

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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### Guatemala: Workers Dismissed for Exercising Right to Organise

Brussels, 8 June 2011 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has joined with its affiliated organisations in Guatemala in firmly denouncing the dismissal of TOMZA Group employees for simply exercising their right to organise and collective bargaining.

According to the information received by the ITUC, in spite of the court ruling prohibiting the workers' dismissal, TOMZA began firing employees on 28 May and went on to dismiss a total of 12 workers.

The situation in Guatemala is totally unacceptable, as private sector employers, backed by the government, are left to violate the law with total impunity thanks to the slowness of the procedures to enforce the labour laws and the inefficiency demonstrated by the Labour Ministry. In the case of the Tomza Group, a long standing employee, Federico Godoy, was placed in charge of blocking any attempt to reactivate the trade union of packing, transport, distribution and gas maintenance workers (Sindicato de trabajadores del envasado, transporte, distribución y mantenimiento del gas) and to negotiate a new collective agreement on working conditions.

The persistence of human and trade union rights violations of this kind, compounded by the total impunity enjoyed in the country, led the ILO supervisory bodies to question the Guatemalan government on 6 June, at the 100th session of the International Labour Conference, and to adopt a special paragraph on Guatemala. "It is essential that the government endeavour to fulfil the obligations assumed on signing the core conventions of the International Labour Organisation (ILO)," underlined ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow.

In a letter [http://www.ituc.csi.org/IMG/pdf/Protesta\\_violaciones\\_Grupo\\_Tomza\\_junio.pdf](http://www.ituc.csi.org/IMG/pdf/Protesta_violaciones_Grupo_Tomza_junio.pdf) to the Guatemalan authorities, the ITUC urged President Alvaro Colom and in particular his Labour Minister to take every step necessary to implement a policy of respect for the ILO core conventions ratified by Guatemala.

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

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