



## ILO Governing Body defended union rights

During a meeting of the ILO (International Labour Organization) Governing Body, held in Geneva from March 11 to March 26, members of the committee examined a series of issues related to the workers rights and especially several cases of violation of essential rights related to union affiliation and freedom of negotiation..

The bench of workers' representatives at the ILO Governing Body has an essential role in the defense of these rights.

Brazilian workers are represented in the Administrative Committee by the colleague **Arnaldo Benedetti, secretary of UGT's International Relationships Department.**



The **Committee on Freedom of Association** drew the special attention of the Governing Body to the cases of Colombia, Djibouti, Guatemala, the Philippines and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

In the longstanding case of Colombia, the Committee noted with interest the measures adopted by the Government to combat violence, but expressed again its deep regret at the murder of trade union leaders and members, and urged the Government to continue taking all necessary steps to guarantee that workers and their organizations can fully exercise their rights in freedom and safety.

While it asked the trade union organizations to provide the competent national bodies with all information that might facilitate the relevant investigations, the Committee requested the government to provide detailed information on developments in the climate of impunity and on concrete progress in the investigations. More particularly, the Committee asked to be informed about any relevant measures related to the alleged existence of links between paramilitary groups and those responsible for providing protection to trade union leaders and members, and regarding the allegations concerning Operation Dragon whose purpose is said to be the elimination of a number of union leaders.

In the case of Guatemala, the Committee deeply deplored the fact that, despite the time that has elapsed since the submission of this complaint, the Government has limited itself to replying to only one of the numerous allegations in this case – some of which concern murders and death threats. It deplored the murder of the trade union officials Rolando Raquec and Luis Quinteros Chinchilla and the attempt against the life of Marco Alvarez Tzoc and Imelda Lopez de Sandoval, and urged the Government to inform it as a matter of urgency of the progress made in the inquiries and proceedings underway. The Committee further urged the Government to take all the necessary measures immediately to safeguard the lives of the wife and children of Rolando Raquec.

The south american workers

Os trabalhadores sul americanos workers are represented in the Governing Body by **Julio Gómez Esguerra, from Confederación General del Trabajo - Colombia** and by **Gerardo Martinez from Confederación General del Trabajo - Argentina.**

### UGT organizes act of solidarity to the Cuban people



UGT organized on April 7, an act of solidarity towards the Cuban people, condemning the criminal economic embargo imposed by the United States to Cuba and also calling out Cuban leaders, inheritors of a revolution that put an end to a bloody and appeaser dictatorship of Fulgêncio Batista to reaffirm their commitment to democracy, freedom and respect to human rights.

Over 300 union leaders went to the protest in front of the Cuban Consulate, in Sao Paulo, mostly women that, dressed in white, demanded that Cuban prisoners of opinion were to be freed and also demanded respect towards humanitarian positions of the "Ladies in White".

Ricardo Patah, national president of UGT, reminded, in his speech, that the union central and Brazilian workers join those that fight for the immediate suspension of the economic embargo to Cuba. He stated that the embargo is similar to an implicit act of war by the USA and attempts against physical and moral integrity of the entire Cuban population. "UGT understands that, under such conditions, the embargo is nothing more than a crime against man kind and its economic and social effects are an act of oppression against the Cuban people", he said.

The president of UGT also reminded that the act of solidarity to the Cuban people and the request for the Cuban leaders to free their prisoners of conscience, was the first one done in our country by a union central and it came to reaffirm the commitment UGT has with democracy, freedom and respect to human rights.

### UGT sympathizes with Chilean workers

**Cícero Pereira da Silva**, First adjunct secretary of UGT's Department of Integration in the Americas, participated, late March, in a mission of solidarity to Chilean trade union centrals - CUT/Chile (Unique Central of Workers) and CAT/Chile (Autonomous Central of Workers).

**Cícero da Silva** showed concern from UGT and Brazilian workers towards the serious consequences of an earthquake that devastated that neighboring country.



The earthquake that struck the south-central region of Chile affected a very important portion of the population in that country, with very strong social and economic consequences. Export of some of the main Chilean products was affected, and the infrastructural damages reached a level of 15 to 30 million dollars, which would be equal to around 15% of the GDP of that country.

**Oscar Olivos**, General Secretary of CAT, described that the affected region is one of the poorest ones in Chile and only with a lot of work and external solidarity it is possible to get the lives of the ones affected back to normal.

Cícero showed a proposal of a partnership in the area of union capacitation for the Chilean union centrals through INCASUR/ Conesul Committee of Workers - CTCS, an institution he presides.

### UGT leads campaign for changes in FGTS



UGT is leading, at the National Congress, a wide campaign to review the legislation that regulates the FGTS (Unemployment Guarantee Fund). The accumulated loss of workers reaches R\$ 58 billion since 2002, according to the Institute FGTS Facil. Last year, FGTS was revised in 3,9% while the inflation level measured by IPCA - National Consumer Price Index - was 4,31%. Ricardo Patah, president of UGT, says it isn't possible to accept that FGTS keep up with a readjustment below inflation and workers keep on accumulating losses.

"We started a fight to reduce the losses workers have been suffering under the current TR (Referential Tax) remuneration, which is zero, plus the miserable 3%. FGTS is a heritage of workers and they must receive a financial feedback adequate to their investment", Patah defended.

**Roberto Santiago, Federal Deputy** (PV party- state of Sao Paulo), **vice-president of UGT** and writer of the sub-committee that analyses the Unemployment Guarantee Fund, defends a wide discussion on the topic to revise distortions that reduce the rentability of FGTS, the inclusion of mechanisms that stimulate workers to leave resources invested longer and the concentration of all judicial demands on the fund, under the Labour Court, among other changes.

There are currently 75 law projects following legal channels under the National Congress related to FGTS. Out of which, 64 deal with the possibility of withdraw. The main proposal is related to exchange the Referential Tax for the INPC (National Index of Prices to the Consumer) as a permanent index, corresponding to a percentage of the Selic tax (basic interest rate of economy), linked to the time the account has been opened, in order to create a revenue.

### UGT defends unity of commerce workers in the south

At the opening of the Seminar of Commerce Workers of the Southern Region, held by FECEP (Federation of Commerce Employees of the State of Parana), **Ricardo Patah, president of UGT**, emphasized the importance of unity in the class of commerce workers of the southern region.

"This partnership is extremely positive so we are able to proceed the fight for the regulation of the class, and also to obtain better salary achievements in collective negotiations with large chains, assuring better profits for the workers", Patah stated.



"Fecep organizes, once a year, a Commerce Workers Meeting. This year we enlarged the participation in the event with the presence of unions from Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul. This way, we are searching for an exchange of informations and proposals of improvement in workers rights and their life conditions", **Vicente da Silva, president of FECEP**, stated.

**Ricardo Patah** also emphasized the defense of a campaign to reduce working hours for shift work from 44 down to 40 weekly hours, without a salary reduction and condemned the act of creating unions with the simple goal of sharing the base and weakening the class.

### CECF from the State of Sao Paulo pays homage to UGT

Cristina Palmieri recebe a placa de agradecimento à UGT

UGT received, on April 05, during the State Committee for the Woman Condition 27th Anniversary Celebration Dinner, a tribute for its participation and support to the "1st Exhibition on Woman Citizenship" held last March.

Commissary Rose, president of the State Committee for the Woman Condition, requested Dr. Marilda Aparecida Panzonato Pinheiro, president of the Association State Police Commissaries of Sao Paulo, to deliver the "Thank Plaque" to the representative of UGT, the colleague Cristina Palmieri, Adjunct Secretary of the Environment and Sustainable Development Department and UGT's Gender Collective.



The colleagues Cleonice Caetano Souza; Ismael Gianeri; Evanice Gomes de Oliveira; Eliane Cássia; Márcia Carneiro; Sra. Sonia de Freitas Toledo Rodrigues; Patrícia Santos; Aparecido Alves Tenório (aka Cidão); Leila Batista de Queiroz; Alenice Rocho dos Santos and Michelle de Andrade Teixeira were contemplated with the "Thank Diploma".

### UGT state branch of Pernambuco opens new office



UGT state branch of Pernambuco, opened, on April 12, its new head office in the capital. The new facilities are located at Rua da Concórdia, nº 381- Bairro São José, Recife-PE, at the disposal of its affiliated people. We congratulate the administration of the institution for this important achievement. (SEEB Garanhuns e Região-Diretoria de Comunicações)

### Ministry of Labour and Employment releases Blog

The Ministry of Labour and Employment released, on April 22, a Blog of Labour, that has as its objective to offer another interactive and online tool with information related to their agenda.

In this blog, internet users will be able to get information on services, numbers and statistics, projects and special programs and legislation, among other topics related to labour and employment. . (Agência Sindical) (Agência DIAP, 26.03.2010)



### Dieese: Brazil kept salary level in 2009

Brazil was able to keep the payroll and employment level along the financial crisis of 2009, compared to 2008. The evaluation was made by Renato Lima, regional coordinator of Dieese (Inter-union Department of Statistics and Social-Economic Studies).

To him, the decision of the Federal Government to adopt a policy requested by unions - with a reduction of taxes in areas that are vital to economy - made possible the increase in employment in some sectors, such as civil construction, which, partially, compensated the low income and unemployment in the industrial sector.



"The General Union of Workers (GUW) reaffirms its historic commitments to the working class, while seeking to expand its methods of action, with ethics, courage and the certainty that Brazil can be better and more just. " Ricardo Patah – UGT's President

UGT World – the International Newsletter of the UGT Brasil - General Workers Union