



STATEN VAN SINT MAARTEN

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Par. g-FH-W GR

WINDWARD ISLANDS CIVIL SERVANTS UNION-
PRIVATE SECTOR UNION (WICSU-PSU)

Established in 1979; Affiliates: W.I.C.L.U.; C.C.L.; C.P.S.A.; P.S.I. & A.C.O.M.

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Honorable Council of Ministers
Soualuiga Boulevard #1,
Pond, Island, Philipsburg,
St. Maarten

Honorable Members of Parliament
Wilhelminastraat,
Philipsburg,
St. Maarten

Ref. Nr.: SCVC/WB0126/0067

February 2, 2026

Honorable Members of the Council of Ministers, Honorable Members of Parliament,

The Windward Islands Civil Servants Union – Private Sector Union (WICSU-PSU) writes on behalf of the Fire Department members regarding the ongoing labor dispute and the continued go-slow. This correspondence serves as a final escalation, a forty-eight (48) hour notice, and a formal request for decisive action.

As previously communicated, a mediation process conducted in good faith resulted in the drafting of an agreement letter, intended to formalize commitments that had already been discussed and verbally agreed to. To date, that agreement has been countered by the Government with a new proposal. In the Union and firefighters' view, this matter is not a negotiation, but a formalization of a position the Honorable Prime Minister publicly expressed to Parliament and verbally committed to in meetings with the firefighters and the Union.

The issues contained in the agreement letter represent the core matters that led to the go-slow. The firefighters requested an agreement on these points as a condition to end the go-slow, after which negotiations on the broader covenant submitted on May 5, 2025, could proceed. There have always been two separate matters: first, resolving the immediate operational issues giving rise to the go-slow; second, proceeding with negotiations on the covenant.

While later correspondence has referenced general commitments arising from the covenant, the specific points in the agreement letter were discussed directly with the Honorable Prime Minister and verbally agreed to. When placed in writing initially as a commitment letter and later revised as an agreement letter, they were not signed. To date, no finalized agreement has been reached.

The latest version of the agreement letter was submitted on January 23, 2026, via the appointed mediator, yet its receipt has not been formally acknowledged. Following this, the Union submitted a

letter of escalation on January 27, 2026, requesting a meeting with the Council of Ministers to clarify the firefighters' position and resolve the impasse. Communication from the Honorable Prime Minister indicated that this request was not accepted.

Despite parliamentary engagement, including the meeting of January 29, 2026, no tangible outcomes have been achieved. The firefighters have now been engaged in a go-slow for almost ten months, with no clear or actionable path forward.

As a result, the Union and the firefighters have concluded that the operational reality of the Fire Department is not fully understood, as certain public statements fail to reflect the conditions under which firefighters are required to operate.

For clarity, an initial request for a meeting with the Council of Ministers was submitted on August 18, 2025. The Honorable Prime Minister responded that, following the Council of Ministers meeting of August 19, 2025, it had been agreed to continue with the existing ministerial responsibilities already in place. While this was respected at the time, the lack of progress since then demonstrates that this approach has not led to resolution.

The Union notes that the prolonged go-slow is now having observable effects on Government operations, with Ministers themselves experiencing the impact in their respective Ministries, underscoring the urgent need for a timely and decisive resolution. After observing the continued discourse and shifting positions, we are compelled to question how a matter that was clearly defined and discussed has remained unresolved for this length of time.

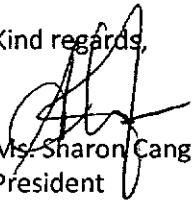
Accordingly, the Union requests:

- the signing of the agreement letter within forty-eight (48) hours of receipt of this correspondence.
- and proposes:
- a result-oriented meeting involving the Council of Ministers and Parliament, within the same forty-eight (48) hour period. Where the Fire Fighter would be able to shed light on their position and what they are requesting. With the hope to bring clarity, as this meeting is intended solely to ensure all parties are fully informed of the firefighters' position and to bring the matter to a resolution.
- The presence of the Fire Chief at the meeting is requested once the meeting is granted.

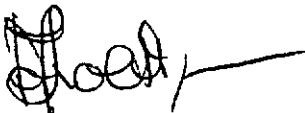
Should no decisive action occur within forty-eight (48) hours, the Union, recognizing the instructions received from the members of the Fire Department, gives notice that it will no longer engage in meetings, discussions, or processes that do not result in concrete outcomes. Continued engagement absent action serves no constructive purpose and only prolongs an untenable situation.

This notice is issued in good faith, in the interest of accountability, safety, and operational stability.

Kind regards,



Ms. Sharon Cangieter
President



Ms. Jaghaira Lioe-A-Tjam
General Secretary

C.c. WICSU-PSU Board
WICSU-PSU Fire Department Members

Date: 02 February 2026

To: President Sharon Cangieter/ BOARD WICSU-PSU

Subject : Urgent Request for Decisive Intervention and Signing of Agreement Letter

Dear Madam President,

We, the members of the Fire Department, write to you as a matter of urgency and escalation, following the continued absence of concrete decisions regarding the ongoing go-slow.

Despite the involvement and engagement of various Ministers, as well as the parliamentary meeting held on January 29, 2026, no decisive follow-through has occurred. To date, notwithstanding extensive engagement and repeated good-faith efforts, this matter remains unresolved.

As has been clearly stated in previous correspondence and throughout the mediation process initiated in good faith, the issues raised by the firefighters have long been identified, discussed, and formally documented. That mediation process concluded in December 2025 with the finalization of an agreement letter, reflecting undertakings already publicly expressed by the Minister of General Affairs and intended to bring this matter to a conclusion. However, no clarity has been provided regarding the signing or implementation of that agreement.

In the view of the firefighters, the continued rhetoric surrounding care, concern, and appreciation for our service stands in stark contrast to reality. We have now been engaged in a go-slow for nearly ten (10) months, with no concrete or credible path forward presented. This prolonged situation contradicts the assurances repeatedly given and has deepened our frustration and sense of neglect.

We must again express our profound disappointment with how this matter continues to be handled. The conduct and statements surrounding the most recent parliamentary meeting—particularly those made even before the meeting formally commenced—reinforced our perception that the seriousness and urgency of our situation are not being treated with the respect they warrant. Regrettably, that meeting produced no tangible outcomes and only prolonged uncertainty.

While discussions continue within the political arena, there remains a clear absence of decisive action by the Minister of General Affairs and the Council of Ministers, as well as a lack of accountability in bringing this matter to resolution. As firefighters, we continue to bear the consequences of this inaction. Our working conditions, safety, morale, and professional dignity remain unresolved while decisions are repeatedly deferred.

We state respectfully but firmly that we are exhausted by prolonged indecision. We are not politicians, nor are we engaged in political maneuvering. We are first responders who place ourselves in harm's way daily in service of the people of St. Maarten. Our concerns are operational and professional in nature and grounded in fairness, safety, and respect.

Date: 02 February 2026

In light of the above, we respectfully request your decisive intervention. Specifically, we call for the signing of the agreement letter resulting from mediation within forty-eight (48) hours of receipt of this correspondence. Given that the agreement was finalized in December 2025 and reflects commitments previously made and publicly stated, this timeline is reasonable and justified.

Furthermore, we make it explicitly clear that we are no longer willing to attend additional meetings that do not meaningfully acknowledge, respect, and address our position. Meetings without outcomes, where our voices are not genuinely heard, only serve to prolong an already untenable situation.

At this stage, what is required is not further dialogue for its own sake, but leadership, accountability, and action. We trust in your role as President of WICSU-PSU and look to your intervention to bring this matter to a just and responsible conclusion.

Respectfully,

Members of the Fire Department

Fire Department personnel Signature.

~~John Marshall~~
Signed
Rajiv
Held
HB

John H. W. Jr.
Albuquerque
Edwin

D Vanterpool
D Vanterpool
Hobson
E Schae

~~John~~
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~~Bill~~
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~~Carrie~~
~~William~~
~~John~~
~~Robert~~
~~Elaine~~
~~Hayles~~