

Update on FLOC in Mexico

May 10 2007

The police in Mexico have shown a visible effort in investigating the murder of FLOC staff member Santiago Rafael since widespread calls for justice from around the world.

The eyes of the world are watching out for the safety of FLOC staff in Mexico. After the vicious murder of FLOC staff member Santiago Rafael Cruz in our offices in Monterrey Mexico, there has been a world-wide outcry for justice. We know of at least 4,000 messages from the U.S., Canada, Europe, Australia, Latin America, and other countries around the world that have been sent to the Governor of Nuevo Leon. U.S. Congressional Representatives have written the Governor of Nuevo Leon and Mexican President Felipe Calderon expressing their concern about the case. We would like to inform our many supporters some of the results of your taking a stand for justice.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on April 24 issued a protection order to the Mexican government for the security of FLOC staff and operations in Mexico. The Mexican Secretaria de Gobernacion reached an agreement with FLOC representatives on May 3 for the protection of our staff in Mexico. This includes video cameras in our offices, daily visits by the police, emergency contact numbers, and, most important, a thorough investigation of Santiago's murder.

The Prosecutor's office of the state of Nuevo Leon is conducting the investigation of Santiago's murder. Though they have stepped up the visibility of their investigation, there is still no indication they are pursuing political-economic motives behind the murder. Nuevo Leon is compared to Sicily and Monterrey is compared to Medellin Colombia for its violence (El Norte May 10 2007). The state investigative office says it lacks the staff to investigate Santiago's murder because half of its officers were recently arrested for ties to drug trafficking. Without a thorough investigation that identifies all involved in the murder, we have no assurances that our staff will really be safe.

The FLOC staff in Mexico are trying to maintain adequate operations. About 10-20 workers going North call the office and staff every day seeking help with various problems, and the staff has to follow up on these inquiries to make sure the workers' rights are protected. The staff are also calling thousands of workers to assure their arrangements for going North are flowing smoothly according to the FLOC agreements. Computers were just returned by the police, and ready access to files and materials is helping speed up the services to members.

FLOC is remodeling our Monterrey office with security features, including restricted access and an alarm system. The costs are far beyond our limited resources, so we appreciate your contributions. (To see how you can help with the security of the Mexico staff and office, go to www.floc.com.) Tensions are high among the Mexico staff, and others have indicated some fear being with us. The staff is trying to be security conscious and practice safety habits. But the greatest assurance is that those who wish us harm know the eyes of the world are watching us. We are very grateful for your support. **Thank you!**