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30 September, 2009

Dear President,

Support for dismissed KENT-AS workers

I write on behalf of the Public Services International (PSI) representing 20 million public service workers in more than 150 countries and territories to express our concern and dismay on learning of the dismissal of 276 workers following the contracting out of the municipal services previously provided by KENT-AS in Karsiyaka Municipality in İzmir.

The 276 workers are all members of Genel-İs, one of our largest affiliates in Turkey. Genel-İs has informed us that the Municipality dismissed these workers due to lack of resources and excess workforce. PSI believes that the main reason for dismissing these workers was to outsource these services. Indeed, shortly after the dismissals took place, the municipal services were contracted out and there are now more workers covered by these contracts than the previously dismissed workers.

PSI believes that outsourcing or contracting out municipal services adds to the cost of public administration both in financial and social terms. We also have evidence from other countries that contracting out of services can lead to corruption.

The workers' struggle has been going on for 5 months now. Genel-İs leaders say that they have sought conciliation with the Municipality Administration but to date have not received a response despite all their efforts. As a result, they have now started a long protest march from İzmir to Ankara. PSI was dismayed to learn of police interference and health problems during the march.

This is a clear violation of trade union rights: dismissals for contracting out are unacceptable.

PSI will be closely monitoring the situation and has launched a solidarity action in full support of its affiliate Genel-İs and their members in this process.

We trust that you will find a just and lasting solution to this problem.

Sincerely yours,

Peter Waldorff
PSI General Secretary

cc. EPSU Liaison Office
Jürgen BUXBAUM, PSI European Regional Secretary
ITUC Brussels and Geneva
Turkey mission in Geneva