

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

**ITUC OnLine**

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**Guatemala: Assassination of two Indigenous and Rural Workers Trade Union Movement of Guatemala (MSICG) leaders**

Brussels, 1 April 2010 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC joins with the United Trade Union Confederation of Guatemala (Confederación de Unidad Sindical de Guatemala -CUSG), the General Workers' Centre of Guatemala (Central General de Trabajadores de Guatemala - CGTG) and UNSITRAGUA in condemning in the strongest possible terms the assassinations on 6 and 26 March of Luis Felipe Cho and Samuel Ramírez Paredes.

According to information received by the ITUC, the body of Luis Felipe Cho was found on 6 March, showing signs of brutal torture. In January, Cho had stepped down as a member of the Consultative Council of the Santa Cruz Municipal Workers' Union, in the Alta Verapaz department, following many threats relating to his trade union activities. He was still an active member of the Santa Cruz Municipal Workers Union, a grass roots organisation affiliated to the Workers' Trade Union of Guatemala (UNSITRAGUA) and the MSICG. The union leader had taken part in the campaign by the MSICG and the municipal workers to denounce the serious violations of the labour and trade union rights of the sector's workers.

Samuel Ramírez Paredes, General Secretary of the Panchoy district banana workers' union (SITRABI) and a member of both the Consultative Council of the CUSG and of the MSICG, was assassinated while members of the MSICG were holding meetings with members of the United States government in order to lodge complaints within the framework of the Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA) against the State of Guatemala for serious violations of labour and trade union rights in the country's banana sector.

In a letter [http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Otros\\_2\\_lideres\\_del\\_MSICG\\_asesinados\\_marzo.pdf](http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Otros_2_lideres_del_MSICG_asesinados_marzo.pdf) to the Guatemalan authorities, the ITUC demands that President Colom take all necessary measures to investigate, identify, bring to trial and sentence the authors of these two latest murders as swiftly as possible. "The violence against MSICG leaders and activists must be stopped and the state of law restored to Guatemala, putting an end to impunity" said Guy Ryder, General Secretary of the ITUC.

The ITUC represents 176 million workers in 155 countries and territories and has 312 national affiliates.

<http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

For more information, please contact the ITUC Press Department on: +32 2 224 0204 or + 32 476 62 10 18

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