

International Human Rights Day – The Genocide Against Teachers Continues

As we commemorate the Universal Declaration of HUMAN RIGHTS, the balance sheet drawn up by FECODE – the Colombian Educators Federation – could not be more dramatic. Article 3 states that “Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person”, yet against that we see that Colombian teachers have been subject to more than two decades of a criminal process of victimisation, as these figures attest:

- . 927 teachers murdered
- . 264 of whom were killed under democratic rule
- . 27 of whom have died in 2010 so far
- . Over 4000 teachers threatened
- . 1092 forced to leave their workplace and their homes
- . 60 disappeared
- . 70 have taken refuge in other countries
- . Over 200 have been victims of extortion.

The departments of Cordoba, Antioquia, Magdalena and Caldas have been the hardest hit. Teachers there have also been subjected to other forms of criminal conduct such as extortion, ATM hold-ups (fleteos) and assaults, at the hands of armed criminals and delinquents, all taking place against the background of the social, political, economic and armed conflict raging in our country.

These serious violations of the right to life, liberty and security of person of the educators affiliated to FECODE are a fact. But it is just as true that violations of their HUMAN RIGHTS also take the form of widespread and permanent infringements of their civil, political, economic, social, cultural and collective rights. That is why we have demanded of our different governments a public policy of recognising and promoting trade union organisations as democratic institutions necessary to the creation of a state of law, as proclaimed by the 1991 political constitution.

Today on International Human Rights Day we express our deepest solidarity with the families of murdered teachers and with our affiliates ADEMACOR, ADIDA, ASOINCA, SUTEV, SUDEA, EDUCAL, AICA, EDUMAG, SIMANA, ASODEGUA, and ASINORT, who have had to say farewell to and bury activists who have died in acts of criminal violence; and we wish to voice our encouragement to all teachers who have been victims of threats and forced displacement.

FECODE denounces before national and international public opinion the rise in the number and seriousness of the threats, extortion and assassinations of teachers before the impassive gaze of the

national government, and in particular the Ministries of the Interior, Justice, Education and Social Protection, the Office of the Attorney General, the Office of the Vice-President of the Republic (the Presidential Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law Programme). We call on international society to show its solidarity and on the authorities to take the necessary action to investigate the genocide of Colombia's teachers, **as well as the presumed irregularities within the administrative authorities of some territorial entities, including the Departments of Caldas, Antioquia, Arauca, Cordoba, Magdalena and the Municipality of Manizales in their handling of the cases of TEACHERS UNDER THREAT**, who have failed to understand that HUMAN DIGNITY, a fundamental principle of our State of Law, overrides any technical or bureaucratic consideration.

We demand that the Government of "National Unity" take prompt and timely action to guarantee the full restoration of the VIOLATED RIGHTS of Colombian teachers, as the necessary precondition to ensuring that not a single teacher faces murder, threats, displacement or extortion, and that they can exercise their trade union rights in full.

10 DECEMBER: A DAY OF MOBILISATION IN EVERY CAPITAL