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Colombia Peace Deal Heralds End of Five Decades of Conflict, War on Trade Unionists Must Stop

Brussels 27 June 2016 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has welcomed the ceasefire agreement between Colombia's government and FARC, which heralds the end of more than 50 years of conflict that has cost some 200,000 lives, 80 per cent of them civilians.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said: "Negotiations to consolidate the cease-fire in the lead-up to the ratification plebiscite must be inclusive with a political settlement that is based on full respect for human rights, an economy which delivers decent jobs and crucially, an end the war on trade unionists. Thousands of union leaders have been murdered, simply because they stood up for fundamental rights. Ending the pervasive targeting of trade unionists and embedding respect for fundamental workers' rights are essential to a sustainable democracy and economic justice. Colombia is one of the most economically unequal countries in the world. Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining are the key to tackling inequality, and social dialogue must be at the centre of the process from the beginning. Colombia's trade unions have been strong advocates for peace throughout the conflict, along with other civil society organisations. They now have a major role to play in consolidating the ceasefire and charting a new direction for the country."

The ITUC represents 180 million workers in 162 countries and territories and has 333 national affiliates.

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