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International Centre for Trade Union Rights

Centro Internacional para los Derechos Sindicales
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ICTUR was founded
to defend and extend trade union rights
and to raise awareness of these rights
and their violations around the world

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Direzione Generale per l'Impiego, l'Orientamento e la Formazione
Via Fornovo 8, Rome

Dear Prime Minister Renzi,

ICTUR wishes to express its gravest concerns at the reported killing of a striking worker at a GLS plant in Piacenza, Italy on 14 September 2016.

ICTUR understands that Abd Elsalam Ahmed Eldanf - a member of the Unione Sindacale di Base (USB) - was killed when he was struck by a lorry during a protest. Workers were picketing against GLS management's decision to renege on a prior agreement with USB which was to improve job security of subcontracted workers. It is understood that around thirty workers were picketing outside the Piacenza plant when a delivery driver drove into the picket line at high speed, hitting two workers. Ahmed later died from his injuries. According to reports of these events, the picketing workers heard management instruct the truck driver to drive through the picket. However, it is understood that no investigation has been initiated, as the Piacenza Prosecutor's office did not acknowledge that any strike or protest had taken place and classified the incident as a 'traffic accident'.

Fundamental rights – especially those relating to human life and personal safety – must be fully respected and in order to guarantee the principles of freedom of association, enshrined in the International Labour Organisation Convention 98, which Italy has ratified. The

freedom of association of trade unionists is further protected under Article 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights. According to the ILO's Committee on Freedom of Association the rights of workers can only be 'exercised in a climate that is free from violence, pressure or threats of any kind against the leaders and members of these organizations, and it is for governments to ensure that this principle is respected' (*Digest of decisions and principles of the Freedom of Association Committee of the Governing Body of the ILO*, Fifth Edition, 2006, paras. 42-45). The Committee has further noted that an independent judicial inquiry should be instituted immediately to investigate assaults on the physical or moral integrity of individuals, in order to determine responsibility, punish those responsible and prevent repetition (*ILO Digest*, paras. 46, 50, 184, 191). Failure to hold guilty parties to account creates a culture of impunity, 'which reinforces the climate of violence and insecurity, and which is extremely damaging to the exercise of trade union rights' (*ILO Digest*, para. 52).

ICTUR calls on the government to investigate the circumstances around Abd Elsalam Ahmed Eldanf's death and to undertake all necessary measures to ensure the fundamental freedoms of workers to join and form unions and to take action in defence of their interests.

Yours sincerely,

Daniel Blackburn, Director