

June 25, 2009

Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement Stopped for Now – Thank You

The Free Trade Agreement between Canada and Colombia is stopped for now. The legislation to implement this agreement has not been passed in Parliament.

This good news is thanks to the efforts of CUPW members, the entire labour movement and organizations including Amnesty International, Kairos (a faith based organization) and the Council of Canadians.

All these organizations opposed signing a free trade agreement for the following reasons:

- Colombia is the most dangerous country in the world for trade unionists. The International Trade Union Confederation reported that 49 trade unionists were killed in Colombia in 2008.
- The Colombian army has been implicated in crimes against humanity. A 2008 United Nations report found that Colombia's security forces were engaged in "widespread and systematic killings" of civilians.
- Human rights organizations, Unions and Indigenous people in Colombia have all said no this deal.
- Colombia has privatized public services (including hospitals, post offices, and electrical utilities) with tanks, water cannons, and semi automatic machine guns.

The Bloc Quebecois and the New Democratic Party have actively opposed the Canada-Colombia free trade agreement.

CUPW members have made phone calls, written letters, sent emails, and signed petitions in opposition to the Canada-Colombia free trade agreement.

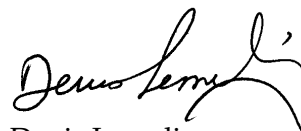
CUPW members joined other union activists and people from human rights, church and community organizations in both Montreal and on Parliament Hill on June 10th to protest against the visit of Colombian president Alvaro Uribe and the free trade agreement.

The fight is not over. Prime Minister Harper wants to assist mining companies by signing the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement. He is just waiting for a better opportunity to do so.

I am asking CUPW members to keep on fighting against the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement. I am asking you to call your Federal Member of Parliament to urge her/him not to support the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement until there is an independent, impartial, and comprehensive human rights impact assessment.

Your hard work has contributed to this free trade agreement being stalled. Please keep up the pressure.

In Solidarity,



Denis Lemelin
National President

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