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INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CONFEDERATION (ITUC)

Colombia: Armed Attack on Trade Union Leaders in Cali

Brussels, 26 February 2013 (ITUC OnLine): The ITUC has firmly denounced the attempt on the lives of Luis Miguel Morantes, the President of its affiliated organisation, the CTC (Confederación de Trabajadores de Colombia), and Adolfo Devia, vice president of the Cali municipal workers' union, the USE (Unión Sindical Emcali).

The attack took place on Saturday 23 February in the city of Cali. The trade union leaders had just left a meeting with International Labour Organisation (ILO) and government representatives, regarding the dismissal of over 400 public workers in Cali.

The assailants shot at the trade unionists' vehicle several times before being fended off by the team of bodyguards accompanying them. Fortunately the vehicle was armoured, saving the passengers from any injury.

This criminal act is one in a series of attacks marking an escalation in anti-union violence in Colombia since the start of the year.

"The situation is extremely grave. The Colombian government has made countless commitments at international level to tackle the climate of intimidation and violence against trade unionists. These latest incidents place us on red alert," said ITUC General Secretary Sharan Burrow.

In a letter to the Colombian authorities <http://www.ituc-csi.org/colombia-atentado-contra-luis>, the ITUC urged President Juan Manuel Santos to take every action necessary, and with every urgency, to ensure that the culprits are found and to guarantee the protection of the trade unionists.

The ITUC represents 174 million workers in 156 countries and territories and has 315 national affiliates.

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