

Mexican Electrical Union Calls for National Strike

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Leaders of the besieged Mexican Electrical Workers Union (SME) are calling on other unions throughout Mexico to mount a national strike to force the government to revoke its liquidation of the Light and Power Company. The union called for a strike after walking out of negotiations with the government, talks leaders characterized as a “farce.”

On the night of October 10, President Felipe Calderón ordered federal police to seize power plants in and around Mexico City, while he dissolved the state-owned Light and Power Company and fired the entire workforce of 43,000.

The takeover wiped out the legal existence of an independent union that had been one of the leading forces against the government’s corporate-friendly agenda. About 22,000 retirees and 1,500 union technical school trainees were also affected.

The union is making legal and legislative attempts to overturn the government’s action but cannot strike itself because its members have been evicted from the workplace.

POLICE AND MILITARY HOLD PLANTS

At this moment 5,000 federal police, backed up by at least 10,000 police reserves and 3,000 military officers, hold more than 100 power facilities. The plants are being operated by management and by 3,000 electrical workers brought in from the other state-owned power company, the Federal Electrical Commission, and another 800 engineers and technicians provided by the military.

Leaders of the Electrical Commission’s union are eager to collude with the government in hopes of sharing in the booty of jobs, union dues, and political influence. For its part, the government seems eager to demonstrate that it can eliminate one of the strongest and most democratic unions, as a warning to all the rest, and to other opponents.

PAST COVERAGE

See also: [Mexican Electrical Workers Union fight for its life](#)

And: [Mexican Government Seizes Power Plants, Liquidates Company, Fires Workers, Union in Jeopardy](#)

SME, backed by other unions, social movements, and political parties, organized a huge protest march in Mexico City October 16, estimated at between 150,000 and 300,000 people.

But getting Mexico’s divided unions to support a national political strike will not be easy. Some of

the major union federations are linked to the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which ruled Mexico for 75 years, and they have said or done nothing to help the SME.

The SME may well receive support from the Mexican Miners and Metal Workers Union, which is also under attack from the Calderón government. The Mexican Union Front, which the SME created along with the independent National Union of Workers and a large, militant rank-and-file opposition group within the Mexican Teachers Union, could also act.
