



Mr Otto Pérez Molina
President of Guatemala

Ref: RP/SV/HR - rights@world-psi.org

14 March 2013

Mr President,

On behalf of Public Services International (PSI), a global union organisation which brings together more than 20 million public sector workers in 150 countries worldwide, I write to express our outrage and demand for justice concerning the recent murder of our colleague Carlos Hernández Mendoza, a union leader with the National Health Workers' Union of Guatemala (Sindicato Nacional Trabajadores de la Salud de Guatemala – SNTSG) which is affiliated to PSI.

Mr Hernández was assassinated on Friday 8 March 2013, while on the road to Marañonal, in the department of Chiquimula, near the border with Honduras; he was intercepted by several men who shot and killed him.

Mr Hernández was an inspiring trade union leader and human rights activist, involved in a wide range of social organisations and campaigns. Mr Hernández was on the executive of the SNTSG, and the National Front for the Struggle (Frente Nacional de Lucha – FNL). He was a leading member of several civil society organisations, including Camotán Peasant Farmers Association (Asociación Campesina Camoteca), the New Day Peasant Farmer Coordination (Coordinación Campesina Nuevo Día), and Coordination of Popular, Indigenous, Church, Trade Union and Peasant Organizations of the East (Coordinadora de Organizaciones Populares, Indígenas, Iglesias, Sindicales y Campesinas de Oriente – COPISCO). We stand with Mr Hernández's family, co-workers and communities in mourning his loss.

On 21 February, Carlos Hernández had received a death threat by phone, following a meeting where he had spoken out against deforestation in the region. Two members of the New Day Peasant Farmer Coordination (Coordinación Campesina Nuevo Día) – Omar Jerónimo and Damaso Aldana – received information that threats were made against them at a meeting. They fear for their lives following the killing of Hernández, and we ask that the government ensure their safety.

Our organisation upholds the International Confederation of Trade Unions' campaign against violence and impunity in Guatemala. PSI condemns this murder and any other act that violates the right of workers to freedom of association or otherwise hurts union comrades and their families in Guatemala. We demand that the Guatemalan authorities make immediate investigations in order to arrest and convict those responsible for this murder and related threats.

PSI affirms our support for our affiliate SNTSG's initiative to create an observatory to track the violation of human and labour rights in Guatemala. We will continue to denounce these crimes at the international level, and demand effective action against impunity. PSI will use our resources to demand justice for our members in Guatemala, and work in cooperation with our international and European partners. We believe the shocking violations of human rights and international labour conventions in Guatemala provide grounds for suspension of the European Union Central American Association Agreement (EU-CAAA), particularly in regard to the EU's [General System of Preferences](#) and special incentive arrangement for sustainable development and good governance, known as GSP+.

We ask you to take immediate action to stop all violence towards trade unions and their members, and ensure their rights under international law are upheld.

Most sincerely,

Rosa Pavanelli
General Secretary