



19 January 2007



ICEM News release



Iraq

ICEM Condemns Killings Within Iraq's Oil Industry

Two recent and separate attacks by lawless militia groupings in Iraq have incensed the ICEM, the Global Union Federation for the energy sector. Both attacks, one random, on 16 January, in which a dedicated trade unionist was slain, the other, on 11 January, a targeted slaying of oil engineers in route to a union's press conference, "reflect the failures of both the occupation forces and of the al-Maliki government," according to ICEM General Secretary Manfred Warda.

The ICEM was appalled to learn of the death of Mohammed Hameed, a dedicated trade union organiser of the Federation of Workers' Councils and Unions in Iraq (FWCUI). He was among a group of 15 civilians who were randomly gunned down in an open marketplace in southern Baghdad near his home. Hameed had been out on a walk when he was caught in a hail of gunfire.



Manfred Warda



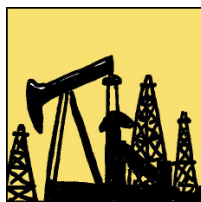
Falah Alwan

"It hurts tremendously when a trade unionist is killed in a situation like this," stated Warda. "Brother Hameed was a person who had the vision and fortitude to help build a just and decent civil society inside Iraq." Hameed, who was in his 30s, scored several advances last summer for oil industry workers in the Baghdad area, who constantly attempt to escape poverty conditions in the strife-ridden area.

He is survived by his wife, who is an active trade unionist herself inside the service sector side of the FWCUI, and two children.

The second incident occurred five days earlier, when militia gunmen abducted eight engineers of the Iraqi Oil Ministry as they were travelling in a vehicle to a FWCUI press conference on fuel price increases. Four of the kidnapped victims were released. One engineer, Abdukareem Mahdi, was later found dead, after being tortured. The other three, Nazar Fattah, Adil Yahia and Ahmed Maulood, remain missing and are presumed dead.

"We are disappointed with the response from the government and the lack of information given us by the authorities on these heinous crimes," said Falah Alwan, the president of FWCUI. "The Iraqi government must take responsibility for the lawlessness that has become so prevalent in the oil industry, as well as for the obvious security deficiencies that has allowed ordinary workers to be killed every day."



The ICEM also calls on the government of Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki to fully investigate the abductions and killings on 11 January, and to make serious efforts to apprehend the drive-by gunmen responsible for the random killings on 16 January.