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Guatemala: Raid on the Headquarters of the National Construction and Services Union

Brussels, 24 February 2009 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has joined with TUCA, its regional organisation for the Americas, and Building and Wood Workers' International (BWI), to strongly condemn the raid on the head office of the National Construction and Services Union of Guatemala (SINCS-G).

The raid took place within the framework of a terror campaign aimed at intimidating and creating panic among the leadership of SINCS-G. In a prior incident, on 7 February, Clemente Rubén Pérez Huinac, general secretary of the Coatepique branch and human rights secretary of the SINCS-G Executive Committee, was brutally attacked by a group of individuals wearing balaclavas, who left him with cut wounds to different parts of the body - he received three injuries to the throat, and the tip of one of his fingers was cut off. Threats were also levelled against Julio Díaz, general secretary of SINCS-G.

These alarming incidents coincide with the launch of a solidarity campaign by BWI, to which SINCS-G is affiliated, demanding a full investigation into the attack on Clemente Rubén Pérez Huinac and the threats levelled against Julio Antonio Díaz, the union's general secretary, as well as into the murder, on 23 December 2008, of Armando Sánchez, the union's lawyer and legal advisor.

BWI website: <http://www.bwint.org/default.asp?Index=2072&Language=ES>

In a letter to the Guatemalan authorities, http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/20090224154749-Microsoft_Word_-_Allanamiento_de_la_sede_del_SINCS-G_23_febrero.pdf, the ITUC called on President Álvaro Colom to order a full and immediate investigation into these attacks on the Guatemalan trade union movement and to ensure that all those responsible are identified and brought to justice.

"The situation is unacceptable," said Guy Ryder, general secretary of the ITUC. "Guatemala must respect the ILO Conventions it has ratified without delay."

The ITUC represents 170 million workers in 312 affiliated national organisations from 157 countries.
<http://www.ituc-csi.org> <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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