

International Trade Union Confederation

Online

Colombia: Chilling threats against Lina Paola Malagón Díaz, member of the Colombian Commission of Jurists



Brussels, 6 March 2009: Lina Paola Malagón Díaz, a member of the Colombian Commission of Jurists (CCJ) and a trade union rights lawyer devoted to the constant denunciation of the climate of impunity surrounding anti-union violence, has received a chilling fax in which she is declared a "military target".

In February 2009, Lina Paola Malagón Díaz drew up a report on the impunity with which crimes are committed against trade unionists, on account of their work to defend labour rights. The information in the report was referred to at length at a hearing on 12 February in the US House of Representatives. The hearing was called by George Miller, chairman of the House of Representatives Education and Labor Committee, to examine the rights situation of workers and the anti-union violence in Colombia.

The work carried out by the CCJ for the hearing was coordinated with the director of the National Labour School of Colombia (ENS), José Luciano Sanín Vásquez, who took part in the hearing called by George Miller. The Colombian president, Alvaro Uribe, reacted to his participation, stating that he and the other Colombian delegates to the hearing were people who distort the truth and are motivated by "political hatred". The US trade union centre AFL-CIO pointed out that such statements represent a serious threat to those who took part in the hearing and urged President Uribe to immediately retract his statements and to publicly acknowledge the legitimacy of human rights defenders in Colombia, including trade unionists, and to

recognise the value of the work they do. It also called on him to guarantee the free exercise and defence of trade union rights, so that this work can be carried out without fear of reprisals.

In a [letter](#) to President Uribe, Guy Ryder, general secretary of the ITUC, strongly condemned the death threat issued to Lina Paola Malagón and, in the name of the international trade union movement, called on him personally and his government to take every measure necessary to protect the life and integrity of lawyer Lina Paola Malagón Díaz. He also demanded that the Attorney General immediately commence the necessary and relevant investigations, to bring those responsible for the threats to justice. On 5 March, the ITUC also sent a complaint to the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association, within the framework of Case 1787.

photo: A Look Askance

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

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