**PSI Supports the SES Struggle for Health Workers’ Rights and In Defence of Public Health**

The campaign’s central aims: to rally public support for SES in its struggle to improve the working conditions of health workers and push home the demands for universal public health care, could not have come at a more appropriate time.

Health workers and the public health system in Turkey and across the world have borne the burden of neoliberal policies such as austerity measures, outsourcing and other forms of privatisation. These have resulted in understaffed hospitals, poorly paid health workers and unsafe workplaces. This is a major reason for the general lack of crisis preparedness for the COVID-19 pandemic.

Yet, public health workers and the public health system have been the bastion of the pandemic response. Members of SES like public health workers across the world have risen up to the challenge of tackling the public health emergency and still continuing to deliver health services to the populace. You have done this even in the face of an unacceptable global shortage of personal protective equipment and within the history of a repressive regime which has repeatedly targeted health workers with several of your members brutalised and even at times detained for standing up for their trade union and labour rights.

Public Services International welcomes and fully supports the “Masks Talk” campaign of the Trade Union of Employees in Public Health and Social Services (SES) in Turkey. The campaign’s central aims: to rally public support for SES in its struggle to improve the working conditions of health workers and push home the demands for universal public health care, could not have come at a more appropriate time.

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Health workers have been described as heroes, with loud applauds replacing concrete action of governments to invest in staffing and decent work in the health services and to guarantee public healthcare for all. But we are not heroes or martyrs. We are workers who deserve and demand better working conditions. We are members of our communities who demand universal public healthcare, the only basis for guaranteeing the fundamental right of everybody to health. And now, the right to health includes universal access to free, effective, and safe vaccine.

PSI thus stands firmly in solidarity with SES and health officers in Turkey as you wage this important “Masks Talk” struggle with sit-in actions in your workplaces. We will lend the collective voice of 30 million public sectors across the world to this struggle through all our media channels. This is part of our collective international struggle to ensure health before wealth, and people over profit for the building of a better world from the devastation of the COVID-19 pandemic.