



Farm  
Labor  
Organizing  
Committee, AFL-CIO

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**FLOC THANKS EVERYONE WHO VOICED THEIR OUTRAGE AT THE BRUTAL MURDER OF SANTIAGO RAFAEL CRUZ. YOUR MESSAGE WAS HEARD!**

**The Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC, AFL-CIO) announces that the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) has granted it preventive measures petition, following the brutal assassination of union organizer Santiago Rafael Cruz in Monterrey on April 9. The IACHR has instructed the Mexican government to “adopt the necessary measures to guarantee the life and physical security” of FLOC staff in Mexico and to keep the IACHR informed of the judicial process to bring Santiago’s killers to justice.**

The approval letter addressed by the IACHR Executive Secretary’s office to FLOC stipulates that the Mexican government has seven (7) days to implement these instructions, beginning April 23. FLOC awaits contact from the government to negotiate what preventive measures are needed and how soon they can be implemented. It is urgent that FLOC staff in Monterrey be afforded all necessary security measures and that FLOC’s office in that city be fortified against any further attacks.

The IACHR’s support comes after an inspiring international solidarity campaign initiated by FLOC’s staff and supporters. Politicians, labor leaders, union members, human rights groups, churches, community organizations, and FLOC supporters came together from all over the world to voice their outrage at the brutal murder of Santiago. FLOC sincerely thanks everyone who communicated their solidarity with Santiago. Your solidarity fills our hearts. It is with your added strength that we will continue to fight for justice.

The assassination of Santiago Rafael Cruz came after more than two years of media attacks, deportation threats, robberies and violent intimidation of the FLOC office and its staff in Monterrey. FLOC believes that the murder was a targeted political attack on the union. In 2004 FLOC won a historic collective agreement with the North Carolina Growers Association to represent nearly 10,000 farmworkers who travel each year from Mexico to North Carolina on H2-A guest worker visas to harvest tobacco, cucumbers and Christmas trees. This agreement provides the only recruiting program with integrity for “guestworkers” traveling from Mexico by giving them a grievance process to defend their labor and human rights. FLOC also recently won a historic Federal lawsuit which dealt a blow to corrupt recruiters in rural areas of Mexico who overcharge workers by several hundred dollars to find them jobs in the U.S. We eliminated those fees for nearly 70,000 H2A workers. While we are heartened by the support of the NCGA and their commitment to regularizing the recruitment process through union agreement, our victories clearly anger other recruiters outside of our agreement who benefited from exploiting and cheating Mexican workers.

Baldemar Velasquez, President of FLOC, insists this new development be viewed with caution. “While I applaud the IACHR for obligating the Mexican federal government to protect our staff and take Santiago’s case seriously, nevertheless, I’m concerned by the slow, incomplete steps taken by the Nuevo Leon authorities in their criminal investigation.” “Last week our lawyers met again with the Nuevo Leon attorney general’s office,” Velasquez continued, “and it’s clear that the authorities are still not considering the economic-political motive behind Santiago’s murder.”

**HASTA LA VICTORIA!**

Baldemar Velasquez

*If you would like to be put on FLOC’s mailing list, please go to <http://www.floc.com/FLOCsignup.htm> If you would like to volunteer with FLOC, or be involved in one of our local support committees, please contact [kbarger@floc.com](mailto:kbarger@floc.com).*

