

# Emergency Support for GM-Colombia workers

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## A Hunger for Justice

*A project of the Washtenaw Community Action Team-WCAT*

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Dear friends and fellow workers,

Inspired by the reporting of a CAT member investigating labor conditions in South America this summer, an initiative was launched to educate, agitate, and confront General Motors for their labor practices at the assembly plant in Bogota. This occasional bulletin exists to inform and share information of the public events planned as an expression of our solidarity with workers in Colombia.

### ***Colombia is a country hungry for justice...***

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Colombia is a country that illustrates just what happens when corporate powers and their political enablers systematically destroy the right of workers to organize and join unions. The assault on collective bargaining there also includes assassination, kidnapping, and brutal assaults by police, military, and right wing militias. A report made to the European Union in 2005 is a grim reminder of what life is like when the labor movement is weakened by repression..

*The Colombian People are getting increasingly poorer, faced with more unemployment and under -employment and less protection. The state ministries and bodies responsible for social policy have been weakened, reformed, or dismantled... Workers have been sacked or given less secure terms of employment in both the private and public sectors. Both sectors are using laws that promote labor flexibility and enable employers to evade clear obligations. It is a complex*

*and sometimes impossible task to form trade unions, sign collective agreements or organize strikes.*

***...barely 1% of the population are covered by a collective agreement.***

***...just 5% of the active population are currently members of unions.***

***...over 6 million Colombian workers are surviving in the informal economy.***

***....at least 4 million are unemployed or poverty stricken.***



***The General Motors assembly plant in Bogota is non-union...***

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...and workers who get sick or injured from the bad working conditions often get fired. In response to this injustice, workers have formed ASOTRECOL, the Association of Injured Workers of General Motors Colmotores, and have, for a year, been living in tents on the sidewalk in front of the American embassy. Their simple demand is to receive adequate treatment and to return to work with union representation. The response of the company is that:

*We regret that these people have turned to mechanisms of undue pressure. GM will continue to act within the framework of law and for any reason will not yield to actions taken by assault.*



## *A hunger strike to the death...*

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On Aug. 1st, four members of ASOTRECOL began a hunger strike by sewing their lips shut. They were joined by three more on August 8th, and this Wednesday, Aug. 15th, more will join. They will go without food indefinitely and are prepared to die to defend the rights of Colombian workers against one of largest, and richest, multinational corporations on the planet.

**We will not let them fight alone. We will not sit by  
and watch them die in silence.**

*Join us in a fight that knows no borders.*

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***Stand with us at GM World  
Headquarters  
300 Renaissance Center  
15 August, 4 pm.***

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