Published on *International Labor Rights Forum* (http://www.laborrights.org)

ILRF Commissions Investigation of Mexican Factory

Date of publication: February 1, 2001

Source: ILRF

On Friday, January 12, the International Labor Rights Fund learned of a labor conflict in a Mexican factory producing Nike and Reebok sweatshirts for the collegiate market. We immediately contacted both companies to learn what they knew and what they were doing about the situation. As a consequence of those conversations, we decided to find a knowledgeable and independent labor attorney in Mexico who could conduct an investigation on ILRF's behalf about the conflict, since the companies were receiving multiple and contradictory reports about the nature and causes of the conflict, which had led to a three-day walkout and a violent confrontation with police.

ILRF immediately contacted Mr. Arturo Alcalde Justiniani, a very well respected labor lawyer who has been president of the National Democratic Lawyers Association of Mexico, and who serves as the attorney for a number of independent non-officialista unions in Mexico. Mr. Alcalde has also been a member of the ILRF board of directors for many years.

On Monday, January 15, Mr. Alcalde visited the factory in Atlixco, Puebla state and interviewed company officials, local labor department officials, company lawyers, workers both in the factory and on strike outside, and representatives of the CROC and UNT, two competitive union federations. He reported his findings to us, which in summary form, concluded that the major issue was the failure of the company to reinstate workers who had been on strike over a variety of issues and the negative impact this would have on any subsequent union representation election. He and his staff have made several subsequent visits.

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