

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION

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Guatemala: violence against campesinos continues

Brussels, 26 May 2011 (ITUC OnLine): Renewed attacks have been seen against campesinos in Guatemala. The ITUC has joined with its Guatemalan affiliates, the CUSG, CGTG and UNSITRAGUA, in strongly condemning the murder of Oscar Reyes and the serious wounds inflicted on five other campesinos in the communities of Agua Caliente and El Sauce Inup, in Panzós, Alta Verapaz.

The trade union movement has expressed its deep concern at this fresh example of impunity. "The wave of violent repression must end now," said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow, "and those guilty must be brought to justice. Enough of the impunity all too characteristic of Guatemala!" This impunity is a constant concern for the international trade union movement, and for this reason the ITUC is organising its second Conference Against Impunity in Guatemala, to take place this July.

According to information received by the ITUC, on the 21 May, 30 security guards from the Chabil Utzaj sugar mill arrived at Agua Caliente asking for two campesino leaders. The farm workers and their families were working in fields owned by the Tzalamila cooperative, which has documents proving its ownership of the land. The private security guards from the sugar mill, led by Jorge Mario Barrientos and Efraín García, without saying a word, started to shoot directly at the campesinos, who had no means of defending themselves.

The Guatemalan trade union movement, the ITUC and the TUCA have demanded an immediate end to this devastating violence against the campesino community, which is fuelled by the desire of company owners for more land and greater wealth. In a letter <http://www.ituc-csi.org/otro-campesino-asesinado-y-cinco.html?lang=es> to the Guatemalan authorities, they urged President Alvaro Colom to take every step necessary to protect and guarantee the lives of the campesinos in Guatemala.

The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 151 countries and territories and has 305 national affiliates. <http://www.ituc-csi.org> and <http://www.youtube.com/ITUCCSI>

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