

The International Campaign is calling on Johnson Controls to do the following:

- Fully implement the August 2010 agreement for JCI Interiors workers and ensure that the Collective Bargaining Agreement is legally registered with the local Conciliation and Arbitration Board.
- Demonstrate that the company respects union freedom by maintaining full production at the JCI Interiores plant.
- Call upon the Mexican government to guarantee that precautionary measures are taken to provide security for the CAT team and their families, and to investigate and prosecute those responsible.
- Use its influence with the CROM to cease any and all violent intimidation of the CAT, their families, and JCI workers associated with the CAT.



JOHNSON CONTROLS CAMPAIGN DEFENDS THE UNION RIGHTS OF MEXICAN WORKERS

Canadian and international unions and labour rights organizations are actively involved in an international campaign to push Milwaukee-based auto parts manufacturing company Johnson Controls Inc. (JCI) to respect the rights of workers in their Puebla, Mexico plants to be represented by a union of their free choice.

Milwaukee-based Johnson Controls is the world's largest independent manufacturer of automotive seating and interior systems. It has three plants in Puebla, Mexico that produce seats and seat parts, principally for the Volkswagen assembly plant in Puebla, but also for Chrysler, Ford, Mercedes Benz and Nissan.

Workers at the company's JCI FINSA and JCI Interiores plants in Puebla have raised complaints about unpaid wages and profit-sharing bonuses, deteriorating and unsafe working conditions, violations of freedom of association, gender discrimination, and outsourcing of labour to a third-party employment agency.

But “protection unions” – ones they never elected or heard from – stood in the way ...



INTERNATIONAL DAYS OF ACTION

In recent years many of the genuinely independent trade unions seeking to improve the lives of Mexican workers have found themselves increasingly under fire.

The Mexican Miners' Union (SNTMMSRM/Los Mineros), the Mexican Electrical Workers' Union (SME), the UNTyPP union representing workers in Mexico's state-owned petroleum company PEMEX, the National Union of General Tyre Workers of Mexico (SNTGTM) and Atento call centre workers seeking affiliation with the Mexican Telephone Workers' Union (STRM) have all faced repression and denial of trade union rights. Some unions, such as *Los Mineros*, have faced violent attacks by the police and/or the military.

This February 14-19, trade unions in Canada and around the world are joining in actions to support the independent trade union movement in Mexico and the right of Mexican workers to be represented by a union of their free choice. The demands include, amongst other things:

- that the Mexican government eliminate systemic violations of workers' freedom of association, including employer-dominated “protection contracts” and interference in union elections; and
- an end to the use of force—by the state or private parties—to repress workers' legitimate demands for democratic unions, better wages and working conditions, and healthy and safe working conditions.

**For more information, visit:
www.imfmetal.org/mexico2011**

Until recently, two company-controlled “protection unions” linked to the Puebla state government have held title to the collective agreement at both factories. JCI workers didn’t organize these unions. They have never received a copy of the collective agreements nor were they consulted about whether they wanted to be represented by the unions that held title to those agreements. Workers were not allowed to elect their leaders, participate in collective bargaining, or otherwise have input into the affairs of their union. Workers had no one to help process their grievances. This is common in Mexico, where employers often sign “protection contracts” with corrupt unions without the workers’ knowledge and/or consent in order to prevent workers from organizing or affiliating with a democratic union. In many cases, unions are already set up at a factory before the first worker is hired.

Workers made their own choice ... they took action

Despite these obstacles, workers at the JCI’s Interiores plant took action in May of 2010 to win the right to be represented by the National Union of Mine and Metal Workers (SNTMMSSRM or *Los Mineros*). After a three-day strike, backed by an international solidarity campaign, representatives of the striking workers and the company signed an agreement that recognizes the workers’ decision, increased the annual profit-sharing bonus by more than 20 times, and provided direct employment and union membership for all workers currently employed through the third-party employment agency, One Digit.



Unfortunately, 150 thugs from the protection union, the Confederation of Trade Union Organizations (COS) retaliated last August, viciously beating workers inside the Interiores plant with rocks, sticks and chains. Workers again walked off the job, shutting down the factory for three days, until JCI agreed to formally recognize *Los Mineros* as their union, sever all ties with the protection union, pay for medical and psy-

chological attention for the injured workers, and negotiate a collective bargaining agreement.

International solidarity backs JCI workers

Against overwhelming odds these Mexican workers took action to defend their right to be represented by a union of their free choice. However their employer has still not fulfilled all of the provisions of the agreement signed in August 2010. International solidarity is still critical to ensure that the parent company respects and fully implements that agreement without further backsliding, stalling, or retaliation.

A coalition including the International Metalworkers Federation, the Canadian and US Autoworkers Unions, the United Steelworkers Union, the AFL-CIO, US-LEAP and the Maquila Solidarity Network is coordinating with the local Puebla labour rights group, the Worker Assistance Center (CAT, in its Spanish acronym), and *Los Mineros* to support JCI workers.

Local support group faces death threats



Prior to the May 2010 actions at the Interiores plant, workers at the JCI FINSA plant, which is also in Puebla, had organized a temporary coalition to advocate for their rights. The Regional Confederation of Mexican Workers (CROM) holds the title to the protection contract at that factory. When management retaliated by firing most of their leaders and members, workers contacted the CAT. Those workers also decided to seek affiliation with *Los Mineros*. The CAT has been giving support to workers at both factories.

In retaliation for supporting the JCI workers, CAT members have received death threats and been physically assaulted on a number of occasions. In December their offices were broken into, vandalized, materials and electronic records stolen, and their institutional email account hacked into. “You don’t know who you are messing with” was scrawled on the wall, and further threats of violent action were sent through the hacked email account.

Although the CAT and Mexican human rights organizations have repeatedly asked the Mexican government to take action to ensure their safety, officials at both state and national levels have refused to act. International supporters are urging the Mexican state, Johnson Controls Inc, and human rights organizations to ensure the CAT’s safety and well-being.

More information about the struggle at Johnson Controls and actions you can take to support the campaign, go to:

<http://en.maquilasolidarity.org/JohnsonControls>