

Global agreement signed with G4S



UNI global union and security giant G4S - the second largest private employer in the world that operates in more than 110 countries - have signed a global agreement. The aim is to improve employment standards across the global security industry and ensure that employee and union rights are respected throughout the company. The agreement is likely to play an important role in raising standards across developing markets in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and South America - with more than two thirds of the Group's 570,000 employees. "We welcome this agreement as a first for a British employer in the services sector," said UNI's Philip Jennings. (christy.hoffman@uniglobalunion.org)

G4S agreement handshake: UNI General Secretary Philip Jennings, G4S Chief Executive Nick Buckles and GMB General Secretary Paul Kenny

Union call for action from G20

Union leaders lobbying the G20 summit in Washington - including UNI's Philip Jennings - called for urgent action to support the real economy as a first priority in ending the global economic crisis. World leaders were urged to find "urgent and exceptional measures" to stimulate economies around the world and to re-regulate financial markets to ensure no repeat of the crisis. Jobs are going around the world in a recession that saw 533,000 job losses in the United States in just one month. UNI's World Executive called for a new international system of financial governance. (philip.jennings@uniglobalunion.org)

Human Rights: Wal-Mart among five worst companies

Wal-Mart is among five companies spotlighted for their opposition to workers joining or forming trade unions around the world. On the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Labor Rights Forum released "Working for Scrooge - 5 worst companies for the right to associate". The five are: Wal-Mart (for violating worker rights in the USA, Canada and elsewhere), Nestlé, Del Monte, Dole and Russell (owned by Fruit of the Loom). Despite labour rights protection in declarations and national laws, workers continue to see their rights trampled on a daily basis. (LaborRights.org)

UNI President Joe Hansen and General Secretary Philip Jennings present UNI Finance's programme to reform the finance industry to IMF boss Dominique Strauss-Kahn in Washington during the lobby of the G20

India: solidarity with unions after Mumbai atrocities

UNI sent its sympathy and solidarity to unions in India following the atrocities in Mumbai that left about 170 people dead and 200 more wounded. "Our deep and sincere condolences to your nation and to the families," was UNI's message, with UNI Delhi keeping the organisation up-to-date with developments in Mumbai. (anjalisinha@unidocindia.org)



India: NASSCOM will not oppose unions

The Indian IT employers association NASSCOM, will not oppose unions - that was the assurance given by NASSCOM's Raju Bhatnagar. UNITES General Secretary Karthik Shekhar welcomed the assurance in the first meeting between NASSCOM and the union. Many IT employees do fear anti-union attitudes among employers. The discussions also covered prospects for the Indian IT industry and jobs in the global economic crisis. (unitesprofessionals@gmail.com)



Dialogue accord signed in Chile

On 2 December an accord to implement social dialogue in the graphical industry of Chile was signed in Santiago by Labour Minister Osvaldo Andrade Lara. Other signatures included union leaders Carlos Aguirre Vargas (Asimpres) and Valentín Vega (Conagra). Rubén Cortina, President of UNI-Americas, and Adriana Rosenzvaig, Head of the Graphical Sector, were also present at this historic event. The accord also commits to decent work. (adriana.rosenzvaig@uniglobalunion.org)

Minister at signing ceremony in Chile

UNI/Press/12-2008/0108

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UNI and Vigeo work together on CSR

UNI and Vigeo, the leading European Corporate Social Responsibility ratings agency, have concluded a partnership agreement. UNI and national unions will provide Vigeo with data, news and observations on individual companies and will work together to promote the inclusion of environmental, social and governance issues in the investment decision-making process. "It's time for a more measured and sustainable approach to investment," said UNI General Secretary Philip Jennings. (oliver.roethig@uniglobalunion.org)

Protest at new arrests in Zimbabwe

UNI has called for a halt to police violence against trade unionists in Zimbabwe. A peaceful demonstration called by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions was crushed by police who arrested 48 trade unionists. Unions were protesting against limits on cash withdrawals in the inflation-ravaged country and successfully presented a petition to the Reserve Bank Governor. UNI is urging the authorities in Zimbabwe to respect human rights. (uni-africa@uniglobalunion.org)

Union recognition confirmed in CNN

In a historic decision the US National Labour Relations Board has found Cable News Network - CNN - guilty of violating the rights of workers in their New York and Washington operations. The Board ordered the reinstatement of 110 workers with substantial damages and immediate recognition of NABET-CWA as their union with the right to bargain. A so-called "staffing project" was ruled a sham to avoid union recognition. CNN has long been anti-union with generally lower working conditions than comparative broadcasting operations in the USA. (jim.wilson@uniglobalunion.org)

UNI warning on survival of PE jobs

UNI has warned about the security of jobs in Private Equity owned companies - and the survival of some of those companies heavily laden with the debt of their own take-overs. Even jobs in the PE groups themselves are going in the global crisis - with 100 staff cuts reported in UK group 3i. UNI wants regulators to include Private Equity in the debate on a new regulatory architecture. In Canada auditors warned that a PE deal with a 92% price tag in debt covering Canadian telecoms group BCE (owner of Bell Canada) would endanger the company. (gabrielle.fulton@uniglobalunion.org)

Worldwide threat to Citigroup jobs

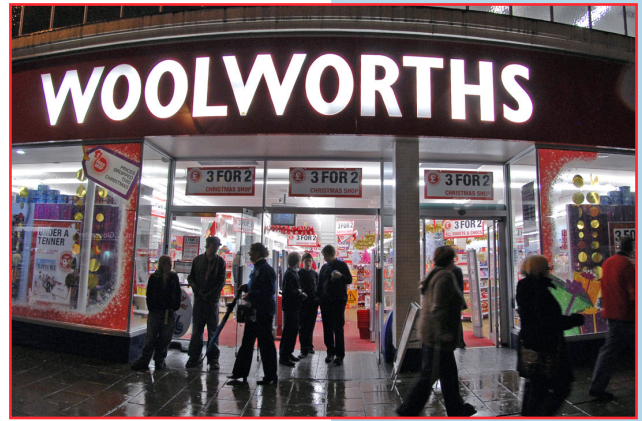
UNI Finance and affiliates are pressing for urgent talks over plans by Citigroup to cut 75,000 jobs worldwide. Citigroup has been bailed out by the US government after making the biggest losses in the sub prime market. A special meeting of the group's European Works Council is being urged along with full transparency to staff. (oliver.roethig@uniglobalunion.org)

Investment in jobs is best economic stimulus

CWA President Larry Cohen called for investment in high-speed broadband networks, critical to the USA's economic recovery. "Creating quality jobs - and the multiplier effect that produces additional job growth - is what will help our communities and get our country out of this economic crisis," he told his audience on Capitol Hill. CWA is one of more than 50 organisations, including companies, consumer and public interest groups, state and local governments and Internet providers and users that have signed up to a call for action on a national broadband strategy. (marcus.courtney@uniglobalunion.org)

Jobs threat on UK high streets

The future of thousands of shop workers in the UK is threatened by the news that High Street retailers Woolworths and MFI have been put into administration. Affiliate Usdaw has been pressing for urgent talks with the administrators for the two companies to ensure that the interests of members are at the top of the agenda. "Many of the staff have served these companies for many years and are extremely dedicated," said Usdaw's John Gorle. (jan.furstenborg@uniglobalunion.org)



Woolworth stores could face closure in the UK
(Photo: Howard Davies /ReportDigital)

Mediterranean initiative targets French banks

A Mediterranean alliance in the finance industry aims to strengthen union rights and collective bargaining in French-based banks in Tunisia. Tunis-based finance union FGBEF is working with French bank union federations with the aim of signing an agreement with French banks operating in the country. As well as union rights and collective bargaining in multinational banks in Tunisia it's hoped to build capacities and bridges between finance unions in the Mediterranean and the Middle East and North Africa region. (sassi.nasreddine@uniglobalunion.org)

Unions challenging precarious work

At the International Labour Organisation on 4 December, global unions, the ILO and academia discussed the issues of precarious work and how to respond to the challenges precariousness creates for workers and society at large. The implications of precarious work for individuals include increased stress, lower psychological well-being, economic deprivation and uncertainty in making life decisions. In its declaration on social justice for a fair globalisation, the ILO reaffirmed that labour is not a commodity. (ilo.org)

Clear message from Telstra workers

Telstra workers have voted overwhelmingly in favour of industrial action over the Australian company's ongoing refusal to negotiate a collective agreement. A secret ballot of nearly 4,400 workers was conducted by the Electoral Commission. 77% of members voted and backed action by a massive 90.3% majority. CEPU, CPSU and APESMA repeatedly tried to negotiate with Telstra, but the company rejected all requests to get back to the bargaining table. (marcus.courtney@uniglobalunion.org)

MENA: enhancing union cooperation in broadcasting

Steps to increase cooperation between broadcasting unions in the Middle East and North Africa region (MENA) and to enhance collective bargaining won support in Cairo in November. Unions from eight MENA countries focused on the threat to jobs from new technology, the need to ensure the full participation of women in broadcasting and improving health and safety. The seminar for Arabic-speaking broadcast unions was organised by UNI MEI global union, FES foundation Germany and the General Union of Press Printing and Information, Egypt. (jim.wilson@uniglobalunion.org)



Cairo seminar: Jim Wilson, Ibrahim Husary and Heinrich Bleicher-Nagelsmann

Access to HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment

For World AIDS Day, Global Union AIDS Programme chair Alan Leather appealed to governments, the international community and others to make universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment an urgent priority to reach the 2010 target. Leather wants to make sure the G8 takes action at its next Summit in Italy. Wide-scale workplace actions must be part of the response to HIV/AIDS, to the global economic crisis and to development longer term. (uni-africa@uniglobalunion.org)

Protesting job cuts in EDS/HP

More than 8,000 IT workers took part in a European action day organised by UNI and the EMF to protest against layoffs and worsening working conditions after the takeover of EDS by Hewlett Packard. There were events in Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Hungary, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. The company failed to respond to an approach from their Danish works council. Dutch unions protested on November 20 at 560 job cuts in their country. 24,000 job cuts are planned over the next three years - 9,330 in Europe - almost 8% of the entire workforce. (gerd.rohde@uniglobalunion.org)



Tripartite collective bargaining in Tunisia graphical



UNI-Americas staff at the Panama office



Pay negotiations underway in Tunisia

Negotiations in a number of sectors in Tunisia are well underway. Collective agreements are determined every three years with tripartite sectoral negotiations following dialogue between the trade union centre UGTT and the government. A key issue in the current negotiations is pay - following recent increases in food prices and overall inflation running at 4.2%. (uni-africa@uniglobalunion.org)

NALC stops delivery outsourcing in USA

The campaign of UNI Post & Logistics affiliate NALC to stop the use of contract workers to deliver mail in the United States has won agreement with the United States Postal Service to prohibit outsourcing in letter carrier workplaces until 2011 at least. The union has closed the low road of poorly paid, non-union contractors, said NALC's William H Young. The agreement also assigns new deliveries to career letter carriers rather than to contractors. (neil.anderson@uniglobalunion.org)

PE investment no solution for Irish banks

Irish finance affiliate IBOA is urging the government to reject substantial investments by private equity funds in Irish banks. The move could be a disaster for bank customers, staff, shareholders and for the country, warned IBOA General Secretary Larry Broderick. "An approach would offer a short-term easing of current problems - but at too high a cost in the long term." (oliver.roethig@uniglobalunion.org)

Bahrain campaign against union ban

Unions in Bahrain have won backing from the International Labour Organisation in their campaign to end a government ban on public service workers forming their own unions - a restriction that hits groups like Post Office employees. The ILO Freedom of Association Committee has called for compensation to a Post Office union leader for her suspension without pay because of union activities. Bahrain unions are also challenging restrictions on the right to strike in sectors of the economy that include banking. (sassi.nasreddine@uniglobalunion.org)

Anti-union clause dropped in the Philippines

After strong pressure from UNI affiliates, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration has removed a clause from a sample employment contract that put Filipino workers at risk of losing their job if they engage in union activities. The government agency has confirmed that the clause has been removed from the sample contract and that the master employment contract processed by the Administration does not contain any provisions that harm workers rights. (uni-asiapacific@uniglobalunion.org)

Support for French public broadcast workers

Media workers across Europe held two days of action in support of French colleagues who demonstrated in Paris against the threat to the financial sustainability and independence of France Télévisions, the French public service broadcasters. Delegations of public service broadcasting workers across Europe presented declarations to French embassies following a call from EURO MEI - the European region of UNI's media and entertainment global union that represents 65 unions and guilds with 200,000 media members. (johannes.studinger@uniglobalunion.org)

Campaigning for security guards in Latin America

UNI-Americas Property Services is expanding its campaign among security guards. The campaign was launched in September in Paraguay, Chile and Panama with a follow up meeting in Panama last month. Millions of people work in the Latin American private security industry, generally under terrible working conditions. Working hours normally exceed 12 hours, pay is often at the legal minimum and premium rates may not be paid for overtime. (uni-americas@unigloblaunion.org)

New faces at UNI

Rachel is new communications head

UNI has a new Head of Communications - Rachel Cohen who takes over in Nyon on January 1. Rachel has been working as Press Officer for the International Federation of Journalists in Brussels. She replaces Noel Howell who retires after ten years communications work with FIET and UNI. (rachel.cohen@uniglobalunion.org)



UNI office in South Africa

UNI is opening an office in South Africa with Keith Jacobs joining the UNI-Africa staff from affiliate CEPPWAWU. Keith will be directing organising and campaigns in the region, which holds its Regional Conference in Tunis next May. (keith.jacobs@uniglobalunion.org)



Security guards press for job security in France

Security guards and their unions in France took action on 5 December to demand greater certainty about their futures when their employers are taken over. Thousands of security workers in France have been affected by company takeovers during 2008. These include the employees of security companies Derichebourg and Brinks who still have no guarantees as to whether they will be retained by incoming employers, Securitas and ICTS. (christy.hoffman@uniglobalunion.org)

O2 Ireland staff vote for action

Staff at mobile phone company O2 Ireland voted in favour of industrial action in a row over union recognition. The CWU Ireland said O2 was refusing to recognise the union for collective bargaining purposes although it does represent individual staff in grievance and disciplinary proceedings. The union accused the company of failing to operate in line with the global agreement signed by UNI and the Telefonica group - which acquired O2 in 2006 - that ensures labour rights. (marcus.courtney@uniglobalunion.org)

Workshop looks at postal liberalisation in Europe

UNI Post & Logistics held a workshop in Luxembourg on liberalisation in Europe's postal sector. A key contribution came from the European Commission on its third postal directive, which will remove remaining protections for established postal services. Unions reported on their work to protect postal services - including public debate in Ireland, organising newcomer companies in Sweden and establishing a minimum postal wage in Germany. (neil.anderson@uniglobalunion.org).

Youth gear up for Nagasaki

Young union leaders from Japanese affiliates gathered in Tokyo last month to gear up for the UNI World Congress in Nagasaki in November 2010. With the assistance of Property Services Claire Parfitt the participants had lively discussions on how to motivate young members to get more involved in union activities and how to develop the existing youth network in Japan. One Nagasaki objective set by Japanese affiliates is to foster more awareness among young members of global union work. (uni-asiapacific@uniglobalunion.org)

Agreement in Alcan Packaging Istanbul

BASIN-IS and Alcan Packaging Istanbul (Rotopak) have signed a second collective agreement. The Union was created three years ago after a successful organising campaign but this year's negotiations have been tough. The long bargaining process included a legal pre-strike and a lockout. The agreement provides for an above inflation increase followed by further inflation tracking rises until June 2010. (adriana.rosenzvaig@uniglobalunion.org)

Postal privatisation protest in Morocco

On 5 December Moroccan Post & Logistics affiliate FNPT-UMT held a one-day national strike and sit-in in front of the Parliament. More than 90% of postal employees joined the strike to protest at the proposed privatisation of Post Morocco as well as over working conditions. The union's campaign helped spark a national debate on privatisation. (neil.anderson@uniglobalunion.org)

Top: Rachel Cohen,
UNI Head of Communications
Below: Keith Jacobs,
UNI-Africa Director
of organising and campaigns

uni
global union



Paris: defending French public broadcasting

Marc Kerki, President EURO-MEI addressing 4000 striking workers in front of the French General Assembly during a rally on 25 November. With him is William Maunier Secretary General SNRT-CGT

Building closer links among Kimberly Clark workers

A Kimberly Clark Bolivia delegation met with delegates from the Argentine company to exchange experience and strengthen the workings of the global union network launched by UNI Graphical and the USW, United States. The meeting took place on 5 December at the head offices of the Argentine Paper, Cardboard and Chemical Workers and Employees Federation. In October members of the global network held their first meeting with the company. (adriana.rosenzvaig@uniglobalunion.org)

New technology scrutiny in Brazilian broadcasting

New technology, equal opportunities and health issues were key focuses at the congress of FITERT - the main broadcasting workers federation on Brazil - in Campo Grande (Mato Grosso do Sul state). Long time UNI MEI activist Nascimento da Silva, of Minas Gerais state, was elected coordinator for the next three years. Marta Pentell, from the broadcasting section of Unionen Sweden, helped open the discussion on women's issues. (jim.wilson@uniglobalunion.org)

NO to sell off of Express Mail in Greece

Greek postal workers are saying NO to the proposed sale of Express Mail operations of the Greek postal service. Delegates to the union's conference in Athens totally opposed the split up of the postal service and the partial privatisation of some parts. Delegates also backed the union's initiatives to fight post office closures to protect consumers in Greece's small and widespread communities. (neil.anderson@uniglobalunion.org)

Graphical workshop in Vietnam



UNI Graphical in Vietnam

Three workshops held by UNI Graphical in Vietnam brought together union leaders from Asia-Pacific, Europe, the Americas and Africa. They looked at the development of the union movement in Vietnam and discussed union growth strategies in the packaging and paper conversion sector. A key issue in Vietnam is ensuring that foreign companies respect union laws. (adriana.rosenzvaig@uniglobalunion.org)

Obituary: Helga Cammell

Helga Cammell - a leading member of UNI founding partner FIET and a committed global defender of women's rights - has died. Helga joined FIET in 1966 and retired in 1999 just before the creation of UNI. "Helga belonged to a generation of women who made an enormously important contribution to the struggle for equality at work and in the trade union movement," said UNI and former FIET General Secretary Philip Jennings.



Helga Cammell



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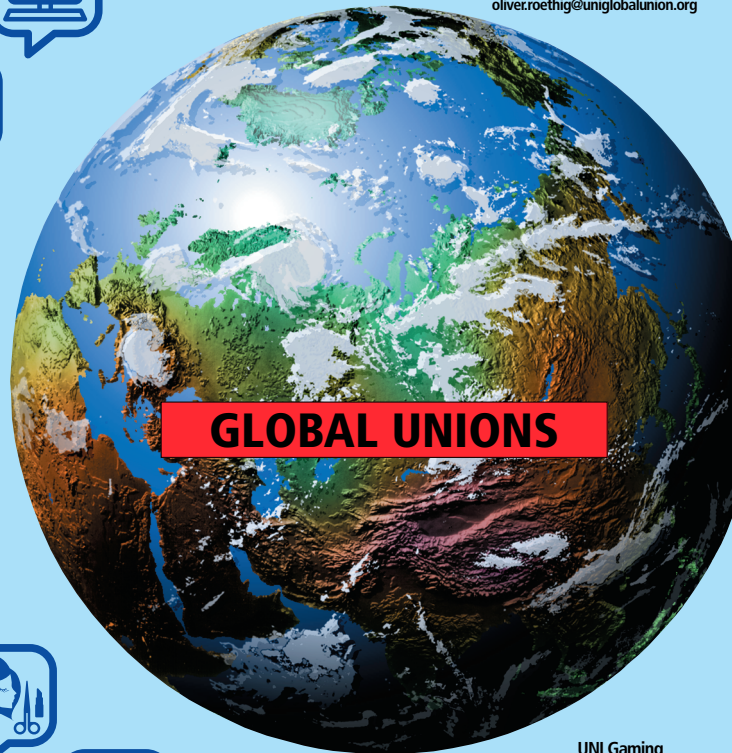
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Global unions for global industries



G4S signing in Crawley, England: union leaders from the UK and Sweden and UNI's Christy Hoffman are among those present at the Global Agreement signing. At the table are Philip Jennings UNI, Nick Buckles G4S and Paul Kenny GMB.



ON CAMERA

www.uniglobalunion.org

Chicago links: UNI and UFCW President Joe Hansen with Barack Obama who becomes US President on 20 January



Media interest in Zambia was high for the Lusaka wedding of Joyce Nonde, General Secretary of ZUPIAW, and lawyer Geoffrey Simukoko



Nada Choueiri, Lebanon and Galila Osman, Egypt try out presenters' chairs at the studios of Egyptian Television during a visit by the UNI MEI-FES Cairo workshop for broadcast workers in the Middle East and North Africa region