

NFWM Action Alert:

NFWM urges supporters of farm workers to respond to FLOC's updated request below for action to ensure a prompt and thorough investigation of the murder of Santiago Rafael Cruz, one of their staff members in Monterrey, Mexico. FLOC is seeking letters to the Governor of Nuevo Leon, the state where Santiago was killed, with copies to the Attorney General of Nuevo Leon and the U.S. Ambassador in Mexico.

On April 9, Santiago was found tied up and beaten to death in the FLOC office. Testimony by witnesses who found the body indicate that Santiago was tortured by more than one individual in the early hours of the morning and that the office showed no sign of forced entry or robbery.

Regular updates on the investigation will be available at www.floc.com

JUSTICE FOR SANTIAGO RAFAEL CRUZ

Santiago Rafael Cruz was a FLOC staff field organizer, working on a number of FLOC efforts and campaigns in Ohio and North Carolina. In February, Santiago joined the FLOC office in Monterrey México. His job involved helping H2A "guest workers" going to work in the fields of North Carolina and other locations, investigating and helping resolve grievances concerning abuses in the recruiting systems and employment conditions, and managing the office administration. He was staying in an upstairs room of the office while looking for permanent housing.

On April 9, Santiago was found tied up and beaten to death in the FLOC office. Testimony by witnesses who found the body indicate that Santiago was tortured by more than one individual in the early hours of the morning and that the office showed no sign of forced entry or robbery.

FLOC leaders and staff who have worked with Santiago know him as a cheerful person concerned with the human and working rights of immigrants. We are all shocked and devastated by his brutal murder. FLOC President Baldemar Velásquez says "We will not forget Santiago". Like all FLOC struggles, we will not let this go until justice has been won.

Santiago's murder will not intimidate FLOC into abandoning its operations in Mexico. Rather, FLOC will reinforce the security of its Monterrey office, and will continue the struggle for justice and human rights protections for all farmworkers. Santiago's years of service defending the rights of fellow Mexicans who work the fields in the United States and Mexico will not be forgotten or in vain.

We have received thousands of calls and messages expressing shock and sympathy over Santiago's murder. We thank everyone for your support and efforts on behalf of Santiago and FLOC. This is a hard time for us, and knowing many friends stand with us in solidarity provides some comfort.

For more information on Santiago's murder, see the FLOC website at <http://www.floc.com>

-ACTION

FLOC and our allies in Mexico have offered to cooperate in the investigation of Santiago's brutal murder. In Mexico, criminal investigators sometimes presume relatively simple solutions to potentially complicated cases, especially those involving defenders of human and worker rights. We are asking Mexican authorities to conduct a comprehensive and transparent investigation. To ensure a complete review of this case, we have also asked the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to fully investigate Santiago's case.

FLOC asks our supporters to contact the Nuevo Leon Governor and Attorney General to demand:

- * A formal, timely, honest, and thorough criminal investigation.
- * A just prosecution and punishment for the murderers.
- * Official measures to ensure that FLOC members and human and worker rights defenders are not subjected to political and economically motivated threats.
- * Restitution for Santiago's family.

Below is a draft letter Gov. González. Please modify it to reflect your organizational and individual concerns, and FAX, email, or mail it to:

José Natividad González Parás
Gobernador de Nuevo León
Zaragoza y 5 de Mayo, Colonia Centro
Monterrey, N.L.
México 64000
Telephone from the U.S.: (011-52) (81) 2020-1226 or 2020-1509
Fax from the U.S.: (011-52) (81) 2020-1087 or 2020-1085
Email: gobernador@nl.gob.mx

With a copy to state Prosecutor Trevino:
Attorney General Luis Carlos Treviño Berchermann
Procurador de Justicia de Nuevo León
Ocampo 470 Poniente, Colonia Centro
Monterrey, N.L.
México 64000
Telephone from the U.S.: (011-52) (81) 2020-3333 and 2020-3317
Fax from the U.S.: (011) (52) (81) 2020-4094, 2020-4038 or 2020-4088
Email: ltrevino@nl.gob.mx

And a copy to the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico:
Ambassador Antonio Garza, Jr.

U.S. Embassy
Paseo de la Reforma 305
Colonia Cuahatemoc
Mexico, D.F. 06500
Telephone from the U.S.: (011-52)(55) 5080-2000
Fax from the U.S.: (011-52)(55) 5525-5040
Email: ccs@usembassy.net.mx

Also, please send a copy to FLOC and to our allies in Mexico, so we can follow up on Santiago's case:

lzavala@floc.com in NC.office;
mhale@floc.com in the Ohio office
and the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center bdavis@solidaritycenter.org

--SAMPLE LETTER

[date]

José Natividad González Parás
Gobernador de Nuevo León
Zaragoza y 5 de Mayo, Centro
Monterrey, N.L.
México 64000

Dear Governor González Parás:

I am writing to inform the State of Nuevo Leon government that I am outraged by the brutal murder of migrant farmworker union organizer Santiago Rafael Cruz in Monterrey on April 9. Santiago was a human and labor rights defender who worked hard to ensure better working conditions for Mexicans working as H2-A guest workers in the fields of North Carolina. Santiago's union, the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC, AFL-CIO), won a historic collective agreement in 2004 with the North Carolina Growers Association to represent nearly 7,000 Mexican farmworkers who harvest tobacco, cucumbers, sweet potatoes and Christmas trees.

In 2005 FLOC established an office in Monterrey to represent the contractual rights of its members as they travel from their home states through Monterrey en route to North Carolina. As you know, the U.S. Consulate in Monterrey hands out the majority of H2-A visas, and FLOC's office plays an important role ensuring workers are protected from illegitimate labor contractors in small towns of Mexico. FLOC's agreement cleaned up and systematized the recruitment of these workers in Mexico, jeopardizing the sometimes corrupt interests of fly-by-night labor recruiters in rural areas of Mexico who previously overcharged workers by hundreds of dollars to find them jobs in the U.S. Since FLOC established its office in Monterrey in 2005, it has been the victim of attacks in the media, deportation threats, several robberies, and violent intimidation.

I respectfully request that your government ensure the following steps:

- * A formal, timely, honest and thorough criminal investigation (averiguación previa)
- * A just prosecution and punishment for the perpetrators of this crime
- * Measures to ensure that FLOC and human and labor rights defenders are not subject to political and economically-motivated intimidation
- * Restitution for Santiago's family

I look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,