

# PERUVIAN TRADE UNION MEMBERS HOMES DESTROYED BY RECENT FLOODING

April 2017

## URGENT APPEAL FOR SOLIDARITY SUPPORT



Peru has been hit in recent weeks by devastating floods and mudslides that have killed around 100 people and torn apart much of the country's infrastructure, and destroyed homes.

ReliefWeb estimated on 30 March that:

- 797,789 people have been directly affected
- 91 people are dead
- 180,475 houses have been flooded

Members of Banana Link partner unions in Peru - **SITAG** (Sindicato de Trabajadores Agrarios Del Peru), and **SITETSA** (Sindicato de Trabajadores Empresa Talsa) – have asked for financial assistance to help rebuild homes and union offices.

### Background

Peruvian tropical fruit export production has been expanding rapidly in recent years, with output [expected to triple between 2015 and 2020](#). The UK is Peru's third-largest fresh fruit and vegetable export destination.

This agro-export boom comes as a result of special legislation that denies many basic labour and union rights to agricultural workers. They are paid less and receive lower levels of bonuses, compensation for sudden or arbitrary dismissals, compulsory holiday pay and contributions to the health service than those established under national labour law.

A [2015 report by the US Department of Labor](#) found serious labour rights abuses in key Peruvian export industries, including significant concerns about the current system to protect the right to freedom of association of workers employed on unlimited consecutive short-term contracts in Peru's non-traditional export sectors.

Labour rights in Peruvian edible horticulture is a thematic working programme of the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) in which the TUC and Banana Link, alongside key UK retailers, are active members.

### Banana Link union partners

In recent years we have been working closely with both **SITAG** and **SITETSA** to address violations of labour rights.



**SITAG** is a key partner in our [Union-to-Union programme](#), and our fundraising has enabled us to support organising, education, legal and advocacy work. Last year SITAG signed an [historic framework agreement](#) on trade union rights and sectoral dialogue with seven banana producers' associations.

Banana Link and our partners in the Make Fruit Fair! campaign have been supporting **SITETSA**, following the sacking of all nine members of their Executive Committee at TAL S.A. A total of 21,704 people supported [our online campaign](#), calling on the company to reinstate the sacked members, and to drop legal action against them. The ETI has worked hard to try and facilitate mediation with the company which has failed. Legal cases are still also being pursued against members of the Executive Committee.

### Our appeal

In response to the calls for help from SITAG and SITETSA, we [launched an appeal on 30 March](#) seeking donations to help with rebuilding homes and offices, specifically the costs of building materials, foodstuffs, clothing and beds.

Communication with the affected areas is difficult due to power cuts and phone lines being down, but we have been told that in the city of Piura, at least a dozen SITAG members have lost their homes, and the union office has collapsed. In the Province of Viru and its district Chao, Department of La Libertad, at least a dozen SITETSA members have also lost their homes.

In both cases, it is executive members of these unions that have been affected. It is crucial that our assistance enables these grassroots activists to continue their vital work of organising workers to defend their rights and bargain on their behalf.

We are hoping to raise **£5,000** to help these 24 members and have so far raised around £1,500.

### Supporting the appeal

Banana Link is collecting donations, which we will then send to SITAG to distribute to the affected union members in both areas.

You can make a donation by cheque made out to Banana Link, or by bank transfer to:

Account name: Banana Link

Bank: Co-op

Account number: 70288849

Sort code: 08 90 14

The photos below give you an idea of the extent of the damage and the rebuilding that will be required.

