



Public Services International  
Internationale des Services Publics  
Internacional de Servicios Públicos  
Internationale der Öffentlichen Dienste  
Internationell Facklig Organisation för Offentliga Tjänster  
國際公務勞連



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - Friday, 02 March 2012**

## **Union women – at the heart of the struggle for basic trade union rights**

*Public Services International celebrates International Women's Day - 8 March*

On International Women's Day, 8 March 2012, Public Services International recognises and applauds the work of women trade unionists, who are always at the very heart of our struggle for human and labour rights and equality.

We express our solidarity with our sisters who place themselves on the front line, delivering vital public services to the most vulnerable in our communities. We call on governments to recognise their contribution and to guarantee, respect and strengthen their human and trade union rights.

PSI General Secretary Peter Waldorff says, "We cannot accept that 15 women trade unionists should be arrested recently in Turkey, simply for advocating for women's rights. Nor can we accept that women leaders in Algeria are now imprisoned for protesting against precarious working conditions. We cannot accept that thousands of women should lose their jobs in Botswana, for defending their right to a decent wage. And we cannot accept that despite women being at the heart of the struggle in the Arab spring, their basic human rights are still to be secured.

"Such disrespect of women's human and trade union rights weakens us all. Governments must know that they are not above the rule of law and that together we will hold them to account for their actions."

EPSU General Secretary Carola Fischbach-Pyttel adds, "In these days of economic crisis, the focus on austerity measures is proving to be the wisdom of fools. Progress on gender equality is being rolled back. All the evidence shows that public services – where women form the majority of the workforce, are key to promote and achieve gender equality. And now these services are under threat; this will not only undermine the European Social Model, but will increase inequalities.

"This must end. We demand that our governments take action now to guarantee women's basic human rights, including the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining enshrined in international labour law and the European Union Fundamental Rights Charter. This must also include respect for the human rights to medical care and necessary social services, to social protection, to an adequate standard of living, and to live and work free from violence."

*PSI's beautiful 2012 International Women's Day posters are available for printing and distribution in numerous languages at [www.world-psi.org](http://www.world-psi.org)*

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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.