



## ***PRESS RELEASE***

### **Violations of employers' freedoms in Venezuela considered serious and urgent by the ILO**

At its meeting today in Geneva, the ILO Governing Body considered the cases presented by the International Organisation of Employers (IOE)<sup>1</sup> against the Government of Venezuela for violations of the freedoms of employers and their organizations in the country as extremely serious.

In the light of the report of the ILO Committee on Freedom of Association, the Governing Body expressed its deep concern over the violence and intimidation against FEDECAMARAS and its leaders. It deplored that, months after the attacks and threats against the headquarters of FEDECAMARAS, not only has the Government not identified the culprits but it indirectly casts doubt on the attacks. Moreover, the Governing Body calls on the Government to effectively ensure the security of FEDECAMARAS headquarters and its leaders and to take measures to step up investigations into the bomb attack of 28 February and to prosecute those responsible.

The numerous violations of private property, especially in the agricultural and livestock sector, the hostile and disparaging remarks made by the President of the Republic towards employers' leaders and the climate of intimidation surrounding leaders of the private sector were among issues which were examined.

In its report, the Committee on Freedom of Association stressed to the Government of Venezuela that the rights of employers' organizations can only be exercised in a climate that is free from violence, pressure or threats of any kind against employer leaders and that it is for the Government to ensure these rights.

It further requests the Government to guarantee freedom of expression and the existence of independent means of expression and to ensure that media enterprises are not threatened or intimidated.

As on numerous occasions in the past, the ILO Committee also calls on the Government to annul the arrest order against former FEDECAMARAS President, Carlos Fernandez, so that he may return to the country without risk of reprisals.

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<sup>1</sup> The IOE is an international member-based organization founded in 1920 representing the business community in all areas of social and labour policy. Its membership numbers 146 national employer federations in 139 countries.

Other recommendations include the request that a forum for social dialogue be established in accordance with the principles of the ILO, that a Commission on Minimum Wages be set up, as is required by the ratification of the Convention on Minimum Wages, that any legislation adopted concerning labour, social and economic issues within the framework of the “Enabling Act” be subject to real, in-depth consultations with FEDECAMARAS and that a national high level committee be established, with the assistance of the ILO, to examine each and every one of the issues in the cases.

During the Governing Body meeting, the Employers’ Group urged the Government of Venezuela, which is a member of the Committee which drafted the recommendations, even though it was not present when the case of Venezuela was examined, to listen to the ILO, to cooperate with that Organization in seeking a solution to the numerous issues pending examination and to cease all violations of the rights of employers and their representative organization, FEDECAMARAS. Venezuela has become the country where employers’ rights are most frequently violated.

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