



A Union of Professionals

Support for the Mexican Teachers' Civil Rights

WHEREAS, on June 19, 2016, after a monthlong strike in Oaxaca, Mexico, teachers and other activists clashed with police in demonstrations against recent education reforms; the conflict resulted in nine deaths and more than 100 injured; and

WHEREAS, at least eight leaders of the Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación—a regional coordinating body of local unions within the Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación—simultaneously were arrested by federal police and charged with serious, unfounded criminal offenses, which many observers believe were in reprisal for the union's political mobilization; and

WHEREAS, these union leaders were taken to prisons far from Oaxaca, including federal prisons reserved for the worst violent offenders and narco-traffickers; and

WHEREAS, legitimate protest should never be criminalized; charges against union leaders and members, without due process, are a clear violation of fundamental rights; and

WHEREAS, while police and other officials have a duty to uphold the law, they also have an obligation to respect the basic rights of legitimate protesters under Mexican and international law; and

WHEREAS, the case of the disappearance of 43 student-teachers of Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers' College in Iguala is still unresolved, and this failure remains a serious setback in the country's fight for justice, and its fight against violence, corruption and impunity; and

WHEREAS, while Mexico's educational levels have improved in the past decade, the country still ranks last out of all 38 OECD (Office of Economic Cooperation and Development) countries in educational achievement, according to the OECD's Better Life Index; geographic inequality, discrimination, class and income barriers, and gender

The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of 1.6 million professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

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disparities continue to hold back educational attainment and outcomes, according to the OECD; and

WHEREAS, since 2012, the AFT has a partnership with the Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (SNTE), the largest body of teachers in Mexico, in the fight for access to high-quality public education, protecting teachers' rights, expanding professional development opportunities, and advancing professional standards. The AFT believes that both organizations—Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (CNTE) and the SNTE—can find common ground in advocating what is best for teachers, students and their communities:

RESOLVED, that the American Federation of Teachers

- **express its condolences to the families for lives lost during the recent violence in Mexico;**
- **demand the immediate release of CNTE leaders incarcerated in federal prison, and demand the government of Mexico cease its policy of arbitrary and unjustified harassment of trade unionists, who have absolute right to conduct independent trade union activities, freely and without reprisal, under international conventions that Mexico has ratified;**
- **urge the government to open an immediate, thorough, impartial and independent investigation into the violence—public and transparent, with complete regard for due process and the rule of law—including allegations of excessive force used by police; the government of Mexico has an obligation to adhere to international norms and standards in protecting the universally recognized rights of freedom of association and assembly;**
- **encourage all stakeholders in the education reform process—especially our brothers and sisters in both SNTE and CNTE, as well as state and federal government officials, parents, and their communities—to continue with good-faith negotiations**

in an effort to resolve this impasse, recognizing that it is the youth of Mexico who suffer most the longer that real accord is delayed;

- **continue to press the government of Mexico to find those ultimately responsible for the student-teacher disappearances in Ayotzinapa, and bring those responsible to justice;**
- **file an official complaint directly to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in support of the cause of justice for the missing student-teachers, as is allowed by the U.N. “to address violations of all human rights and all fundamental freedoms occurring in any part of the world”; and**
- **communicate its concern with developments in Mexico to the governments of the U.S. and Mexico, and with Education International and Public Services International, as well as Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación, Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación, and Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México.**

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