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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

ITUC OnLine

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Assassinations continue in Colombia

Brussels, 12 May 2009 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has strongly condemned and denounced the murders in April and May of five trade union activists dedicated to improving the lot of workers in Colombia.

The national, regional and international trade union movements have joined with the three Colombian union confederations, CUT, CGT and CTC, in their unwavering condemnation of the relentless attacks on the Colombian trade union movement, committed in blatant violation of the core ILO Conventions ratified by Colombia. These attacks take the form of intimidation, persecution and threats along with continuous murder of trade union members and leaders for simply trying to defend workers' rights.

These five deadly crimes against the trade union movement take the number of trade unionists assassinated in 2009 to seventeen. Over the last decade, Colombia has seen the murder of 2711 trade union leaders and activists in total. These assassinations seriously call into question the numerous claims by members of the Colombian administration that the violence, murders and stigmatisation suffered by the trade union movement are declining.

In a letter to the Colombian president, Alvaro Uribe, http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/mas_asesinatos_de_activistas_sindicales_en_Colombia_-mayo2009.pdf, the ITUC called on the Colombian authorities to carry out urgent and conclusive investigations to bring those responsible to justice, and thus break the chain of impunity characterising the murders of trade unionists.

"The ITUC will send the relevant information to the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association within the framework of Case no. 1787," said Guy Ryder, general secretary of the ITUC. "Real justice is urgently needed in Colombia!"

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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