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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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Colombia: ITUC Condemns Murder of Trade Union Leader

Brussels, 29 January 2008 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has protested to Colombian President Álvaro Uribe over the murder of prison officers' trade union leader Yebraín Suárez at his home on 28 January. 32 year-old Suárez was shot in the doorway of his house by killers who were waiting for him on his return from work. The ITUC has joined its affiliate the CGT Colombia in calling for the government to take immediate action to investigate the crime and bring the murderers to justice.

"Colombia has a long and appalling record as the most dangerous place on earth for trade unionists, with dozens of killings taking place each year. Only a tiny fraction of these have been investigated properly. The government must fulfill its responsibility to protect trade unionists and end the culture of impunity which has reigned for so long", said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder.

Despite recent optimistic statements by Colombian Vice-President Francisco Santos and other government officials, Colombian trade unionists still carry out their legitimate trade union activities at constant risk to their lives, on top of serious deficiencies in the country's labour laws which impose major restrictions on trade union rights.

The ITUC represents 168 million workers in 155 countries and territories and has 311 national affiliates.

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