Solidarity with the 43 Disappeared Students of the Ayotzinapa Teachers College in Mexico and Their Families

Whereas, on September 26, 2014, 43 students disappeared from the Raúl Isidro Burgos Rural Teachers College in Ayotzinapa— one of the few teachers’ colleges remaining that has preserved the socialist curriculum adopted shortly after its founding and whose graduates teach in poor rural areas in the State of Guerrero; and

Whereas, the group of students went to the city of Iguala to collect donations during the day and were barred by the police from entering Iguala’s central plaza to protest the underfunding of their school, where María de los Ángeles, the wife of the mayor of Iguala, José Luis Abarca, was holding a political event; and

Whereas, the students seized buses – a tactic that the New York Times has reported as being routine and temporary – to transport them to a demonstration on October 2nd commemorating a 1968 student massacre in Mexico City; and

Whereas, the local police blocked the buses carrying the students; and

Whereas, police repeatedly opened fire on the students, leaving behind 17 injured students and rounding up 43 students into police trucks; and

Whereas, witnesses reported and the parents of the missing students believe that the police handed the students over to the local criminal organization Guerreros Unidos, an organization with ties to local politicians; and

Whereas, on October 17, 2014, the attorney general of Guerrero initiated criminal charges against the mayor with “aggravated homicide against six people”; and

Whereas, on January 15, 2015, federal prosecutors in Mexico formally charged the mayor, his wife and others with the kidnapping of the students, and at least 74 people have been arrested in connection with the mass kidnapping; and

Whereas, it remains to be determined whether the burned and maimed bodies that have been discovered in several shallow mass graves are the bodies of the kidnapped students, but the remains of one of the students have been identified by forensic science officials; and

Whereas, the parents of the disappeared students remain hopeful and have launched a civilian search in the region of Guerrero; and

Whereas, there has been widespread condemnation and tumultuous street protests against this act of state repression against young teacher trainees intent on transforming civil society through their work in poor communities; and
Whereas, many NYSUT members are engaged in a similar transformational education project, many are involved in teacher training, and thousands are teachers, working in every area of the state; and

Whereas, participants at the first regional gathering of the Workers’ Economy, a group of academics and unionists (founded in 2007 in Buenos Aires), held in Mexico City in November, and including two NYSUT members, unanimously adopted the following eloquent statement of solidarity:

*We, workers, activists and academics from Mexico, the U.S.A, Canada and other countries, wish to express our pain, dignified rage and condemnation of the forced disappearance of 43 student teachers of the Ayotzinapa teacher training college, which was perpetrated in Iguala, in the state of Guerrero, on September 26th last, by the Municipal Police of Iguala and Cocula and by an as yet unidentified “group of civilians,” which could be members of the Guerreros Unidos drug cartel and/or of the Mexican military…*

*We express our solidarity with the struggle of the families of the disappeared students and of the persons murdered by the security forces of the Mexican State and our support for their demands for the return alive of the 43 disappeared students, for the revelation of the full truth on what happened and for the punishment of those responsible for these heinous crimes of State at every level of the Mexican government, including if necessary, of the chief of the Mexican security forces, President Enrique Peña Nieto…*

*Finally, we wish to express our support for the struggle of the Ayotzinapa social movement made up above all of millions of students and youth in Mexico and around the world who share the same demands, and our solidarity with those who have been unjustly repressed and arrested and who must be immediately released. “Alive they were taken, alive we want them back!”; therefore be it*

**RESOLVED, that NYSUT endorses the above solidarity statement of the Workers’ Economy conference in Mexico City, and that NYSUT will send copies of this resolution to the relevant authorities in Mexico and the United States, to the group of families of the 43 students, as well as to the faculty and students of the Ayotzinapa Teachers College in Mexico.**

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