



INCREASED PROTECTION FOR TRADE UNIONISTS IN COLOMBIA

WHEREAS:

Paramilitary and guerrilla violence has severely affected Colombia's trade unions. According to the U.S. State Department's 2001 Human Rights Report, "Labor leaders nationwide continue to be targeted for attacks by paramilitaries, guerrillas and narcotics traffickers. According to the U.N, the ILO and trade union leaders, the vast majority of killings and attacks on labor leader are committed by paramilitaries. According to the ENS (National Trade Union School), a total of 184 union activists were killed during the year," and

WHEREAS:

The Colombian armed forces have failed to take concrete action to sever the systematic ties between its members and the paramilitary forces of the AUC; and

WHEREAS:

The Colombian government has failed to take effective action to investigate, arrest and prosecute the killers of union members. The vast majority of cases are not investigated at all. In nearly all cases in the past 10 years, no arrests have been made. In the few cases where there has been an arrest, no prosecution resulted, and in not one case has there been a conviction; and

WHEREAS:

Measures adopted by the Colombian government to protect union leaders have been inadequate. The U.S. State Department reported that the number of unionists seeking protection increased from 300 in 1999 to more than 2,300 in December 2001.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

AFSCME actively lobby against the far-reaching changes in U.S. policy for Plan Colombia contained in the administration's emergency supplemental appropriations bill; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That AFSCME work with the Congress to ensure that U.S. policy toward Colombia

1. Maintains existing human rights conditions on U.S. assistance; and
2. Requires the Colombian government to take action to sever links between its military forces and the paramilitaries, to arrest and prosecute the killers of union members and other civilians, and to provide enhanced protection for defenders of labor and human rights by withholding aid unless significant progress is made on these issues; and
3. Provides assistance for humanitarian purposes and for the development and reactivation of the Colombian economy; and
4. Supports efforts to achieve a negotiated solution to the military conflict; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That AFSCME call on Public Services International to continue and expand its worldwide campaign demanding that the Colombian government provide protection for trade union members and their leadership from the deadly attacks on them by paramilitary forces; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:

That AFSCME call on the AFL-CIO to take all actions possible in support of the objectives of this resolution.

SUBMITTED BY: INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD