

ITUC OnLine

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Colombia: Education Sector Prey to Constant Threats and Assassinations

Brussels, 12 May 2010: Violence is reaching a peak in Colombia. Since 28 January of this year, no fewer than four teachers affiliated to the teachers' association of Cordoba, ADEMACOR, have been assassinated in the Department of Cordoba. The ITUC, together with its Colombian affiliates, CUT, CGT and CTC, have strongly denounced and condemned these murders as well as the constant threats against the leaders and headquarters of the teachers' association of Antioquia, ADIDA.

According to the information received by the ITUC, Overto Beltrán Narváez, Rigoberto Polo Contreras, Elkin Eduardo González and Benito Díaz Álvarez were all killed by unknown assailants close to their workplaces. The president of ADIDA, Over Dorado Cardona, was also the victim of an armed attack, which he fortunately escaped unharmed.

During the month of April alone, ADIDA has denounced the murder of two of its members, the attempt on the life of the union's president, the systematic threats against 59 teachers and the harassment during the march of 15 April, at which an official from the Criminal Investigations Department (SIJIN) filmed the speech of Over Dorado.

In a letter http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/20100511-4_docentes_asesinados_amenazas_a_ADIDA_mayo_2_.pdf to the Colombian authorities, the ITUC urged President Álvaro Uribe, his government, and the relevant departmental and municipal authorities, to take every action necessary to ensure that these incidents are investigated and that all those responsible for these crimes are identified and brought to justice. The ITUC also called for the immediate and effective protection of the teachers under threat as well as the protection of the ADIDA headquarters. .

"The deep-rooted violence against trade unionists in Colombia is unacceptable. Respect for workers' fundamental rights is central to the construction of a fair society," reiterated ITUC General Secretary Guy Ryder.

The ITUC represents 176 million workers in 155 countries and territories and has 312 national affiliates. <http://www.ituc-csi.org> and <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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