

Thursday, 17 May 2012

## Colombia

ACTU Congress acknowledges with concern the ongoing and systematic repression of workers in Colombia, including the harassment, detention and assassination of trade union activists and the lack of freedom of association and other fundamental workers' rights.

Despite the claims of human rights improvements by the Colombian government since the election of the president Juan Manuel Santos, trade unionists continue to be targeted. In 2010 and 2011 respectively, 52 and 23 trade unionists were killed. In 2012, 7 trade unionists have been killed already; this is in addition to the 2,908 trade unionists that have been killed since 1986.

Added to this, is the increase in violence and forced displacement against community leaders, Afro-Colombian and indigenous populations in rural areas at the hands of paramilitaries, military and secret police, the continuous detention of political prisoners, and systematic abuses of human rights.

The ACTU notes with concern the decision by the Australian Government to open a Consulate General in Bogotá to promote trade and investment opportunities for Australia business interests in a country that continues to egregiously violate human rights.

The ACTU condemns the Colombian government for not keeping its commitment to guarantee the safety of community leaders and trade union activist and calls on the Australian Government to raise directly with the Government of Colombia the violation of workers' rights and work with others in the international community to press for an end to these abuses.