

>>> "ITUC Press" <press@ituc-csi.org> 22.06.2009 11:18 >>>
INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

ITUC OnLine

102/190609

Colombia: Two More Trade Unionists Murdered

Brussels, 22 June 2009: The ITUC once again strongly condemns and denounces the murders of two more trade unionists in the Arauca region. Pablo Rodríguez Garavito and Jorge Humberto Echaverri Garro, teachers affiliated to the Arauca teachers' association Asociación de Educadores de Arauca (ASEDAR), were brutally murdered by unknown gunmen.

The ITUC has joined with its regional organisation TUCA, its Colombian affiliates, and ASEDAR, in their resounding condemnation of these murders, mourned by working people and the national, regional and international trade union movement.

The two murders took place during the same week as the 98th International Labour Conference that has been held every year in June, in Geneva, for almost a hundred years. The Colombian government was once again questioned by the Conference Committee on the Application of Standards over the lack of guarantees for the exercise of trade union rights, the increase in violence against trade unionism, the scant progress in bringing an end to impunity and the stigmatisation of trade union organisations.

In a letter http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Dos_docentes_asesinados_18_de_junio_2009.pdf to the Colombian authorities, the ITUC called on President Alvaro Uribe to urgently take every step necessary to guarantee the free exercise of trade union rights, in conformity with ILO Conventions 87 and 98, which Colombia has ratified. The ITUC also called for an immediate and exhaustive investigation aimed at identifying both those who ordered these crimes and those who carried out them out and bringing them to justice. "The chain of impunity prevailing in Colombia must be broken," insisted Guy Ryder, general secretary of the ITUC.

The ITUC represents 170 million workers in 312 affiliated national organisations from 157 countries.
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