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TUR/SH

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Third Attempted Assassination of the Deputy General Secretary of the PGFTU

Dear President,

I was deeply disturbed to hear of the attack on Mr. Rasem Al Bayari, Deputy General Secretary of our affiliated organization the Palestine General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) on 6 April. On behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), representing 304 affiliated member organisations, with a total membership of 168 million workers in 153 countries and territories, including Palestine, I wholeheartedly condemn this cowardly attempt on his life.

The PGFTU informs us that Mr. Al Bayari was driving his family in a car in Gaza when they were attacked by a group of masked men who opened fire. Fortunately his family escaped without injury. Mr. Al Bayari was injured however when one of the bullets grazed his neck.

This is the third attempt on Mr. Al Bayari's life this year. As you will recall we have already written to you to protest at the rocket attack on his home on 29 January 2007, and about the bombs and gunshots fired at his home the following night, leaving his family without shelter. As a result of these attacks, Mr. Al Bayari was forced to leave Gaza for a short while, for his own safety and to protect his family. He did so with the support of the international trade union movement, and we are of course ready to help him again whenever necessary.

Primary responsibility for his safety however lies with the Palestinian Authority. It is your responsibility as President to ensure that the Authority upholds internationally recognised rights, including full respect for the fundamental human rights of trade unionists, such as their right to life. Thus far your government has manifestly failed to do so. There has been a pattern of repeated attacks on the PGFTU and its leaders, notably the raid on the PGFTU headquarters in October 2006 and the three recent attempts on the life of Mr. Al Bayari, including this latest incident.

The ITUC urges you to take all possible steps to ensure the safety of Mr. Al Bayari and his family and prevent further attacks. We also ask you to order an immediate and

thorough investigation into the shooting, to bring the perpetrators of this serious crime to justice, and ensure there is no repetition of such attacks on Mr. Al Bayari, his family or the PGFTU.

Mr. Al Bayari is a prominent figure in Gaza and this will be an important test of the political will of the Palestinian Authority to uphold the fundamental human rights of trade union leaders.

Yours sincerely,

General Secretary