

American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations



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December 11, 2006

His Excellency Carlos de Icaza
Ambassador
Embassy of Mexico in the United States of America
1911 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

On behalf of the over ten million members of the AFL-CIO, I am shocked by your government's repeated use of intimidation, illegal arrests, deadly violence and murder in dealings with the Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores Mineros, Metalúrgicos y Similares de la República Mexicana (SNTMMSRM).

As you know, Napoleon Gomez Urrutia, the democratically elected general secretary of the National Miners' and Metalworkers' Union (SNTMMSRM) was forcefully removed from his position in March 2006 after speaking out against gross government and company negligence regarding the health and safety of the Pasta de Conchos mine, that left 65 miners dead after an explosion. Mexico's own National Human Rights Commission that investigated the accident in the weeks to follow has confirmed this negligence.

The International Metal Workers Federation has filed a complaint with the International Labor Organization concerning this violation of ILO Convention 87. The AFL-CIO is committed to supporting the SNTMMSRM as their fight to protect their union autonomy and oppose government interference of any kind in union affairs.

As unionists who believe that social and economic justice are ideals to live by and fight for, we ask that you use your influence with the Mexican Labor Ministry and Mexican government and urge them to reinstate Napoleon as the democratically elected leader of the SNTMMSRM. We ask that the Mexican Government allow for Mexican unions to work within their structures to decide what is best for their membership and the workers of Mexico.

Sincerely,


John J. Sweeney
President

JJS/jc

cc: SNTMMSRM
International Metalworkers' Federation
ILO Committee on Freedom of Association