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Union Members Tortured and Murdered ***The Truth About Colombia***

If you lived in Colombia, you could be marked for murder simply because you are a union member. Since 1991, over 2,200 union members have been murdered, giving it the notorious distinction of being the country with the most murdered unionists in the world.

Did You Know...

- The number of reported death threats in 2006 numbered an astounding 244. Many death threats start when union leaders and activists work to organize new members or get ready to bargain.
- Over 97 percent of the murder cases since 1991 have gone without punishment. Many are believed to be carried out by the government or by paramilitary death squads with corporate involvement.
- The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) has declared Columbia: **“the most dangerous place in the world to be a union member.”**
- Not surprisingly, this situation is taking a toll on the Colombian labor movement. There are fewer and fewer people covered under new union contracts each year. In 1996 there were 260,000. Last year that number fell to only 47,000.
- The Steelworkers have been in a years-long struggle on behalf of the beverage and food union known as Sinaltrainal to challenge the human rights abuses, including a number of murders as well as torture, against its members and leaders. More Sinaltrainal members were murdered in 2007.
- **The Bush Administration is actually considering a free trade agreement with Colombia even though they know all about the torture and murder of Columbian trade unionists!**

Note to Rapid Response Teams: Get Ready! Rapid Response will be sending out additional educational InfoAlerts in the coming weeks which will lead to a call for action on Colombia.