

São Paulo
2 February 2026

Public Services International (PSI), a global union federation representing more than 30 million public sector workers in 154 countries, condemns and denounces the fact that Marcelo Di Stefano, a member of the secretariat of the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA), a regional organisation of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), was detained for more than seven hours at Tocumen Airport and subsequently deported without any explanation or justification.

Di Stefano had arrived in Panama to participate in a tripartite mission of the ILO and was deported despite having a formal invitation to participate in it. His detention and expulsion represent a frontal attack on this organisation and the fundamental principles of social dialogue and tripartism.

We can only understand the totally unacceptable treatment received by Marcelo Di Stefano as an escalation and internationalisation of the anti-democratic practices implemented by the Panamanian government. This represents a clear rejection of the basic principles of social dialogue and the right to freedom of association. PSI recognises this internationalisation of repression and will actively contribute to all international responses.

Marcelo Di Stefano is a trade union leader with a recognised national, regional and international track record. He is a distinguished university professor and was for many years Secretary of FATUN (Argentina) and CONTUA. He was also a member of the PSI executive and has played a prominent role in ILO activities in defence of workers' rights.

The Panamanian government must provide a full and public explanation, guarantee compliance with its obligations under international law, and put an end to all forms of intimidation and restriction of national and international trade union activity.



Euan Gibb
Regional Secretary
Public Services International
Inter-America



Federico Dávila
First Vice-President
Public Services International