

Today, March 1, we commemorate **International Waste Pickers' Day** in remembrance of our *compañeros/comrades* who were brutally assassinated in the Universidad Libre de Barranquilla (Colombia) in 1992. That terrible day, waste pickers were tricked by personnel from the Universidad Libre de Barranquilla, who invited them to enter into the premises of the university under the pretense of providing them with recyclable materials. Once inside they were beaten and shot to death so that their bodies could be used for research and organ trafficking. The tragedy was recounted by a survivor, who during the attack pretended to be dead and later escaped.



Photo: J. Barrett

According to the ILO, there are more than 20 million people engaged in recycling in the world. In each country our sector has a unique story.

As the South African Waste Pickers Association we are fighting for a Recycling Revolution! Don't burn our livelihoods: Recycle, Reuse, Reduce. This livelihood helps us to put food on the table and take our children to school.

More than 60 000 waste pickers make a living by collecting recyclable material on the streets and on landfill sites.

Let's commemorate this day by raising the flags of abagerezi and their organisations struggling for the recognition of our profession and work conditions, just as any other worker (minimum wage, social rights, social and health protection, and recognition of our organizations as legitimate).

