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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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Guatemala: Two MSICG Members Assassinated

Brussels, 9 December 2009: There is no let-up in the extreme violence facing trade unionists in Guatemala. The ITUC has once again strongly condemned the murders in October and November of two members of the Guatemalan labour, indigenous and campesino movement, MSICG.

On 6 October, a fresh attempt was made at dislodging the members of the Sindicato de trabajadores del comercio de Coatepeque, affiliated to the Guatemalan general workers' centre CGTC and the MSICG, from their workplaces. A large contingency of State security officers used brutal force, as on other occasions, to evict the members of the trade union, who have also received death threats.

Miguel Chacaj Jax, a founding member of the union, died on 13 October at the hands of state security forces. Pedro Ramirez De La Cruz, director of the organisation for the defence of indigenous people of Las Verapaces and a member of the MSICG, was assassinated on 29 November. He had received numerous death threats on account of his work defending land rights and promoting agrarian reform and rural development.

In a letter http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/2_miembros_del_MSICG_asesinados_12-09.pdf to the Guatemalan authorities, the ITUC called on President Álvaro Colom and his government to take every step necessary to put an immediate end to the terrible violence against trade unionists in Guatemala.

"Every action must be taken to end these intolerable acts," said Guy Ryder, general secretary of the ITUC.

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

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