

International Confederation of Free Trade Unions and
World Confederation of Labour

ICFTU OnLine

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Trade union leaders under threat in Guinea

Brussels, 12 June 2006 - The ICFTU and the World Confederation of Labour are deeply concerned at the deteriorating situation in Guinea with serious violations of trade union rights taking place, including death threats against union leaders. Threats have been levelled against the trade union leaders of the two most representative labour confederations in Guinea (CNTG and USTG), namely: Hadja Serah Rabiatou DIALLO, general secretary of the CNTG and a member of the ILO Governing Body; Ibrahima FOFANA, general secretary of the USTG; Ahmadou DIALLO, first assistant general secretary of the CNTG, and Louis Mbemba SOUMAH, first assistant general secretary of the USTG and general secretary of the Free Trade Union of Teachers and Researchers of Guinea (SLECG).

On 24 May 2006, Ms Kanfy Camara was murdered. She was driving a vehicle similar to that of Mrs Diallo, lived close to the latter's home and also resembled her. Given the circumstances of the murder, there are reasons to fear that the actual target was in fact Mrs Diallo. The murder also took place shortly after Mrs Diallo had returned to the country following a long absence.

As regards Ibrahima Fofana, a group of individuals have been following him since the May Day demonstrations. Two of these people went as far as the trade unionist's home. One of them, identified as Yacouba Camara, an agent of the state security department, went to the bank where Mr Fofana works on 26 May 2006. He was apprehended by the bank's security guards, and was found to be carrying a pistol.

The day previous, Mr Fofana, along with Ahmadou Diallo and Louis Mbemba Soumah, had received threats from the Minister of State for Presidential Affairs, Fodé Bangoura.

The incidents follow on from the calling of a general strike in February. The CNTG and the USTG had called for a general strike in protest at the government's unilateral decision to increase oil prices, a measure which led to cross-the-board price increases in a country where purchasing power has already been severely diminished. An agreement was subsequently reached between the government and the social partners, and the strike action was called off. On 22 May, the CNTG-USTG Inter-Union Group demanded that the government respect the recently signed agreement, and threatened to call another strike if necessary. In the absence of a positive response from the government, the strike was finally launched on 8 June. The sequence of events indicates the link between the trade union action taken by the Inter-Union leaders and the threats against their persons.

The four trade union leaders are currently attending the ILO Conference being held in Geneva. The ICFTU and the WCL appealed to ILO Director-General, Juan Somavia, to urgently intercede with the Guinean authorities to ensure that the threats against the four trade unionists are brought to an immediate end, that they be provided with special protection, and that ILO Conventions 87 and 98 be fully respected and promoted in Guinea.

The ICFTU represents 155 million workers in 236 affiliated organisations in 154 countries and territories. <http://www.icftu.org> ICFTU is also a partner in Global Unions. <http://www.global-unions.org>

The WCL represents 30 million workers around the world.

For more information, please contact the ICFTU Press Department on +32 2 224 0204 or +32 474 621 018.

