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Colombia: Trade Unions in Mourning for Two More Murdered Colleagues

Brussels, 4 September 2009: Two more trade unionists, Gustavo Gómez and Mauricio Antonio Monsalve Vásquez, were assassinated in Colombia this week, bringing the total of trade unionists assassinated in Colombia since January 2009 to 27. The trade union movement has urged the authorities to do whatever is necessary to put an end to the bloodshed.

On 21 August, unidentified persons arrived at the home of Gustavo Gómez, an employee at Nestlé-Comestibles la Rosa S.A. and a member of the SINALTRAINAL trade union. They knocked on his door then, when he opened it, fired 10 shots at him. He died a few hours later.

At the time of his murder, Sinaltrainal had just presented a set of demands to the company, Nestlé Purina PetCare de Colombia S.A.

Mauricio Antonio Monsalve Vásquez was a teacher, and had gone missing for ten days. His body was then discovered buried the municipality of Ituango, in an area called Santa Lucía. His body has not yet been received for burial, as the necessary procedures still have to be completed.

Both teachers and the members of SINALTRAINAL are the target of merciless persecution. So far this year 12 workers from Nestlé, all Sinaltrainal members, have fallen victim, and 13 teachers, 6 of whom were union members.

In a letter http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Dos_sindicalistas_asesinados_FECODE_SINALTRAINAL_septiembre_de_2009.pdf to the Colombian authorities, the ITUC has urged President Álvaro Uribe to order an immediate investigation to bring those responsible for the murders to justice, and to take all appropriate measures to protect the lives of trade unionists and guarantee the universal right to take part in trade union activity, in accordance with the fundamental conventions of the ILO ratified by Colombia.

The ITUC represents 170 million workers in 170 countries and territories and has 312 national affiliates.

<http://www.ituc-csi.org> <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

For more information, please contact the ITUC Press Department on +32 2 224 0204 or +32 476 621 018

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