

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

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Colombia: Mineworkers' Leader Murdered

Brussels, 17 August 2011 (ITUC OnLine): The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has joined with its Colombian affiliates, CUT, CGT and CTC, in firmly condemning the killing, on Tuesday 26 July in El Campo district, of Rafael Tobón Zea, a founding member of the Segovia branch of the mine and fuel workers' union SINTRAMIENERGETICA.

Rafael Tobón Zea was fired during the takeover process after working for 15 years at the Frontino Gold Mines, owned by workers and pensioners. The mining company had been forced into liquidation and then illicitly handed over to transnational capital. At the time of his murder the union leader was working at a small mine where he was defending small and medium sized mining operations, backed by SINTRAMIENERGÉTICA, as well as supporting the workers and the local community at the Frontino mine in their fight to save the company from the clutches of transnational capital.

In a letter to the Colombian authorities <http://www.ituc-csi.org/colombia-asesinato-de-lider-minero.html?lang=es>, the ITUC urged President Santos and his government to take every step necessary to clear up the facts without delay surrounding the constant crimes against the trade union movement in Colombia.

"Those responsible must be arrested and face the full force of the law, to bring an end to the impunity in Colombia," said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow. "As many as 19 trade unionists have already been murdered during 2011. Trade unionists have a right to exercise their legitimate trade union activities without putting their lives at risk."

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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