

ICEM Calls Attention to Killing of Iraqi Trade Unionist, Hassan Hamza

Editors: The International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions calls attention to the brutal political killing of Hassan Hamza, a secular trade unionist in Iraq who was murdered in October. He was the president of the Hotel and Tourism Employees Union, part of the Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq (FWCUI), the union that won a highly successful wage arrears strike at the Sheraton Hotel in Baghdad in March 2007.

He had been receiving death threats from Islamic Sunni extremists in the Baghdad suburb of Hor Rajab due to the secular and progressive work he had been doing in his community. A report said that he went to Syria in early October to evacuate his family, but he returned to Iraq to live in a different neighbourhood.

The FWCUI received confirmation of his death on 25 October. The union had been trying to reach him for the previous three weeks.

In March, Hassan Hamza attended an International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) seminar in Amman, Jordan, that had participation from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. He was a long-time and dedicated trade unionist even before the Ba'athist regime of Saddam.

FWCUI commended his courageousness and competency, recounting that the difficult circumstances of extremist terrorism groups in his neighbourhood did not deter him from fighting for his beliefs.

'During these sad times, and while we are mourning the loss of a capable trade union leader,' read a FWCUI statement from Falah Alwan. 'We hereby announce to all trade unionists in Iraq and the world that one of the most prominent leaders in Iraq has joined the long row of trade unionists who have sacrificed themselves in the battle against terrorism.'

The International Federation of Chemical, Energy,
Mine and General Workers Unions