

Charlottetown Area Office, 100 Capital Drive, Charlottetown, PEI C1E 1E7

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**New Government Legislation Will Take “Right to Strike” Away from Paramedics, Island EMS Employees (CUPE Local 3324)**

**Charlottetown** - “The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 3324, representing all Paramedics on Prince Edward Island (Employees of Island EMS) were advised this morning, while at the bargaining table with the Employer, that the Ghiz Government suddenly and without warning tabled Bill 35 an *Act to Amend the Labour Act of Prince Edward Island* which, we are told, will take our right to strike away, replacing it with binding arbitration,” says Bill McKinnon, National Servicing Representative for CUPE, and the Paramedic Coordinator for PEI.

CUPE Local 3324 has been without a contract since September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009, and they have been in negotiations with Island EMS for a new agreement, for a total of eight days since then, including just this morning.

“Not only does this legislation intrude on our Right to Free Collective Bargaining - which is something that no government on PEI has done since Catherine Callbeck’s infamous 7.5% rollback legislation in 1994-95 – but the government tabled this legislation last night with no consultation from either the Union or the Employer. As if this wasn’t bad enough, no one in the Ghiz Government had the decency to even notify the Union that this legislation was even coming. We found out at the negotiating table this morning, from one of the Employer’s representatives.

Frankly the lack of consultation and decency of notification is becoming a trademark of this Government. The Local bargaining committee is frustrated, but we have also been in communication with our members, and are planning an emergency meeting of the Local membership to discuss this situation early next week.

In the meantime, Local 3324’s negotiating committee is heading to the Legislature this afternoon, and have put out a call to our membership to join us, if they are available, to illustrate our frustration at this government,” concluded McKinnon.

**For more information:** Bill McKinnon (902) 566-4006 or (902) 439-1055.

