



Education International
Internationale de l'Éducation
Internacional de la Educación
Bildungsinternationale

**TO ALL EI MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS
TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD
TO ALL GUFs**

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World Teachers' Day is celebrated annually on 5 October. It is an opportunity for Education International and its partners to celebrate the profession and to promote international standards for the teaching profession. The theme for this year's commemoration is, "Take a Stand for Teachers".

World Teachers' Day is an opportunity to appreciate the dedication and contribution of teachers to quality education. Unfortunately, in Colombia teachers live in constant fear of being killed or maimed. Over the years, FECODE has documented the killing of 968 teachers and unionists, highlighting a pattern of deadly violence targeting teachers and their union.

Since the election of President Santos in June 2010, 32 teacher unionists have been killed and over 500 have received death threats. EI, with its affiliate FECODE, has continued to urge President Manuel Santos to take urgent measures to ensure the safety of trade unionists, to enable them to conduct their union activities freely and peacefully without risking their lives. Even if relevant legislation has been adopted in 2011 to protect the lives of teacher unionists, the lack of implementation and awareness by public officers is blatant. In June 2012, Decree 1628 deprived all threatened teachers of the protection extended to them by a 2010 ruling (resolutions 1240 and 3900).

Together with the International Labour Organisation, EI denounces the persistence of murders of unionists and the impunity in relation to crimes against trade unionists.

EI and its affiliate have also opposed the Education Law that deepens privatization of public schools. Under the model of "concession" public funds have sustained multiple private schools, leading to the loss of 30 000 teaching jobs in the last 15 years and displacing over 40,000 children from public to private schools. EI also denounces the Ley 715 which allows any employee to become a teacher.

As we commemorate this year's World Teachers' Day, we call upon education unions, teachers, human rights advocates and other partners to put pressure on Colombian authorities to guarantee the safety and security of all teachers.

Yours sincerely,

Fred van Leeuwen
General Secretary