

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)
ITUC OnLine

Mass Dismissals at Municipal Council in Guatemala

Brussels, 19 January 2012 (ITUC OnLine): The first measure taken by the newly elected authorities in the municipality of San José el Rodeo in San Marcos was to dismiss, on 16 January, all of its unionised employees. This unacceptable act, condemned by the trade union movement, implies the total destruction of the union representing municipal workers.

According to the reports received by the ITUC, the measure was taken by the mayor of the municipality, Juan Francisco Aguilar Díaz, with the backing of the Partido Patriota (PP) councillors who had come into office just one day prior to the mass dismissal.

The mayor had called all the workers to a meeting in the municipal hall on 16 January, and asked, in an intimidating fashion, who wanted their severance pay. Those employees not belonging to the newly-formed union accepted the severance pay and the loss of their posts. The general secretary of the municipal workers' union, speaking on behalf of those who refused, explained that they had decided to form a union in February 2011 with a view to defending their rights and their job security. The mayor responded that all the workers present were, in any case, being dismissed with immediate effect.

"Such action constitutes a serious violation of the right to work and freedom of association," underlined ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow. "These rights are enshrined in the Political Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala, Municipal Law, and Conventions 87 and 98 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO)."

In a letter <http://www.ituc-csi.org/despidos-masivos-en-la.html?lang=es> to the Guatemalan authorities, the ITUC, together with its affiliated organisations in Guatemala, urged President Otto Pérez Molina and his Labour Minister to take urgent action to ensure the reinstatement of all the dismissed workers; to strengthen the rule of law; to end impunity, and to convert Guatemala into a country where working people's fundamental rights are respected.

The ITUC represents 175 million workers in 153 countries and territories and has 308 national affiliates.

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

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