



Trades Union Congress

His Excellency Acisclo Valladares Molina
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our ref: ilo/Guatemala/euird
date: 22 June 2016
contact: Stephen Russell
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Dear Ambassador

Assassination of Trade Unionist Brenda Marleni Estrada Tambiento

It is with great sadness that we have heard about the cowardly criminal attack on Brenda Marleni Estrada Tambiento, who died on Sunday 19 June 2016. The trade unionist was followed on the way back from a bus station, where she had left her father, trade union leader Jorge Estrada Y Estrada, who is assisting with the negotiation of collective agreements in one of the banana plantations in the department of Izabal. She was shot five times.

I am sure you will join us in forcefully condemning this brutal murder.

Brenda was the assistant coordinator of the Legal Advice Commission of the Unión Sindical de Trabajadores de Guatemala (UNSITRAGUA-HISTORICA), affiliated (as is the TUC) to the International Trade Union Confederation. She also formed part of the Guatemalan Organisers' Group and was a member of the Continental Legal Team of the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA). There can be no doubt that this killing was inextricably linked to her union role.

When you met with my colleagues Sam Gurney (ILO Governing Body) and Stephen Russell (Policy Officer, International) in March, you emphasized your government's commitment to ending the culture of impunity surrounding violent crimes towards trade unionists. At the time, the recent period of relative safety for Guatemalan unions was a source of hope for all of us that progress was possible, despite the lack of prosecutions. This latest murder is therefore not only a tragedy for Brenda, her family and her fellow trade unionists, but a serious blow to Guatemala's international reputation and to our hopes for progress. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that this cowardly murder, which has once again plunged the Guatemalan trade union movement into mourning, is a reflection of an ongoing climate of culture of terror and persecution in Guatemala, affecting workers and trade union leaders and representatives.

The TUC joins with the Guatemalan and international trade union movements in calling for the immediate intervention of the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG), and the opening of proper investigations to identify those who perpetrated and ordered this killing, and to punish them in accordance with the law. If Guatemala is to demonstrate any progress towards ending impunity, this killing must result in swift and thorough action both to bring justice for Brenda and to serve as a warning that such acts will no longer be tolerated.

I trust that you will convey this urgent request to your government.

Yours sincerely

FRANCES O'GRADY

General Secretary