



General Otto Pérez Molina
President of the Republic
Guatemala
National Palace
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Ref: RP/SV/CHM
Contact: rights@world-psi.org

23 March 2015

Dear Mr President,

On behalf of more than 20 million public sector workers throughout the world, we are writing to inform you that our affiliates in Guatemala have advised us that you made statements to the media on 18 March, in which you said you were issuing instructions to prohibit the authorisation and negotiation of collective agreements between trade unions and government ministries as well as other employment benefits that are the government's responsibility on the grounds that these measures are needed to contain public debt because of the country's fiscal gap.

Our affiliates in Guatemala completely reject this measure, as of course does our global union, given that Guatemala is believed to be one of the most dangerous countries in the world to be a trade unionist. Many trade union leaders and activists have been killed or threatened and most of the perpetrators have not been brought to justice. It is still not known who killed Carlos Hernández and Ovidio Ortiz.

We must remind you that the International Labour Organisation (ILO) is discussing the systematic and daily violation of the freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining in your country. In talks with the ILO, your government committed itself to overcoming this crisis of disrespect towards the trade union movement, through the implementation of and your compliance with a Road Map, thereby avoiding the imposition of sanctions on your country under the terms of trade treaties and other instruments.

The government of Guatemala has so far failed to comply with the Road Map. Neither is it complying with the terms of collective agreements already signed after long negotiations, such as the collective agreements reached by unions with the Ministry of Health and the Municipal Water Company (EMPAGUA).

As we made clear at our meeting with you in March 2014 and more recently with the Deputy Minister of Labour on 4 March 2015, we would like you to begin sector level talks with public service employees to discuss the issues affecting and impeding the development of this important sector.

The PSI calls on you to change your policies and take a new turn. The government should really be introducing a national policy to promote respect for trade unions and encourage collective bargaining. We reserve the right to take action in accordance with our material and legal responsibilities.

In the hope of receiving a positive response from you.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rosa Pavanelli". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small dot at the end.

Rosa PAVANELLI
General Secretary

Cc.:

Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Lic. Carlos Contreras, ccontreras@mintrabajo.gob.gt

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