Impunity in Colombia: One Woman’s Story

Yessika Hoyos Morales, Human Rights Activist and Attorney, will speak about the systemic violations of human and labor rights that plague Colombia. Colombia is the most dangerous place in the world to be a trade unionist with more than 2,700 assassinated union members in two decades and an impunity rate of 95%.

Colombia is also home to Latin America’s longest running armed internal conflict with 4 million people internally displaced. Today, various Colombian government departments, members of military, politicians, and members of Congress are under investigation for their links to illegal armed groups. The Colombian government’s chief intelligence and security service has once again been implicated in illegal activity against trade unionists and human rights leaders, illegally gathering intelligence information from these organizations, including the law firm where Ms. Hoyos works. The Colombian military and police forces receive nearly $700 million in aid each year from the United States.

The U.S.-Colombia Free Trade Agreement is currently pending in Congress, while Colombian trade unionists continue to be threatened and murdered everyday and the Colombian government continues to participate and systematically violate human rights on many levels.

As a victim of violence herself, Ms. Hoyos is co-founder of Sons and Daughters against Impunity and for the Memory of the Fallen, an organization of children of victims of disappearance, torture, exile, and murder in Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and other Latin American countries. She is also the recipient of the 2008 AFL-CIO George Meany-Lane Kirkland Human Rights award.

Wednesday, September 30, 2009
5:00-6:30 PM
University of Chicago
School of Social Service Administration
Room W-I, 969 E. 60th Street
Chicago, IL 60637

Sponsored by the U.S. Labor Education in the Americas Project
And The University of Chicago Human Rights Program