



June 24, 2016

The Honorable John Kerry
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St. N.W.
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

On behalf of the 1.6 million members of the American Federation of Teachers, I am writing to express our shock and dismay at the horrific events taking place in Mexico, where police force was used to counter the protests of teachers and community activists, resulting in a mounting death toll, injuries, arrests and disappearances. The AFT strongly condemns this disproportionate use of force.

Public protests over government policies and actions should never lead to the use of lethal force that results in the loss of human life and injuries of this kind. The developments in Oaxaca, Mexico, which began as a legitimate protest by teachers, now threaten the politics and economy of an entire region, perhaps the country. Mexico's democracy is threatened when police resort to deadly force rather than government engaging with all relevant stakeholders in meaningful and constructive social dialogue.

Let us not forget that this is not an isolated incident of human rights violations. In September 2014, 43 Ayotzinapa students studying to become teachers went missing, with local government and security officials implicated in their disappearances.

The entire situation is as tragic as it is unconscionable and erodes the very tenets of democracy and civil society. It is a sad commentary on human rights when a government meets protesters and their concerns with deadly force.

We urge that you call on the Mexican government to bring an immediate cessation of violence, create an independent commission of inquiry and engage in talks at the highest levels with all parties involved in the dispute before further lives are affected. Dialogue, not use of force; collaboration, not isolation, are the means to a resolution.

Sincerely,

Randi Weingarten
President

RW : bsc opeiu#2 afl-cio

cc: H.E. Carlos Manuel Sada Solana, Mexican Ambassador to the U.S.
H.E. Roberta Jacobson, U.S. Ambassador to Mexico

American Federation
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

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The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.