

March 26, 2008

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Dear Sirs:

We have learned recently of the brutal murder of four trade unionists around March 6, the day of the mass rallies to protest the vicious acts of paramilitary groups in Colombia, and we join with a chorus of others in denouncing the Colombian government's failure to protect trade unionists forced to live in fear of paramilitary groups who threaten their lives.

We are informed that the victims of this recent paramilitary violence were Leonidas Gomez Rozo, leader of the National Union of Bank Employees (UNEB); Carlos Burbano, vice-president of the hospital workers' union (Asociación Nacional de Trabajadores Hospitalarios); Carmen Cecilia Carvajal, a teacher; and, Gildardo Gómez Alzate, a teacher and activist with the Asociación de Institutores de Antioquia. The four were active participants in the rallies that attracted hundreds of thousands of people.

Colombia has earned a reputation as the world's most murderous country. With this latest murder, its government must wear a badge of shame. Canada will share that shame if it proceeds to negotiate a free trade agreement with a country that holds one of the world's worst human rights records.

The Colombian trade union movement, especially the CUT and its affiliated unions, continues to be the victim of a leadership extermination campaign that the Colombian government appears to condone. We understand that the Black Eagles paramilitary group has declared the UNEB a 'Military Objective'. We implore you to do your part by urging the Colombian government to bring to justice the paramilitaries that maraud and murder with impunity.

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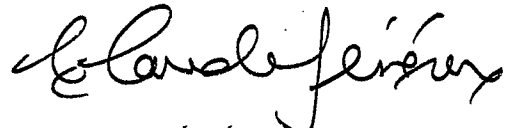
On behalf of our 570,000 members, we ask you to take the lead in demanding that these crimes be exposed to the world by urging that a thorough international investigation into this and other murders take place. Colombia alone cannot conduct it. It must involve the international community.

CUPE implores you to call for an end to the intolerably dangerous situation facing trade unionists and other civil society activists in Colombia. We further call on you to stop free trade negotiations now. Canadians do not want a trading relationship with a country that refuses to stop this madness.

Yours truly,



PAUL MOIST
National President



CLAUDE GÉNÉREUX
National Secretary-Treasurer

cc. CUPE National Executive Board
CLC President Ken Georgetti