

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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Guatemala: Health Workers Pay High Price for Trade Union Involvement

Brussels, 11 October 2010 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has joined with its Guatemalan affiliates in denouncing the violence unleashed against health sector employees and that has cost the lives of four workers during August and September of this year.

In August, Bruno Ernesto Figueroa, finance secretary of a branch of the SNTSG national health workers' union, was attacked by a group of heavily armed unknown assailants, who opened fire indiscriminately. Figueroa was seriously injured and died on 10 August.

During the month of September, three other health workers were murdered: on 27 September, Fredy Geovani Lopez Caal, disputes secretary of the SNTSG, was shot dead; on 29 September, David Pineda Barahona, branch secretary of organising and minutes for the San Benito Vector-Borne Diseases Programme in Petén was murdered, and on 30 September, Carlos Enrique Méndez Ramírez, a member of the National Mental Health Hospital branch was shot to death by unknown assailants who fired numerous rounds at him from a vehicle with smoked-glass windows.

In a letter to the President of Guatemala (http://www.ituc-csi.org/IMG/pdf/Cuatro_trabajadores_de_la_salud_asesinados_en_Guatemala_en_2020.pdf), the ITUC deplored the rise in violence and the total lack of respect for workers' fundamental rights. "The ITUC is highly concerned by this wave of violence and the unabated impunity, and is urging Guatemala to respect the core ILO Conventions it has ratified," said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow.

The ITUC represents 176 million workers in 151 countries and territories and has 301 national affiliates.

<http://www.ituc-csi.org> and <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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