



Trades Union Congress

His Excellency Mr Miguel Angel Solano Lopez Casco
The Paraguayan Ambassador
Embassy of the Republic of Paraguay
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our ref: euid/parag
date: 03 September 2014
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Dear Ambassador

Attack on Silvio Piris and other trade unionists

The TUC, on behalf of its 54 affiliated unions and 6.2 million British workers, firmly condemns the recent brutal and cowardly repression of trade union leaders in the Paraguayan education sector.

Last week (28 August), Silvio Piris, president of the Federación de Educadores del Paraguay (FEP), Santiago Ortiz, general secretary of the Sindicato de Periodistas del Paraguay (SPP) and Juan Gabriel Espínola, general secretary of the OTEP-Auténtica, and several others were injured during an otherwise peaceful demonstration. Silvio Piris was particularly badly injured as police shot him 17 times with rubber bullets, including three times in the chest.

The demands of the demonstration were better pay and a guaranteed share (7%) of Paraguay's GDP going to education. These are not demands or actions which should have led to a brutal and criminal response from police.

The TUC stands in support and solidarity with the Paraguayan trade union movement and we urge the authorities to take immediate action to protect Mr Piris and his fellow trade unionists from further attacks, and to allow free and peaceful expression of the demands of all Paraguayan workers seeking to address poverty, social exclusion, unemployment and in this case proper funding for quality public education. If such demands provoke hostile reactions from vested interests, we hope that police will in future protect demonstrators, rather than acting with unrestrained brutality against peaceful campaigners.

We will continue to monitor this case and others like it, and I hope to receive assurances from you that the situation is being addressed.

Yours sincerely

FRANCES O'GRADY
General Secretary