

The International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations



By email: cidhdenuncias@oas.org

8 March 2018

Dr. Paulo Abrão
Executive Secretary
Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

Dear Dr. Abrão,

I am writing on behalf of the International Federation of Air Line Pilots' Associations (IFALPA), the global voice of more than 100,000 professional airline pilots in 100 countries. IFALPA provides representation, services and support to promote the highest level of aviation safety worldwide.

I am writing to condemn the outrageous “union busting” actions of Avianca Airlines (Avianca) towards members of the pilots’ union, Asociación Colombiana de Aviadores Civiles (Acdac). Acdac has informed us that Avianca has not only terminated the employment of Captain Jaime Hernandez Sierra, the President of Acdac, but has also filed criminal charges against him for his union activity. Additionally, we understand that Avianca has disciplined and discharged some 200 plus members of Acdac who honored an Acdac strike. This is blatant anti-union conduct that cannot be tolerated. Moreover, we have been informed that Avianca management is actively recruiting foreign pilots to replace well trained and experienced Acdac Pilots.

Acdac has been engaged in good faith efforts to achieve a new collective bargaining agreement. However, Avianca responded to this effort by offering pay incentives to pilots if they would agree to individual labor agreements and fly more fatiguing schedules. All these actions by Avianca are designed to deprive Acdac members of their basic human right to collectively bargain pay and working conditions and their right not to be discriminated against because of union membership.

We believe that the conduct of Avianca is a flagrant violation of the Labor Action Plan (LAP) in the current trade agreement between the United States and Colombia. This conduct also violates the International Labor Organization Convention CO87 and CO98, both establishing the right to organize and bargain collectively. These treaties have been ratified by the Colombian government and as such, the Colombian Government’s duty is to honor and enforce these agreements. In addition, the intimidating

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conduct of Avianca towards its pilots and the threat of termination creates workplace challenges that distract pilots and adversely affect aviation safety. Avianca's conduct, in our view, violates the spirit of ICAO Annex 19 which mandates member States to establish safety management systems that create and foster a "Positive Safety Culture" at all airlines that operate in their country.

We respectfully ask that you investigate the deplorable labor relations at Avianca and use your Organization to foster a mutually agreeable solution to this matter. The unfair treatment of the Avianca pilots is receiving international attention and we believe your good offices will be crucial for the respect of the basic human rights of Colombian workers

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ron.", with a stylized flourish above the name.

Captain Ron Abel
President