



1st December 2010

TO ALL AFFILIATES OF:

International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF)

International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM)

International Transport workers' Federation (ITF)

UNI Global Union

TRADE UNION RIGHTS IN MEXICO



MEXICO

DAYS OF ACTION

14-19 February 2011

In the early hours of February 19, 2006 a fireball exploded in the bowels of Grupo México's Pasta de Conchos coal mine in the northern state of Coahuila, triggering cave-ins all along the 2.8 km number eight shaft and trapping 65 miners hundreds of meters below the earth.

When 33 miners were trapped underground at the San José mine in August 2010, the Chilean government swung into action and 69 days later all 33 workers were rescued.

In stark contrast, rescue efforts were stopped after only five days in Mexico, when families were only a few metres away from their trapped loved ones. As Grupo México and the Mexican government halted rescue efforts, disconnecting the electricity making any continuation of the search impossible, they also made it impossible to carry out a proper investigation into the cause of the mine collapse, believed by many to be illegal safety conditions in the mine.

Almost five years later, the bodies of 63 of the 65 miners that died at Pasta de Conchos remain buried and the Mexican government has failed to investigate or prosecute those responsible. Their widows and families have never been properly compensated.

Since 2006 the Mexican government has escalated its illegal and violent attacks on the Mexican Miners' Union (SNTMMSRM/Los Mineros), the union that demanded justice for the "industrial homicide" at Pasta de Conchos and the recovery of the miners' bodies.

Since February 2006, the Mexican government has systematically and repeatedly violated Mexican law and international standards in an attempt to crush the Mexican

Miners' Union. The union's democratically elected General Secretary has been forced to lead Los Mineros from exile in Canada as the Mexican Government and Grupo México continue a sham legal process against him. Los Mineros union official Juan Linares has been imprisoned since December 2008 with the offer of immediate release in exchange for denouncing his union and general secretary.

The Mexican Miners' Union is not alone. The few other genuinely independent trade unions seeking to improve the lives of Mexican workers have also found themselves increasingly under fire. In October 2009, President Calderón used an executive decree to dissolve the country's second largest electrical power distributor and in doing so he also sacked the entire 44,000 workforce, and disbanded their union, the 95 year old Mexican Electrical Workers' Union (SME).

The oppressors of the 30,000 technical and professional employees of PEMEX, Mexico's state-owned petroleum company, violently removed from their workplace the entire executive committee of the UNTyPP union after it achieved official trade union recognition on December 19, 2009, following several years of struggle. After this successful legal battle members of the new union were informed by company management that in order to retain their jobs, they would be required to sign two documents, one calling for the cancellation of the union's registration, the other a resignation from the union. Those who refused, including the entire National Executive Committee of the union along with organizers of the UNTyPP, were fired and violently removed from their workstations by paramilitaries.

The National Union of General Tyre Workers of Mexico (SNTGTM) has faced strong anti-union efforts by Continental Tire, which has worked with the labour authorities to impose a company-dominated union.

Workers at call centers run by Atento (owned by Telefónica) faced violent repression by company goons and police in July when they attempted to kick out the company-imposed union and affiliate to the Mexican Telephone Workers' Union (STRM).

The continued violations of the right to freedom of association by the Mexican government must stop.

This February, the IMF, ICEM, ITF and UNI are calling on affiliates to take action from February 14 until and as close as possible to the fifth anniversary of the Pasta de Conchos tragedy on February 19.

Join us in calling on the Mexican government to:

- 1. Hold employer and government officials accountable for the Pasta de Conchos mine explosion that killed 65 miners on February 19, 2006.*

There must be an independent, professional investigation of the causes of the explosion. The persons responsible should be criminally prosecuted. The government must pay fair compensation to the families of the victims and recover the 63 bodies that remain in the mine for proper funerals. Mexico must take action to improve mine health and safety in compliance with ILO Conventions.

2. Abolish systemic violations of workers' freedom of association, including employer-dominated "protection contracts" and interference in union elections.

The government must eliminate the "toma de nota," which requires that the labour authorities approve the results of union elections before they are given effect. The elected leadership of Mineros and SME must be immediately recognized.

The practice of employer-dominated "protection contracts" must be ended so that workers can freely choose to be represented by a union of their choice without fear of intimidation or reprisal. Workers must have the right to receive copies of their collective bargaining agreements.

3. End the use of force—by the state or private parties—to repress workers' legitimate demands for democratic unions, better wages and working conditions, and good health and safety conditions.

The government must immediately withdraw federal police forces from Cananea and from all workplaces.

The persons responsible for the assassination of Los Mineros members Héctor Álvarez Gómez,, Mario Alberto Castillo Rodríguez, Reynaldo Hernández González,, Juventino Flores Salas and FLOC organizer Santiago Rafael Cruz must be brought to justice.

4. End the campaign of political persecution against the Mexican Miner's Union and the Mexican Electrical Workers' Union.

The government must release unjustly imprisoned trade union leaders Juan Linares Montufar and Miguel Márquez, drop criminal charges against General Secretary Napoleón Gómez Urrutia and other Mineros leaders, return the funds in the unions' frozen bank accounts, and cease the political persecution of SNTMMSRM and SME.

The government must create a new public company to provide electrical power to the Mexico City region, re-hire the fired workers who are demanding reinstatement, and recognize the SME as their bargaining representative.

To support these demands we ask that your union, in coordination with others, take some form of action from February 14 to 19 suitable to your national situation, which may include:

- Demonstrations at and meetings with the Mexican embassy or consulate in your country to deliver a letter of protest to the Mexican government;
- Meeting with and briefing politicians in your own country who may have some influence on the Mexican government through international negotiations on trade or human rights;
- Seeking meetings with investors and clients of these Mexican companies to outline the violation of fundamental rights; and
- Hold press conferences, stage media events and/or sending letters to editors to bring public awareness to the situation in Mexico.

To assist us in coordinating this global week of action, we ask that you inform your respective GUF of what action you plan to take in this week by no later than January 4.

IMF at: unionrights@imfmetal.org

ICEM at: tom.grinter@icem.org

ITF at: cortes_isabel@itf.org.uk

UNI at: Olga.Vinogradova@uniglobalunion.org

In the forthcoming weeks additional background information, leaflets, protest materials and press kits will be made available on the IMF website at:

www.imfmetal.org/mexico2011 and ICEM website at: www.icem.org/en/5-Mining-DGOJP

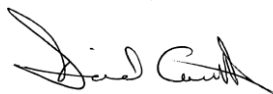
In Solidarity



Jyrki Raina
IMF General
Secretary



Manfred Warda
ICEM General
Secretary



David Cockcroft
ITF General
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Phil Jennings
UNI General
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