



Canadian Association of University Teachers
Association canadienne des professeures et professeurs d'université

November 11, 2020

By Email: contacto@presidencia.gov.co

His Excellency Iván Duque Márquez
President of the Republic of Colombia

Subject: New death threats against FECODE Executive Committee members

Excellency:

The Canadian Association of University Teachers (CAUT), representing 72,000 academic staff, has been informed by Education International (EI) and the *Federación Colombiana de Educadores* (FECODE) of new threats to the lives of the members of the FECODE National Executive Committee. I join with the global education community in demanding immediate protection measures for all FECODE Executive Committee members in response to these threats.

We have received reports from FECODE that the members of its Executive Committee were sent death threats in the form of individualized obituary notices and a funeral wreath. We are alarmed at these latest threats to the teachers' union and are deeply troubled that violence towards social and union leaders has become far too commonplace in your country.

EI and its Latin America Regional Committee have expressed their grave concerns regarding the chronic lack of safety of teachers and union leaders in Colombia, where they are often threatened and intimidated. Over 6,000 education unionists have been killed, threatened, or forcefully displaced over the last 30 years. With these recent threats, this terrible trend continues.

We call on your government to take all necessary measures to immediately and permanently stop the wave of threats and killings in your country. CAUT urges your government to ensure the safety and the physical integrity of all individuals on the FECODE Executive Committee, and of all citizens who exercise their rights to express opinions, demonstrate, and organise in defense of the public education system.

As part of the global community of educators, CAUT stands in solidarity with unions and teachers in Colombia. We will continue to closely monitor the human rights and labour rights.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'David Robinson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

David Robinson
Executive Director

c.c. Hon. François-Philippe Champagne, Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Francois-Philippe.Champagne@parl.gc.ca