

Meeting of IndustriaALL Australia New Zealand Council with Mexican Embassy Officials

Re: Mexican Labour Rights, Tuesday 12 March 2013

Present: Guillermo Puente Ordorica, Deputy Head of Mission;
Rafael Ignacio Montoya Bayardo, Third Secretary;
Tony Maher, CFMEU National President; &
Andrew Dettmer, AMWU National President

The meeting took place at the request of IndustriaALL and our Mexican comrades. The issues were raised along the lines of the information provided by Brother Martin Esparza Flores of the Electrical Workers Union. The meeting was cordial.

Matters discussed:

1. The new Government - has recently celebrated its first 100 days in office. They claim to have a new political agenda, and has committed itself to labour, educational and telecommunications reform, amongst others. It is willing to combat corruption, and inconsistent application of the laws. They noted the appointment of a new Teachers Union leader.
2. The new Labour minister has been making his views known. The new Government is willing to respect the rights of unions and workers. They will make a difference between themselves and the previous 2 Governments.
3. Electrical Workers: The dismissal of the 44,000 workers by decree of former President Calderon was raised. We sought a commitment that the 16,599 remaining workers receive appropriate consideration. The commitment was given that the Government will actively assist those workers to apply for severance pay. But they will not interfere with the decision of the Supreme Court. The issue of Jorge Eulises Uribe Gaona was raised, his jailing without conviction, and with no crime committed. They had no knowledge of the matter.
4. Bata Sandak: The illegal closure and lockout was raised, and the unfair and unjust treatment of the workers. The representatives will convey our concerns.
5. The SNTE "President for Life" Elba Esther Gordillo Morales jailing was claimed to be an expression of the new Government's approach to the rule of law and the respect for internal union processes. We raised that the SNTE process was not transparent and democratic, nor respectful of proper legal processes. That we stand for proper accountability of unions, and that the CNTE has protested this as recently as March 5. Again, it was stated that the Government will allow the processes of the law to follow.

6. Los Mineros and Bro Napoleon Gomez: The case was traversed, as is well known; that while there remains an Interpol alert against Bro Gomez, there are no outstanding warrants in Mexico or elsewhere which would cause his arrest. We made clear that the alert must be withdrawn, and we protested its continuing existence. The response was given that the matter is complex. It was noted by the embassy officials that Bro Gomez regularly writes in Mexican newspapers. However we stated that this was no substitute for actually being able to return to Mexico with his wife and family. It was stated that an international delegation of trade unionists would be welcome to visit Mexico to address this and other matters of concern.
7. The changes to Mexican labour laws were raised. We stated that we believed that these laws are contrary to ILO Conventions 87 and 98, to which Mexico is party. They responded that there is "no way back" because the laws have already been promulgated. We said that this was unacceptable as these laws will continue to offend the ILO Conventions. They contended that the Government wants to create better conditions for economic growth and prosperity. We contended that, to the contrary, these laws will not bring prosperity.

The meeting conclude cordially. The embassy representatives said that they would respond to our concerns, and that information would be provided on the cases that we have raised.