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Secretary General,

On behalf of Public Services International, and the more than 20 million public sector workers we represent worldwide, I write to you to express our deep concern following your recent decision to withdraw collective bargaining rights from the elected representatives of United Nations staff.

The highest quality of public services can only be delivered by workers whose rights are fully respected. To this end, Public Services International defends and advances the fundamental rights and conditions of work for all workers across the globe regardless of status. These rights begin with the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining. Of course the rights of public employees are also included here. In a context where workers' rights face an onslaught in both the private and public sectors, PSI is convinced that the UN is sending the wrong message by denying these fundamental rights to its own staff.

UN employees are certainly a special category of public employees, often exposed to particular risks to their health and physical integrity and with a strong sense duty to promote world peace and human dignity in a global context, above and beyond national administrations. For large numbers of UN staff this issue will directly affect their safety at work and place them at greater risk. For example, staff are now unable to negotiate for UN security officers to protect them in the field and must rely on unscreened private security companies instead.

You are sending an unacceptable message to the world that unions are not relevant, especially coming from the global organisation dedicated to peace, social justice and upholding the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the fundamental international labour conventions on freedom of association and collective bargaining of the International Labour Organization.

At the occasion of the World Day for Decent Work, we call on you to fully restore collective bargaining rights to UN Staff. The United Nations as an employer should set a global example in this regard. In doing so, we urge you to reconvene the talks that were abandoned on 14 June 2013.

Sincerely,

General Secretary

Cc: ILO Director General, ITUC Secretary General, all PSI affiliates