

INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)
ITUC OnLine

Death Threats against SINTRAECOL Leaders

Brussels, 8 February 2012 (ITUC OnLine): Colombian trade unionists have seen a rise in the level of death threats since the beginning of the year, especially representatives of the Colombian energy workers' union Sintraecol, affiliated to the CUT and ICEM.

Sintraecol leaders Marcelino José López Pérez and Danuyl Pérez Gómez have managed to escape three attempts on their lives since 19 December 2011. Martín Porto and Walberto Figueroa of Electricaribe, a subsidiary of the Spanish energy firm Gas Natural, have also received death threats linked to their trade union activities.

Neither the state nor employers have taken measures to ensure the safety of the Sintraecol leaders issued with death threats. "The authorities must protect Colombia's citizens and trade unionists," insisted ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow. "The state has a duty to enforce the law and bring those responsible to justice." The ITUC has joined with Sintraecol, the CUT and ICEM in firmly denouncing the lack of urgency displayed by the authorities and the unit in charge of managing risk among vulnerable groups, attached to the Human Rights Office, in assessing the risks faced by these trade unionists.

In a letter <http://www.ituc-csi.org/colombia-trabajadores-de-la.html> to the Colombian authorities, the ITUC has urged President Manuel Santos, and his vice president in particular, to take urgent measures to ensure the safety of trade unionists, to enable them to conduct their union activities freely and peacefully without risking their lives.

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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