

RESOLUTION 64

Justice for Santiago Rafael Cruz

Submitted by Farm Labor Organizing Committee
Referred to the International Labor Committee

WHEREAS, on the morning of April 9, 2007, the body of Santiago Rafael Cruz, a union organizer for the Farm Labor Organizing Committee, AFL-CIO, was found in FLOC's office in Monterrey, Mexico. He had been brutally tortured and murdered, and his dead body was tied and left in the union office; and

WHEREAS, FLOC represents Mexican migrant workers who travel from Mexico to North Carolina to work under a U.S. unionized guest-worker program. This is the largest guestworker program in the United States. Santiago defended the human and labor rights of Mexican farm workers going to the United States, and he paid the ultimate price. Santiago was 29 years old; and

WHEREAS, following Santiago's assassination, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights found sufficient evidence the murder was politically motivated, and issued a protective order for FLOC staff and members in Mexico. In July 2009, the IACHR, at the request of the Mexican government and following persistent lobbying, rescinded the protective order; and

WHEREAS, to date only one of the murderers has been captured and sentenced to prison, but three other suspects are still at large. FLOC is seeking justice for Santiago Rafael Cruz and his family, and punishment for those who are responsible for his murder; and

WHEREAS, union investigations have uncovered widespread corruption among Mexican labor recruiters who hire for U.S. agribusiness. Mexican workers covered by a FLOC contract are no longer victimized by unscrupulous recruiters. Santiago Rafael Cruz's murder was a message to FLOC to back down by the criminal networks that prey on these workers. The staff and members of FLOC in Mexico cannot feel safe until all of the murderers of Santiago Rafael Cruz are found and punished;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO calls on the Inter-American Human Rights Commission to restore protective status to FLOC, its staff and members in Mexico; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO calls on the government of Mexico to make good on President Calderon's claim that human rights are being respected by making a real effort to engage federal law enforcement personnel on all levels in Mexico to apprehend and bring Santiago Rafael Cruz's murderers to justice as soon as possible; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the AFL-CIO supports FLOC and its efforts to resolve the case of Santiago Rafael Cruz, and will assist FLOC's campaign to protect its staff and members in Mexico from harm.