



FAO:

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, London
 Department of Foreign Affairs, Dublin

C.C.

UK Ambassador in Colombia
 Irish Ambassador in Colombia
 Colombian Ambassador in the UK
 Colombian Ambassador in Ireland

6 May 2021

Trade unions in Britain and Ireland express our profound condemnation of the terrible state violence currently taking place in Colombia.

Since the latest round of trade union-led National Strike mobilisations were initiated on Wednesday 28 April, Colombian state forces have committed human rights abuses on a massive scale. According to national human rights organisations, state forces have killed at least 18 people, with some reporting up to 37 deaths, and left numerous others with permanent eye injuries. There are also several reports of sexual violence committed against detainees, while human rights observers and journalists have been attacked.

Following the police killings of up to 13 people during protests in September 2020, Colombia's Supreme Court found state forces to act with systematic violence towards peaceful protest. Despite this ruling and repeated warnings by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other bodies, state violence in Colombia has continued.

We cannot stay silent in the face of these brutal attacks against protesters. We support the right of every Colombian to protest and to raise their voice to call for a brighter future. We congratulate the trade unions, the social movements and particularly the thousands of young people who have had the tenacity to stand up and continue their protest in the face of so much intimidation and violence from the police. The Colombian state must respect citizens' democratic right to peaceful protest and freedom of assembly.

On behalf of the millions of workers across both Britain and Ireland who our unions represent, we call separately on both our governments, in Britain and Ireland, to publicly condemn the state violence which has taken place over recent days and to demand an immediate end to the violence and full accountability for the perpetrators.

Signed:

Frances O'Grady, General Secretary, TUC



Gerry Murphy, President, ICTU



Roz Foyer, General Secretary, STUC



Ged Nichols, General Secretary, Accord



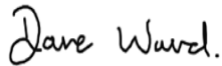
Mick Whelan, General Secretary, ASLEF and Chair, Justice for Colombia



Sarah Woolley, General Secretary, BFAWU



Dave Ward, General Secretary, CWU



Larry Flanagan, General Secretary, EIS



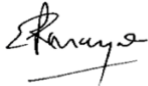
Matt Wrack, General Secretary, FBU



Kevin Callinan, General Secretary, Forsa



Eoin Ronanye, Deputy General Secretary, Forsa



Horace Trubridge, General Secretary, MU



Patrick Roach, General Secretary, NASUWT



Mark Dickinson, General Secretary, Nautilus



Mary Bousted, Joint General Secretary, NEU

Mary W. Bousted.

Kevin Courtney, Joint General Secretary, NEU

Kevin Courtney

Alison Millar, General Secretary, NIPSA

A millar

Mark Serwotka, General Secretary, PCS

M. Serwotka

Steve Gillan, General Secretary, POA

Steve Gillan

Mark Fairhurst, Chair, POA

Mark Fairhurst

Michael Lynch, General Secretary, RMT

M. Lynch

Manuel Cortes, General Secretary, TSSA

Manuel Cortes

Jo Grady, General Secretary, UCU

Jo Grady

Vicky Blake, President, UCU

V. Blake

Christina McAnea, General Secretary, UNISON

Christina McAnea

Len McCluskey, General Secretary, Unite

Len McCluskey

Paddy Lillis, General Secretary, USDAW

Paddy Lillis