

>>> "ITUC Press" <press@ituc-csi.org> 29.1.2010 15:07 >>>
INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

ITUC OnLine

013/280110

Guatemala: Trade Unionist Shot at by Municipal Official

Brussels, 28 January 2010: The ITUC and its Guatemalan affiliates - the Confederation of Trade Union Unity of Guatemala (CUSG,) the General Guatemalan Workers Centre (CGTG) and UNSITRAGUA (Trade Union of Guatemalan Workers) - roundly condemn the attack suffered by Abel Barsilai Girón Roldán, a member of the Zaragoza municipal workers' union.

The trade unionist was shot at by Héctor Marroquín, a senior member of the municipal council. According to reports received by the ITUC, the assailant fired 13 shots but fortunately failed to hit Girón Roldán. The police were informed of the attack, but said that "firing a weapon is not a crime". Members of Girón Roldán's family have also received death threats.

Since 15 January 2008, 60 members of the Zaragoza municipal workers' union have been dismissed on charges of "forming a trade union organisation". Their dismissal coincided with the appointment of municipal council members.

In a letter http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Guatemala_-_Sindicalista_agredido_a_tiros_por_funcionario_municipal_enero.pdf to the Guatemalan authorities, ITUC and TUCA (ITUC's regional organisation for the Americas) call on President Álvaro Colom to promptly take every possible measure to shed light on this latest in the constant succession of acts of violence against the trade union movement and to protect Abel Barsilai Girón Roldán and his entire family.

"All government bodies must respect trade union freedom and allow workers to freely form trade unions of their own choosing," stated ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder. "The ILO conventions ratified by Guatemala must be fully observed to achieve peace and social justice".

The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 155 countries and territories and has 311 national affiliates.
<http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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