

Mexican autoworkers speak out in support of the rank-and-file investigation into the death of Ronald Adams Sr.

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Mexican autoworkers have joined the growing international support for the investigation initiated by the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) into the death of Ronald Adams Sr. at the Stellantis Dundee Engine plant on April 7.

The messages of support take place in the context of Trump's tariff war and the bowing down by the trade union apparatus on both sides of the border to the demands by corporations for concessions in pay and working conditions, including job security, to maintain production in each country.

In Mexico, the country's largest exporter, General Motors, and so-called "independent union" SINTTIA, following promises of an at least 15 percent raises, imposed pay increases of only around 10 percent, ostensibly due to tariffs. GM then announced a \$4 billion investment to shift production from Mexico back to the United States due to the trade war, undoubtedly after cost-cutting guarantees on the part of the United Auto Workers (UAW), whose president Shawn Fain has loudly cheered on Trump's devastating tariffs.

This is at a time when workers can only defend their right to workplace safety by building an international movement to assert control over working conditions for transnational corporations and their allies in the nationalist unions and governments. Under these conditions the expressions of solidarity and appeals from workers south of the US-Mexico border takes on crucial importance.

Fernando, an assembly worker at the General Motors complex in Silao, central Mexico, expressed solidarity with Adams's family and responded with anger to the

initial news that the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) has not even interviewed the contractors responsible for the programming of the gantry and washer that Adams was working on when the gantry crushed him.

Workers at the Silao complex already have a record of international solidarity. In 2019, a rank-and-file group called "Generating Movement," opposed to the company union, suffered firings for refusing speed-ups in support of the US national strike at GM that year. The AFL-CIO and its Solidarity Center later intervened with cash to train a few of these workers as pro-corporate union officials who later established SINTTIA.

"This is a serious administrative failure, and a lawsuit is certainly warranted," Fernando said. Referring to the investigation, he added: "Well, this needs to be extended to as many companies as possible. These problems are global. But if we don't speak out, who will know about them? They will remain just a small echo. We must all spread the word."

Ernesto Tolentino, a former GM Silao worker who suffered an unjust firing and an insulting compensation offer after a prolonged workplace injury, related that such initiatives should be embraced by Mexican autoworkers as well. "Many colleagues at GM Silao say that they have recently imposed speedups. What's more, neither of the two unions does anything for the workers; if they do anything at all, it's for those who suck up to them. The two unions there are SINTTIA and Coalición [of the Confederation of Mexican Workers; CTM]."

"Truly, I find the investigation great," he said, urging his fellow workers in Mexico to support it. He

continued:

At GM Silao, many colleagues are unfortunately injuring their backs and feet. They are under a lot of stress due to the heavy workload. And stress can cause a lot of distress among employees. It can cause accidents or, in the worst cases, strokes or heart attacks. Here in Mexico, there was a case of a worker at a soft drink factory who was very tired and asked his bosses to give him a vacation. They didn't give him a vacation, and he died at work. He had a heart attack. The truth is that there is a lot of pressure at General Motors and many companies here in Guanajuato and throughout the country.

There is work, but the truth is that it is very stressful. I'm telling you this because I worked there for 15 years, and they pay you well, but just as they pay you, they put a lot of pressure on you. And the truth is that you leave very tired, stressed, exhausted, you don't even know what's going on. What I've heard from my coworkers is that they give new hires very simple jobs—materials and stuff like that—because they don't want to put them on the line anymore; for the same reason, that they can't take the pressure. And I wonder what happens when a line worker wants to move to a quieter area because they can't stand it there? The boss or supervisor doesn't want them because they're incapable of dealing with a new person and can't take the heat from GM.

That's why it's good that this gets investigated in the United States as well as here in Mexico, in all GM plants, in Ramos Arizpe, San Luis, Silao, and Toluca. The truth is that the GM Silao unions don't do anything for the workers.

Finally, Efraín, another GM Silao worker, said he has read carefully the reports on the rank-and-file investigation on Adams's death. "Well, what can I say? Unfortunately, that's life. We are exposed to everything, he said, and explained:

Even though companies have or adopt safety protocols, depending on the company, these are not implemented as promised. I'm telling you this because I saw so many unsafe practices here, both in the body shops and even more so in the general assembly area. You realize that production is more important to them than the safety of their workers.

About the investigation, Efraín offered some advice: "I think it's very appropriate and correct. However, it's also a double-edged sword. As long as they don't try to bribe the workers. They need to elect people with values and principles."

A Delta Staff textile worker in Durango, northern Mexico, responded to news of the inquiry with a message to the WSWS:

I stand in solidarity with the family of Ronald Adams. It is commonplace in the 21st century for workers to die every day in factories around the world. It is always a machine malfunction. Either the safety device failed to respond, and the worker is directly blamed.

The employer is never punished for omissions in their safety systems that cause the deaths of thousands of workers.

Our condolences and wishes for strength to the family of Ronald Adams. Not one more workplace death.



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