

International Call to Action: GM Worker brings Hunger Strike to Detroit

September 11, 2012

Protest at GM sites to demand a just settlement now!

Ten members of the Association of Injured Workers and Ex-Workers of General Motors Colombia (ASOTRECOL) reignited their hunger strike on September 3rd after GM Colombia in negotiations refused to provide adequate compensation and rehire workers who were fired due to work-related injuries. GM only agreed to a financial settlement, initially offering \$5,000 in total sum to twelve workers--in reality turning the workers into street vendors. GM then offered \$30,000 per worker. However, spinal surgery alone costs \$50,000. When the workers refused, GM then tried to "fix the personal situation" of Jorge Parra, ASOTRECOL president and hunger striker. GM Colombia executives said the workers were "far more dangerous inside the plant than out."

Jorge is now in Detroit demanding to negotiate directly with GM Detroit to ensure a just settlement for all workers involved. Meanwhile, workers in Colombia continue their hunger strike and year long tent occupation outside the U.S. embassy in Bogotá.

ASOTRECOL's struggle reflects the failure of the 2011 Labor Action Plan to defend workers rights, a \$2 million program paid for by U.S. taxpayers and a condition of the Free-Trade Agreement between the United States and Colombia. By ignoring ASOTRECOL's demands for justice, General Motors, and the U.S. and Colombian government perpetuate the violent conditions that make Colombia the most dangerous country in the world for labor organizers. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) documented 29 trade unionist murders, 10 attempted murders, and 342 death threats in 2011. Private security firms have harassed and surveilled ASOTRECOL.

On Monday, Sept. 17th:
Detroit: GM Headquarters, 4 PM
Bogotá: U.S. Embassy, 24/7
Your City Here?

Endorsed By: Witness for Peace; United Steel Workers; São José Metal Workers Union, Brazil (Sindicato dos Metalúrgicos de São José dos Campos e Região); International Automotive Workers Council (Internationaler Automobilarbeiterratschlag); Washtenaw Community Action Team; Graduate Employees' Organization, AFT-Michigan, Local 3550; Lecturer Employees' Organization, AFT-Michigan, Local 6244; Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice; Moratorium Now!; U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange; Autoworkers Caravan; Organization for a Free Society; Solidarity; International Action Center

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