

Onlines

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Gaza: Assassination Attempt on Union Leader



Brussels, 29 January 2007: In an attack described by ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder as a “vicious and cowardly murder attempt”, the home of Palestinian trade union leader Rasem al Bayari was hit by two rockets in the early hours of Monday morning. Al Bayari is Deputy General Secretary of the ITUC-affiliated Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions. At 2am local time in Gaza, the rockets destroyed the doors and entrance to the building, however Rasem and his family escaped as they were asleep on an upper floor of the residence.

The attack comes against a background of increasing tension and violence between political factions in Palestine, and extremists making death threats against Rasem and other union officials. Fighting between Hamas and Fatah factions has caused the death of some 24 people in recent days.

“This despicable attack is clearly aimed at intimidating the PGFTU, and it was only by good fortune that Rasem and his family escaped death of serious injury. The people responsible must not be allowed to escape justice”, said Ryder. “The victims of this factional violence are the Palestinian people themselves, and leaders from all sides must do all they can to put an end to the killing and maiming,” he added.

In its statement in response to the attack, the PGFTU pledged that the attack would neither “silence the workers nor stop the PGFTU carrying out its activities to build the

structures of the Palestinian state for the benefit of the Palestinian people and workers".

Founded on 1 November 2006, the ITUC represents 168 million workers in 153 countries and territories and has 304 national affiliates.

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