



SANTIAGO RAFAEL CRUZ **Presente!**

One year after your assassination,
your family, friends, colleagues,
and members of FLOC
celebrate your life as our *compañero*.

"*Tantas veces me mataron, tantas veces me mori, sin embargo estoy aquí resucitando...*" ["So many times they killed me, so many times I died, however I am here resurrecting.."], sings Maria Elena Walsh, the singer and composer from Argentina celebrating the life of the extraordinary who give everything they've got, even their lives, for justice and for a better world for all of us.

On April 9, 2007, Santiago Rafael Cruz, an organizer with FLOC, was brutally murdered at the FLOC offices in Monterrey, Mexico. The FLOC office in Monterrey was opened in 2004 after the union signed an agreement covering some 8,000 agricultural guestworkers from Mexico. The new members requested the union open an office in Monterrey as they explained many of their grievances arose during the recruitment process. Before the FLOC victory, workers used to pay on average \$600 dollars to corrupt recruiters just "for the benefit" of being recruited into the program. All of that was eliminated by the new FLOC contract, re-negotiated last February. An additional \$346 that workers used to pay in visa and travel expenses was also eliminated per agreement between the union and the employers.

As the union challenged and changed the old system of recruitment and travelled all over Mexico educating the workers on the new regulations (which saved over \$3 million dollars to the workers just the first year!) hostility towards union staff grew. These events led to the assassination of Santiago Rafael Cruz. As of today, the crime has not been resolved and it is under investigation. One person has been apprehended. He has presented a complaint arguing his confession was done under torture and blames two men and a woman as the actual murderers. One of the accused was caught by US authorities trying to cross the border last November and returned to Sonora to be liberated soon thereafter by Mexican authorities.

FLOC has hired two well known human rights attorneys in Mexico to pursue the case for the organization and Santiago's family. The investigation will continue until we bring justice to the investigation

For the anniversary of Santiago Rafael Cruz's assassination, several special events are being planned:

In **Toledo**, FLOC will celebrate a mass on **April 10** at 7:00 pm at **St. Peter and Paul Church**, 728 S. St. Clair Street.

In **Monterrey**, FLOC will celebrate a mass on **April 12** at 10:00 am at **La Purisima Church**, followed by a **march** and a **press conference** at the FLOC office.

In **Detroit**, the **Labor Notes conference** on **April 11-13** will honor Santiago with a special presentation in the plenary session by the FLOC President Baldemar Velásquez.

In **Ann Arbor**, the **University of Michigan Latinos in Labor Conference** on **April 18-20** is celebrating this year in honor of Santiago Rafael.

FLOC invites the community to join us in celebrating Santiago's life and to honor all like him who gave their lives for a better world. Santiago's hand is warmly extending the torch to us, to continue the work for justice and equality for all. Let's take the torch and run!

ACTION

FLOC asks our supporters to **write Mexican President Felipe Calderon**

Felipe Calderón Hinojosa

Presidente de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos
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With **copies** to:

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Santiago Canton

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Farm Labor Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO

1221 Broadway Street
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Email: info@floc.com

In your message (see sample letter below):

Explain

1. One year after the assassination of Santiago Rafael, the government of Nuevo Leon **has not been able to show clearly** what happened and has clearly demonstrated that it **is not serious** in investigating **who is behind** his vicious murder.
2. Without a resolution of the murder, the FLOC staff and members **cannot feel safe**, as is the intent of the protective order of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

Then **ask** that:

The **Government of Mexico take over the investigation** of the vicious murder of Santiago Rafael Cruz, which it is entitled to do in a human rights case. Ask that the investigation focus on political motives for the murder, particularly the corruption in the recruitment of Mexican migrant workers, in violation of Mexican national labor laws.

Please circulate to your networks. **Thank you** for your support in the fight for justice for Santiago Rafael Cruz.

Sample letter to President Calderon

[organizational letterhead, if appropriate, or return address]

[date]

Felipe Calderón Hinojosa
Presidente de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos
Residencia Oficial de "Los Pinos", Casa Miguel Alemán
Col. San Miguel Chapultepec
México D.F. 11850
México

Subject: Assassination of Santiago Rafael Cruz
Staff Member, Farm Labor Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO

Dear President Calderon:

I am writing you about Santiago Rafael Cruz, who was assassinated in April of 2007 in the offices of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee AFL-CIO in Monterrey, Mexico. The investigation by the Government of Nuevo Leon of Santiago's brutal murder has been incompetent and deceptive. Santiago was a FLOC union organizer who defended the human and labor rights of Mexican farmworkers going to the United States. Following his murder, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights found sufficient evidence that the murder was politically motivated, and issued a protective order for FLOC staff and members in Mexico. We have been following this event for a year now, and we fear for the continued threat to the lives of FLOC staff and members in Mexico.

The government of Nuevo Leon has shown that it is not serious in the investigation of the assassination of Santiago Rafael. The Nuevo Leon government has not even considered investigating political motives in the murder. Instead, it has made unsubstantiated public statements with no evidence to support allegations, and has continually evaded the questions of FLOC lawyers. Eventually, the authorities announced that they had detained a minor criminal, whose "confession" was apparently obtained under torture, which is particularly shocking in a human rights case. We are also aware that the N.L authorities had not issued detention requests for other suspects in the case, resulting in the release of another man accused in the assassination. Last June, the Secretary General of the Nuevo Leon government stated to U.S. Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur that "there is no political motive" in the case, even though the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights issued its protective order on the basis of such evidence. As you are aware, the Secretary General resigned a few days later under allegations of corrupt ties to drug traffickers. In the meantime, the FLOC staff are being watched and followed in Monterrey and other areas.

Given the unwillingness of the Nuevo Leon government to pursue a legitimate investigation, the staff and members of FLOC in Mexico cannot feel safe. Any resolution of the murder of Santiago Rafael Cruz's murder has to provide a satisfactory resolution for FLOC, as is the intention of the protective order of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

Therefore, I respectfully request that the federal Government of Mexico take over the investigation of the vicious murder of Santiago Rafael Cruz, which it is entitled to do in a human rights case. We ask that the investigation focus on political motives for the murder, particularly the corruption in the recruitment of Mexican migrant workers, which is in violation of Mexican national labor laws. As long as this threat remains unresolved, we fear for the safety of FLOC staff and members in Mexico.

Sincerely,

[your name]

[your organizational affiliations, if any]