

Geneva, 24 November 2014

Juan Manuel Santos
President
Republic of Colombia
Palacio de Nariño
Bogota
Colombia

fsantos@presidencia.gov.co and mission.colombia@ties.itu.int ;

cc. ryder@ilo.org ; Press-Info@ohchr.org ; niu@ohchr.org ; vstefanov@ohchr.org ;
civilsociety@ohchr.org ; dexrel@ohchr.org

IndustriALL demands an end to death threats against trade union leaders in La Guajira

Dear President,

I am writing to you in my capacity as General Secretary of [IndustriALL Global Union](#), which represents the collective interests of 50 million workers in more than 700 trade unions in the mining, energy and industrial sectors of 141 countries, to **again** request your immediate intervention to stop the death threats that trade union leaders in your country continue to receive, in this case, in the department of La Guajira.

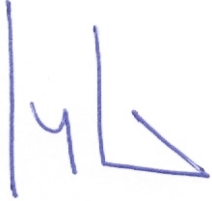
Four days ago, paramilitary groups, which your government claims to have dismantled, sent death threats (copy attached) to leaders of trade union and social movement leaders in La Guajira, including the Sintracarbón, Sindesena and Sintrabienestar trade unions. These continued threats and attacks on trade union leaders, which we have been denouncing for a long time, clearly violate basic human rights and, in particular, violate and seriously undermine the right of Colombian workers to collective bargaining and freedom of association, as the threats are often sent at key moments in workers' negotiations with companies.

In other words, the death threats and attacks take place every time that workers demand that their employers respect their legitimate rights. Consequently, we vigorously condemn this clear attempt to intimidate trade unions in order to restrict their activities.

It is time that the Colombian government put an end to these flagrant violations of human and trade union rights and keep its promises to guarantee the safety of trade union and social movement leaders, ensure respect for collective bargaining rights and the freedom of association, and lay the foundations for genuine social peace.

As your government has systematically ignored our legitimate complaints and denunciations, we are copying this letter not only to the Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations but also to Guy Ryder, Director General of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a vertical line on the left, a horizontal line in the middle, and a diagonal line on the right that ends in a small triangle.

Jyrki Raina
General Secretary
IndustriALL Global Union