

URGENT ACTION

LABOUR RIGHTS ACTIVISTS AT RISK IN MEXICO

Armed men have assaulted and threatened independent trade unionists Cándido Corona Barruecos and Virgilio Meléndez Montiel at the factory where they work, in the central Mexican state of Puebla. Members of a non-governmental labour rights organization supporting the trade unionists have received death threats.

On 16 August, several armed men held Cándido Corona and Virgilio Meléndez captive for around seven hours in the factory. The two men have reported that the assailants hit them in the face, stomach and back, and threatened to kill them or their families if they did not resign from their jobs in the factory. The armed men are believed to be linked to the state-affiliated Trade Union Confederation (Confederación de Organizaciones Sindicales, COS) which operates in the factory. The COS has been the "official" trade union in the factory for many years. In Mexico, "official" trade unions are permitted by the authorities and employers to represent workers on the basis that they will act in the interests of the employers. Cándido Corona and Virgilio Meléndez are among a group of 16 independent trade unionists at the factory who have challenged the COS.

Police were outside the factory when Cándido Corona and Virgilio Meléndez were released, but according to the men, the police failed to make any enquiries or arrest any suspects. The factory, which is leased by the US-based company Johnson Controls Inc. or by one of its subsidiaries, is located in the Resurrección industrial site near the city of Puebla, 130 km east of Mexico City.

Members of a local non-governmental organization, the Workers' Support Centre (Centro de Apoyo al Trabajador, CAT), assist the 16 independent trade unionists in challenging the official union at the factory and asserting the rights of the workers there. Several members of CAT have also received death threats this year as a result of their work.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of Cándido Corona, Virgilio Meléndez, their colleagues and families;
- Urging the authorities to provide them with effective protection in strict accordance with their wishes;
- Calling on the Puebla state authorities to investigate the 16 August attack and bring those found to be responsible to justice;
- Calling on the state authorities to guarantee the right of all trade unionists to freedom of association.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 08 OCTOBER 2010 TO:

Minister of the Interior

Lic. José Francisco Blake Mora
 Secretario de Gobernación
 Secretaría de Gobernación
 Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez
 Delegación Cuauhtémoc
 México DF, CP 06600, MÉXICO
Fax: +52 55 5093 3414
Email: secretario@segob.gob.mx
Salutation: Dear Secretary/Estimado
Señor Secretario

Governor of Puebla state

Lic. Mario Marín Torres
 Gobernador del Estado de Puebla
 Casa Aguayo, Av. 14 oriente 1204
 Colonia El Alto
 CP 72000, Puebla
 Puebla, MÉXICO
Fax: +52 222 213 8805
Email: gobernador@puebla.gob.mx
Salutation: Dear Governor/Estimado
Señor Gobernador

State Attorney General's Office

Lic. Rodolfo Archundia Sierra
 Procuraduría General de Justicia del
 Estado, Boulevard Héroes del 5 de
 Mayo y 31 Oriente, Col. Ladrillera de
 Benítez, Puebla, CP 72539, Puebla,
 MÉXICO
Fax: +52 222 243 5933
E: particular.pgj.puebla@hotmail.com
Salutation: Dear Attorney
General/Estimado Señor Procurador

Also send copies to the Mexican diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Mexico has a long history of large official trade unions operating in concert with factory managers. Efforts by workers to establish independent trade unions to represent their interests on occasions have been met with hostility and violence, which state authorities have been accused of failing to prevent or punish.

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