

URGENT ACTION

TRADE UNION LEADER KILLED, OTHERS IN DANGER

A trade union leader was shot dead on 24 March in Guatemala City, together with three other men. He may have been targeted for his trade union activities. Other members of the trade union may be in grave danger.

Luis Ovidio Ortíz Cajas was shot on 24 March at around 8.30pm as he walked to a shop near his home in the capital, Guatemala City. He was a public relations secretary of the Executive Committee of the National Trade Union of Health Workers (*Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Salud de Guatemala – SNTSG*). A group of men were playing cards outside the shop. As Ovidio Ortíz was about to go into the shop, a young man got out of a white sedan car and started shooting at him and the group playing cards, with what a local source said was a 9mm pistol. Another local source said that Ovidio Ortíz was shot about eight times, twice in the head and six times in his upper torso. The other men who died as a result of the attack were: a farmer, Bildave Santos Barco, who was shot twice in the head and died instantly; Fredy Leonel Estrada Mazariegos and Oscar Alexander Rodríguez Lima who died later in hospital. Two other men were wounded.

The trade union of which Ovidio Ortíz was a member has campaigned for many years on issues of corruption in the management of the country's public health facilities, and in December 2010 filed an official complaint against the previous Minister of Health, accusing him of corruption. On 22 March the trade union's Executive Committee reached an agreement with the Ministry of Labour regarding seniority-based annual pay rises (*bono de antigüedad*) for health sector employees.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Call on the authorities to order an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the killing of Luis Ovidio Ortíz Cajas and the three other men (Bildave Santos Barco, Fredy Leonel Estrada Mazariegos, Oscar Alexander Rodríguez Lima) killed on 24 March, publish the results and bring those responsible to justice;
- Urge them to take immediate steps to provide all necessary protection to SNTSG members, in accordance with their wishes;
- Remind them that human rights defenders, including trade union leaders, have the right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals, as set out in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 11 MAY 2012 TO:

Attorney General

Claudia Paz y Paz Bailey
Fiscal General de la República
Ministerio Público
15ª Avenida 15-16, Zona 1, Barrio Gerona
Ciudad de Guatemala,
GUATEMALA
Fax: +502 2411 9210
Twitter: @mpclaudiapaz
Salutation: Estimada Sra. Fiscal General

Minister of the Interior

Lic. Mauricio López Bonilla
Ministro de Gobernación
6ª Avenida 13-71, Zona 1,
Ciudad de Guatemala,
GUATEMALA
Fax: +502 2413 8658
Twitter: @mingobguate
Salutation: Dear Minister/
Estimado Sr. Ministro

And copies to:

Health workers' trade union
Sindicato Nacional Trabajadores de la Salud
de Guatemala - SNTSG
Email: sindicatodesalud@yahoo.com

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

TRADE UNION LEADER KILLED, OTHERS IN DANGER

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Trade unionists in Guatemala face dangerous conditions due to their work on labour rights.

Byron Arreaga, a member of an administrative workers' trade union, the *Sindicato de Trabajadores Administrativos del Segundo Registro de la Propiedad* (Trade Union of Administrative Workers for the Second Property Registrar, SITRASEREPRO) was shot dead in the north-western city of Quetzaltenango, on 13 September 2011. See UA 293/11, AMR 34/013/2011 - <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR34/013/2011/en>

Idar Joel Hernandez Godoy, a finance secretary in the *Sindicato de Trabajadores de las Bananeras de Izabal* (Trade Union of Banana Workers, SITRABI), was shot several times by individuals riding on a motorcycle on 26 May 2011. Amnesty International called for a thorough and impartial investigation into the killing. See the press release, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/guatemala-urged-investigated-trade-unionist%E2%80%99s-killing-2011-05-27>

Name: Members of the *Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Salud de Guatemala* – SNTSG and other trade unions
Gender m/f: Both

UA: 95/12 Index: AMR 34/002/2012 Issue Date: 30 March 2012

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL

