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SITRABI Target of Deadly Anti-Union Repression in Guatemala

Brussels, 9 February 2012 (ITUC OnLine): Miguel Angel González Ramírez, a member of the Izabal banana workers' union SITRABI, was killed on 5 February. He was shot several times whilst carrying his young child in his arms.

"This is yet another deadly crime against banana workers and, as such, against the Guatemalan trade union movement as a whole. President Otto Perez Molina must honour the responsibility he has to protect the workers targeted by constant violence," insisted ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow.

The murder took place in the midst of a battle being waged by SITRABI following the refusal of Del Monte subsidiary BANDEGUA to pay the minimum wage recently set by the government. "Workers have a right to a decent wage and employers have a duty to respect the legislation and the ILO core conventions ratified by Guatemala," insisted the ITUC general secretary.

This is yet another fatal illustration of the violence and impunity to which trade unionists are constantly exposed in Guatemala. SITRABI has been one of unions hardest hit in recent years. Two out of the ten trade unionists assassinated in 2011 were from SITRABI.

In a letter to the Guatemalan authorities, the ITUC joined with its Guatemalan affiliates and SITRABI in urging President Otto Pérez Molina, in his first month in office, to take every step necessary to ensure the safety of SITRABI members and leaders, that the trade unionist's murder is fully investigated, that those responsible are brought to justice, and that the banana company negotiates a decent wage with its employees without delay.

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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