



15/03/2018

Dear Secretary-General Guterres

On behalf of Public Services International and the 20 million public sector workers we represent around the globe, I am writing to express our deep concern at the substantial deterioration in the employment conditions and relations of United Nations Staff.

Of particular concern was the recent communique to all *United Nations Office in Geneva* workers, which clearly attempts to discourage workers from taking part in union activity. The communique states: "staff Regulations and Rules provide no basis for staff members to be absent from work because of a work stoppage or strike."

As we are sure you are aware, the right to strike is ensured by a range of International Treaties and is enshrined under Article Eight of the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Political Rights as well as by the recognition of the right to take industrial action linked to ILO Convention 87 on Freedom of Association.

Furthermore, the UN and ILO Administrative Tribunals have, for decades, affirmed the right to strike and other forms of legitimate industrial action for International Civil Servants, the latter declaring in Judgement 615 that "as a matter of principle, a strike is lawful."

It is frankly astonishing to see the United Nations so clearly undermine these fundamental rights which the labour movement has fought for over a century to achieve. It is our firm belief that the United Nations, as the primary global advocate for Human Rights, needs to lead by example. Failure to do so will lead to accusations of hypocrisy and could create lasting damage to the organisation's reputation.

With this in mind, we implore you to publicly affirm the right of United Nations workers to take part in industrial action, as proposed by the Coordinating Committee for Staff Unions and Associations (CCISUA). We hope that you will commit to implementing a coherent system of collective bargaining and respect for trade union rights across the UN System.

We also request that you ensure that Staff concerns regarding the International Civil Service Commission and its flawed processes are swiftly addressed to avoid further deterioration in relations between unions and management.

In closing, your record of statesmanship and dedication to progressive ideals and social dialogue leaves us hopeful that you will duly take our concerns into account.

In solidarity,

Rosa Pavanelli
General Secretary
Public Services International