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ABUJA
Nigeria

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TUR/JS

15 January 2007

Assassination of Regional Chairman of the NURTW

Dear Minister,

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), representing 311 trade union organisations, with a total membership of 168 million workers in 156 countries and territories, writes to you to condemn the assassination of Alhaji Saula Saka, Lagos State Chairman of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) an affiliate of the ITUC-affiliated Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC).

The ITUC has been informed that in the evening of 6 January 2008 our colleague Alhaji Saka was shot dead at his residence no. 5, Adeboun Street, Iyana Ipaja.

He was shot repeatedly by four men and reportedly the killers were shooting in all directions to scare people away so nobody could come to his aid.

After the shooting the family rushed him to hospital as he had sustained severe gunshot wounds. He was declared dead around 9.30 pm at the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital at Ikeja. According to media reports Mr. Alhaji Saka's brother believes that his death is directly linked to his trade union leadership.

The government of Nigeria is under an obligation under ILO Convention 87 to ensure that all trade unionists can operate freely and safely. The government thus has a duty to do launch an investigation into the murder with the objective to establish whether his trade union activities were indeed the motive behind his murder.

Trade union leaders cannot perform their duties and promote workers' rights in full freedom, if they have to fear for their lives. The ITUC understands that the Lagos State Governor Mr. Fashola has sent a letter of condolence to the family. It urges you, however, to ensure that a thorough and independent investigation is made into the murder of Alhaji Saula Saka and that all efforts are made to find the perpetrators and bring them to justice.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Guy Ryde".

General Secretary

Cc. Inspector –General of the Police, Mike Okiro