



Leo W. Gerard
International President

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Lic. Enrique Peña Nieto
President of Mexico
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Dear Mr. President,

I write to you on a matter of urgency. On the morning of March 4 at 11:00, the Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Board (JFCA) closed the file of the strike demand III-2601/2015, presented by the National Union of Mine, Metal, Steel and Related Workers of the Mexican Republic (SNTMMSSRM) on the basis of violations of the collective bargaining agreement between the unión and ArcelorMittal Hierro, S.A de C.V. in Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán. The legal effect of this decision is to render the strike, which was scheduled to and in fact did commence at 12:00, illegal. The JFCA offered no reason for its decision or for its refusal to consider other legal options to prolong the negotiations between the union and the company which have continued since June 18.

The JFCA's decision to effectively declare the strike illegal threatens to unleash repressive measures against the workers in Lázaro Cárdenas, Mexico's largest steel mill. Ten years ago, a similar attempt to declare a strike illegal resulted in the murder of two members of the SNTMMSSRM by federal and state police.

Mr. President, today there is great concern around the world about violations of labor rights and human rights in Mexico. The Federal Government has an opportunity to demonstrate its respect for international law, specifically the right to strike, established in ILO Convention 87 to which Mexico is a party. I respectfully ask you as the head of the Executive Branch to ensure that the right to strike is respected, that no acts of repression are committed against the workers, and that the JFCA makes every effort to establish a dialogue between the parties that will enable a just and peaceful resolution of this conflict. Our unión, which has close relationships with both the unión and the company, will do all that we can to support such a resolution.

Regards,

Leo W. Gerard
International President

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