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NASUWT

The Teachers' Union

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HE Mr Nestor Osorio Londoño
Embassy of Colombia
3 Hans Street
London
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Dear Ambassador,

The NASUWT, the UK teachers' union, is writing to express our serious concern about the threats being made to members of the Executive Committee of FECODE.

It is almost a year since NASUWT, as part of a TUC delegation, met with you to express concerns around the peace process and the Colombians government investment in this process. The NASUWT representative (Victor Agüera) raised with you the government's lack of engagement with FECODE and asked for this concern to be addressed.

However, on 26 October 2020, death threats were made against all fifteen members of the Executive Committee of FECODE, as well as Diógenes Orjuela, president of the Confederación Sindical CUT and a former professor and leader of FECODE. The threats took the form of a funeral wreath with the words "Rest in Peace". Sixteen candles and obituaries with the name of each of the threatened union leaders were also delivered to the home of Carlos Rivas, Secretary of Legal Affairs for FECODE.

These threats follow union-led nationwide efforts to address the country's social, health, educational and economic crisis. FECODE is a sister teachers' trade union which is committed to public education and democracy and is working to promote schools as zones of peace by fostering inter-community dialogue. FECODE remains firmly committed to the full implementation of the Peace Agreement.

According to a new report published by FECODE and the Escuela Nacional Sindical there were 6,119 violations of the right to life, physical integrity and freedom of education unionists in Colombia between 1986 and 2016. These include 990 murders, 78 forced disappearances and 49 attempted murders, in addition to over 3,000 threats and more than 1,500 forced displacements.

The NASUWT, together with Education International (EI) representing 32 million teachers and educators worldwide, together with EI's Regional Committee for Latin America, expresses our serious concerns over the chronic lack of measures to protect the safety of teachers and trade unionists in Colombia. Despite representations made to the Colombian President, Iván Duque, calling for the

immediate protection of all members of the FECODE Executive Committee, we note that more than 1,000 teachers and trade unionists have been killed in Colombia in the last 25 years.

The NASUWT supports fully the representations by EI to alert United Nations agencies, including the ILO, UNESCO and the UN Commission on Human Rights, to highlight our serious concerns.

The NASUWT stands ready to meet with you further to discuss our concerns and to ensure that the interests of teachers and educators and their students are protected and advanced.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Roach', written in a cursive style.

Dr Patrick Roach
General Secretary

cc: Frances O'Grady, General Secretary, Trades Union Congress
Hasan Dodwell, Justice for Colombia
David Edwards, General Secretary, Education International