFIT

FOR TRADE UNION AND LABOUR RIGHTS OF ALL UN WORKERS

PSI CONGRESS DEMONSTRATION | PLACE DES NATIONS | 1 NOVEMBER 2017 | 13:00 – 13:45

International civil servants are vital for global governance and indispensable in promoting human rights but they are also exposed to threats and attacks where they are deployed. They often lack basic rights such as access to collective bargaining while facing obstacles in accessing justice.

Recently, the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) tried to unilaterally slash pay for UN Geneva-based staff by 7.5 per cent. UN staff members also face increasing uncertainty with regards to contractual status, benefits, and job loss related to outsourcing and offshoring. There have been cases of retaliation and arbitrary decisions against staff representatives and union officials, including dismissals. This situation produces poor working conditions and has an adverse impact on the UN's work.

Today non-staff contractors make up 40 percent of the workforce, half of whom have had contractor status for five years or more. This results in a dual workforce: one with full rights and entitlements and another with no or limited entitlements, working in the same organization. This is not in line with international labour principles nor the values promoted by the United Nations.

We also aim to address the issue of unpaid internships in the majority of UN organisations. A significant concern is that they are actively replacing entry-level jobs, limiting access to those who can somehow afford to work for free, usually with parental support, and therefore exacerbating existing inequalities.

Unpaid interns constitute an increasingly large proportion of the UN's workforce, with a dramatic 10% increase in intern numbers in the past four years. There is a need to adopt the best existing practices: paying all the UN's interns a living stipend similar to that provided by the ILO, to ensure diversity and equal access.

PSI solidarizes with international civil servants worldwide, as well as UN consultants, interns, volunteers and all those serving and risking their lives in often dangerous theatres of war, peace-keeping operations, natural disasters, epidemic emergencies and defending the rule of law.

We call on the UN to respect the labour and trade union rights of its workers! We need a strong and unified United Nations, that values its workers and provides fair and equal treatment! We need a United Nations that reflects diversity, recognizes the value of labour and pays its interns!

Speakers at the Rally:

Rosa Pavanelli – General Secretary, Public Services International

Catherine Comte-Tiberghien, ILO Staff Union

Jamshid Gaziyeu, UN staff unions

Bibi Sherifa Khan – UN NYC staff union

UN Interns - Fair Internship Initiative

ILO and UN Staff Unions are affiliated to PSI. The NYC UN Staff Union is affiliated to PSI affiliate AFT (American Federation of Teachers)

Public Services International is a global trade union federation representing 20 million working women and men who deliver vital public services in 150 countries. PSI champions human rights, advocates for social justice and promotes universal access to quality public services. PSI works with the United Nations system and in partnership with labour, civil society and other organisations.