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Ride for workers' rights and social justice follows 'Route of Shame'

[Geneva, Switzerland] Led by members of the global union federation Public Services International (PSI), trade union leaders from around the world will join in a 'Route of Shame' bicycle ride Wednesday 12 June and visit missions and embassies in Geneva, Switzerland to draw attention to countries which consistently violate workers' rights.

The 'Route of Shame' takes place during the 102nd International Labour Conference (ILC) in Geneva. A major focus of the annual ILC is to determine whether countries are upholding their obligations to respect the rights of workers and their trade unions under International Labour Organization conventions.

Countries of specific concern for PSI members include Algeria, Egypt, South Korea, Guatemala, Botswana, Bangladesh, Columbia and Turkey. The ride will also highlight violations in Russia, Canada, Nigeria, Iran, Paraguay, Pakistan, Ethiopia, Honduras, Cameroon, Dominican Republic, Mauritania and Greece.

PSI General Secretary Rosa Pavanelli says, "A concerted attack on the public sector is taking place on a global scale, both in emerging economies where PSI affiliates struggle for full recognition of workers' rights, and in many other countries through austerity and privatisation measures that weaken trade unions and workers' rights. We demand social justice and the protection of workers' rights, instead of societies that violate human rights as a rule."

The 'Route of Shame' speakers will include trade union leaders from Algeria - where independent trade unions are violently suppressed by the government, and from Guatemala – where dozens of union members have been assassinated in recent years.

A number of other situations will also be highlighted. For example, in Egypt independent unions are being denied the right to strike or protest to silence their demands for a just society. Gross human rights violations are committed in Turkey where union members, including women and sometimes even their children, are locked up in isolation under false pretexts, and denied access to due legal process or medical treatment. In South Korea, democratic unions are denied recognition and workers are pushed into precarious employment.

Pavanelli says, "Too many governments prefer to act in the interest of the few, and that is why inequality is rising at an ever faster pace all over the world. We need investment in decent working and living conditions, supported by quality public services. We stand with the millions of workers who struggle for their rights and do not give in. International solidarity makes us stronger."

'Route of Shame' ride begins: Wednesday 12 June 18h30, Place des Nations, Geneva

Ends: 20h30, Bains des Paquis

Websites: www.world-psi.org and www.facebook.com/TheRouteOfShame

Photos for media use: www.flickr.com/photos/psi_isp_iska/sets/72157633809747319/

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