

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

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Guatemala: Women Trade Unionists Held Captive at Labour Ministry

Brussels, 16 November 2009: The ITUC has strongly condemned the illegal detention on 6 November of a group of women trade unionists from the Guatemalan labour, indigenous and campesino movement, MSICG. This illegal act of intimidation and mistreatment represents a blatant violation of workers' fundamental rights.

The women trade union leaders had gone to the Labour Ministry to denounce the constant human and trade union rights violations committed by large multinational fruit companies operating in Guatemala. The women were held against their will in the entrance of the Labour Ministry when security guards were ordered to lock the door to the building and the gates giving onto the street, trapping the women inside.

During their illegal detention, staff at the ministry photographed and filmed the women trade unionists without their consent, as well as insulting and mistreating them.

"These deplorable acts constitute not only a violation of these women's trade union rights and physical integrity," said Guy Ryder, general secretary of the ITUC, "They also constitute an act of intimidation against all workers in Guatemala and a serious violation of the core conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) ratified by the country."

In a letter [http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Detencion\\_de\\_mujeres\\_lideres\\_sindicales\\_noviembre\\_de\\_2009.pdf](http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Detencion_de_mujeres_lideres_sindicales_noviembre_de_2009.pdf) to the Guatemalan authorities, the ITUC joined with the MSICG in its condemnation of these acts of intimidation as well as expressing consternation over the failure of Labour Minister Edgar Rodriguez to ensure the implementation of genuine inspections and mechanisms to report, remedy and halt the countless violations suffered by workers on a daily basis.

The ITUC represents 170 million workers in 158 countries and territories and has 316 national affiliates.

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