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Guatemala: Attacks and Violence Against Altiplano Campesino Committee (CCDA)

Brussels, 16 February 2010: The ITUC, along with its regional organisation for the Americas, TUCA and its Guatemalan affiliates, the CGTG, CUSG and UNSITRAGUA, has strongly condemned the raid on the "Café Justicia" processing centre in Santiago Atitlán, from which 182 quintals of coffee, the fruit of the CCDA members' work, were stolen.

According to information received by the ITUC, threatening messages directed at the MSICG and each of its member organisations were found in the centre. Leocadio Juracán, head of the CCDA and a member of the MSICG Political Council, is the main target of these attacks.

The acts of violence took place just days after the MSICG's presentation of the report "Guatemala, el costo de la libertad sindical" (Guatemala, the Price of Trade Union Freedom) denouncing the violence and attacks against the labour, indigenous and campesino struggle led by the MSICG. TUCA had also condemned the attacks on the MSICG and the general climate of violence in Guatemala in a statement http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Declaracion_de_CSA_02-2010.pdf released just a few days ago.

Since the MSICG's international denunciation, the acts of violence against the CCDA have been stepped up. On 13 February, the aggressors once again visited the offices of the CCDA and Beneficio de Café, leaving both places with written death threats against Leocadio Juracán and his family. The intimidation commenced when Juracán took part in a delegation of MSICG leaders to the European Union, as part of a mission organised by the ITUC, to denounce the dangers facing Guatemalan workers.

In a letter to the Guatemalan authorities, the ITUC and TUCA http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Actos_de_violencia_contra_el_Comite_Campesino_del_Altiplano_feb.pdf called on them to guarantee the lives, security and physical integrity of the CCDA leadership and Leocadio Juracán and his family. "These incidents must be cleared up without delay," said ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder. "An immediate investigation is essential, to ensure that those responsible for these unacceptable attacks are brought to justice."

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

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