

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

ITUC OnLine

210/081209

Colombia: 195 Teachers Killed, No One Guilty

Brussels, 8 December 2009: The ITUC has denounced and strongly condemned the murders of art teacher Zorayda Cortés López, who worked at the Higher Technical Institute of Pereira, the capital of Risaralda, and Leny Yanube Rengifo Gómez, a teacher and active member of the Cauca education workers' union, Asociación de Institutores y Trabajadores de la Educación del Cauca – ASOINCA.

It is unacceptable and a cause for grave concern in the trade union movement that 195 teachers have been assassinated in Colombia, without a single arrest being made, and that 35 trade unionists have been killed this year alone.

These murders have once again plunged into mourning the victims' families along with the entire teaching profession and the national, regional and international trade union movement. "Colombia must respect the ILO core conventions it has ratified and that are therefore binding on it," said Guy Ryder, general secretary of the ITUC. "These murders demonstrate the utter falsity of the message the Colombia government is striving to send out to the international community regarding its success in curbing violence against trade unionists."

In a letter http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Asesinato_de_Zorayda_Cortes_Lopez_y_Leny_Yanube-dic.pdf to the Colombian authorities, the ITUC has called on President Álvaro Uribe and his government to fulfil their Constitutional duty to protect trade union leaders and on the Attorney General to investigate these despicable crimes, to bring those responsible, at every level, to justice, to punish them with the full weight of the law and thus break the chain of impunity surrounding the murders of trade unionists in Colombia.

The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 155 countries and territories and has 311 national affiliates.

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

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