

### **Declaration of Solidarity with the people and trade unions of Korea.**

The Executive Board of Public Services International condemns the unlawful and dangerous attempt to impose martial law in Korea by President Yoon Suk-yeol and applauds the Korean trade union movement for its courageous and sustained struggle in defence of democracy.

Trade unionists fought hard to end martial law in Korea 44 years ago and have built a powerful and courageous union movement, persistent in their defence of labour rights, public services and democracy. The immediate response by trade unions, the announcement of a general strike and the rush of workers to the parliament in freezing weather, is a clear signal to the world that trade unions are at the heart of a successful democracy.

The declaration, purportedly aimed at "eradicating pro-North Korean forces and maintaining constitutional order," lacked legal justification based on any clear or immediate threat. It introduced a range of restrictive and unprecedented measures, including the prohibition of all political activities, strikes, work stoppages, and rallies. It placed all media and publications under the control of the Martial Law Command.

The attempts to declare Martial Law represented a grave and anti-democratic act endangering lives and undermining fundamental freedoms, including ILO principles on freedom of association. We recognise that this attempt was a continuation of the persistent attacks on trade unions that have occurred under the Presidency of Yoon Suk-yeol.

PSI strongly denounces the use of military and state apparatus to suppress democratic rights, prevent the functioning of parliament, and silence dissent. At a time where authoritarian rule is growing and democracy is under attack worldwide, trade unionists must deepen our collective resolve to demand workplace democracy, political democracy and the strengthening of public services and public institutions that are essential for a just and fair society. President Yoon Suk-yeol must be held accountable for this attack on the rule of law and democracy.

We express our respect and admiration for the courageous trade union decision to hold a general strike and carry out nationwide emergency actions to stop Martial Law and a potential dictatorship. We will continue to stand firmly with the people and trade unions of Korea in any further attempts to attack their rights and draw inspiration from Korean unions resolute defence of democracy.

The solidarity message was adopted on 4 December 2024, Geneva.

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