

HE Mr Antonio Jose Ardila
Colombia Ambassador
Embassy of Colombia
3 Hans Crescent
SW1X 0LN

18 June 2020

Dear Ambassador

**TUC condemns the assassination attempt on Jose Angel Mena Renteria,
Colombian trade union leader**

I am writing on behalf of the TUC, which represents more than 5.5 million working people in Britain, to strongly condemn the assassination attempt on Jose Angel Mena Renteria, trade union regional leader of the Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT) in Choco state. The attack took place two days ago in the early hours of Tuesday 16 June when, at 3:00 a.m. armed men broke into Jose's house.

Colombia continues to see widespread human rights violations, including the murders of social activists, trade unionists and former FARC combatants. The country continually features in the ITUC's annual Global Right's Index, as one of the top 10 worse places in the world for working people. In the latest report released today, it exposes Colombia as one of the most dangerous places in the world for trade unionists. The first five months of 2020 has been the most violent period since the peace agreement was signed, with the Colombian organisation INDEPAZ registering 114 murders of social activists between 1 January and 29 May. On 28 May, the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Fatou Bensouma, said that the ICC was monitoring killings of social activists and human rights defenders in Colombia. Over 200 former FARC combatants have also been murdered since the signing of the peace agreement.

The signing of the Peace Agreement in Colombia in November 2016, bringing an end to 53 years of internal armed conflict, was received with much hope by the international community and, especially, the international trade union movement.

In view of the grave human rights violations and the serious risks posed by the lack of comprehensive implementation of the Peace Agreement, we urge you to convey these urgent requests to your government:

1. Allow the competent authorities in Colombia to carry out investigations aimed at finding those responsible for this attack and to protect José Ángel Mena Renteria and all those union and social leaders who continue to fear for their lives.
2. Ensure the comprehensive implementation of the Peace Agreement, including the chapter on crop substitution, respect for the independence of the transitional justice institutions for peace (Special Jurisdiction for Peace - JEP), the Commission for the Clarification of Truth, and the Search Unit for Missing Persons), as well as the entire judicial branch, and the reopening of dialogue with the National Liberation Army (ELN).
3. Ensure that the authorities take effective measures to stop the murders of social leaders, trade unionists, human rights defenders and former combatants, and to provide the necessary security guarantees for them, in addition to ensuring judicial investigations to end the reign of impunity.
4. Ensure that the Colombian state effectively fulfil the international labour commitments it has undertaken with regard to labour rights, freedom of association, human rights and the protection of life, effective measures to protect the physical integrity of leaders, and the collective reparation plans, which should include full guarantees for workers.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

FRANCES O'GRADY

General Secretary