

November 19, 2022

XXVI Congress of the Socialist International
Madrid, Spain

Two thousand and five hundred days since the detention of the indigenous leader Milagro Sala, we denounce the violation of socialdemocratic values by the president of the Radical Civic Union of the Argentine Republic, member of the Socialist Internacional

The **International Network for the Freedom of Milagro Sala**, which includes citizens from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Spain, United States, Finland, France, Italy, United Kingdom, Sweden and Switzerland, hereby denounce the use of state power to silence, persecute, and imprison individuals and organisations opposed to his government, by the governor of the province of Jujuy, Argentina, **Mr Gerardo Morales, president of the Radical Civic Union, a party belonging to this International** — in total disregard of the values promoted in the Ethical Charter of the Socialist International.

The long history of the Socialist International defending freedom, justice, and solidarity in the world is tarnished by the antidemocratic and authoritarian behaviour of the above-mentioned Mr Gerardo Morales.

Thus, both in its Ethical Charter, as well as in the most recent Declaration on the Independence of the Judiciary by its Regional Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (3-4/6/2022 in La Romana, Dominican Republic) confirms the pluralistic democratic vocation of this institution:

The Committee reiterates its call for the countries of the region to have independent judiciaries that fulfil their important functions in full compliance with the guarantees of due process and the fundamental rights of all people.

The Committee expresses its rejection of any attempt or derivative of the use of legal cases with the aim of preventing candidacies, limiting rights and, in general, threatening normal political activity in our countries. Likewise, the Committee expresses its solidarity with the people who have been sentenced for this type of case, calls for the review of unjustly imposed sanctions and the cessation of all persecution.

We therefore consider that Mr. Morales' membership in the SI does not withstand the minimum enumeration of his actions as head of state of a province, namely:

Gerardo Morales increased the number of judges of the provincial Superior Court of Justice and immediately appointed as new judges deputies from his party who had voted for this change, thus obtaining an automatic majority in the Court; created the Public Prosecutor's Office with the special mandate for the persecution of Milagro Sala; give {direct or indirect} instructions to the members of the Superior Court not to release Milagro Sala, as two of the former presidents of that Court, Pablo Baca and Clara Languede Falcone, later made public;



appointed judges and prosecutors with a mandate that violates the principle of natural justice and, lately, used the provincial Chamber of Deputies to remove judges that may bother the government. All this is very far from an independent and democratic judicial system as promoted by the Ethical Charter and stated by the Regional Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean.

Milagro Sala is the founder and leader of the Túpac Amará Neighbourhood Organization in Jujuy, Argentina. The Organization was founded in 1991 with a mandate to generate employment, develop housing, and provide services to the most disadvantaged people in the province. They were very successful in their initiatives. By the end of 2015 the Organization had built 8,000 homes, generated 4,500 jobs, set up a brick factory and a metallurgic plant to ensure less expensive raw material; and a textile factory. They opened primary, secondary and tertiary schools and vocational training centres, health posts with special services for people with disabilities, and several recreation centres with swimming pools and sports facilities. All was obtained utilizing solidarity, cooperative and community self-management in one of the provinces with the highest rates of poverty and indigence in Argentina.

Many promises never met by the provincial and national governments were delivered by Milagro Sala and the Túpac Amaru Organization; making the unemployed and single mothers alike empowered and active citizens.

We can understand why the government of the province, supported by the previous national government and monopolistic sectors of the economy, could not allow this example of democratic self-management to grow.

Since the inauguration of the government of the UCR-PRO alliance(December 10, 2015), not only were the members of Túpac Amaru deprived of one of the most fundamental rights, such as the right to work, but they were persecuted with unproven accusation of corruption and many of them arbitrarily detained for the mere fact of belonging to the Organization.

Milagro Sala's detention on January 16, 2016 was illegal and arbitrary, as denounced by Resolution 31/2016 of the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary

Detentions. Like Milagro, all the other detainees have suffered violent raids on their homes by plain-clothes police without identification, in many cases at night, contrary to legal provisions. Several of the detainees were forced to testify against Milagro Sala in exchange for their freedom. The wife of Alberto Cardozo, one of the detainees from the Network of Social Organizations (ROS), publicly denounced that her husband was tortured in prison.

Together with Milagro, 14 people have been deprived of their liberty, of which 8 are still detained. María Eugenia Molina, Elba Jesús Galarza, Raúl Noro, Mirta Rosa Guerrero, Gladis Diaz and Mirta Aizama have already regained their freedom. The following are on parole: María Graciela López, María Sandra Condori, Adriana Noemí Condori and Javier Nieva.

Milagro Sala, Patricia Margarita Cabana, Iván Altamirano and Miguel Sibila remain detained under house arrest.



In the 6 years of his government, activists from the Left and Workers' Front (FIT), the Union of Sugar Workers and Employees of the La Esperanza Sugar Mill, and the Association of State Workers (ATE) were arrested and prosecuted — and members of the Evita Movement, of the Clasista and Combative Current (CCC), of the Organization for the Liberation of Argentina (OLA), of the Union of Municipal Employees and Workers (SEOM) and others were also repressed and imprisoned, at different times, for opposing the policies of Mr Morales.

In July 2022, the Jujuy police raided the homes of 16 leaders of the social organisations Front of Organizations in Struggle (FOL), Darío Santillán Popular Front - Plurinational Current, (FPDS-CP), Our America, Evita Movement, Llakaj Maki, Movement of Excluded Workers (MTE) and Túpac Amarú — by order of a prosecutor but with no prior cause and without a judge's authorisation. As a result of these procedural and police actions without judicial oversight. **In October 2022 Gabriela Carpineti, National Director for the Promotion and Strengthening of Access to Justice, denounced Governor Morales for leading an illegal espionage network against political opponents in Jujuy.** Returning to the Ethics Charter of the Socialist International, the evidence shows that respect for the rights of the individual and of minorities is not observed in the province of Jujuy.

Referring to the fight against corruption, the promotion of a free press and democratic functioning of the government mentioned in the Ethics Charter, it is public knowledge that Governor Morales, even when promised during the electoral campaign that he will never do it, employed and appointed to government positions at least 25 relatives, including sons, brothers, brothers-in-law, and cousins. In addition, the main leader of the “opposition”, who is not only a politician but also the owner of the largest communications company in the province, usually reporting in favour of the government, is a direct partner in several business with the Morales family.

Milagro Sala is the symbol for all the people imprisoned, detained, persecuted, and spied on in the province of Jujuy. The freedom of Milagro must be accompanied by the freedom of all, and the free exercise of democratic life in the province.

At the International Network for the Freedom of Milagro Sala we believe that Mr Gerardo Morales, president of the Radical Civic Union of the Argentine Republic, does not deserve to be part of an international organization committed to defending and promoting the values of equality, freedom, justice, solidarity, and peace that are the foundation of democratic socialism.

Therefore, we ask the XXVI Congress of the Socialist International - which will meet in Madrid on November 25, 2022 - to pronounce itself for the freedom of Milagro Sala and other political prisoners, to take political and humanitarian initiatives to obtain their freedom. As well as disciplinary and ethical measures towards Gerardo Morales, directly responsible for these flagrant violations of Human Rights.

In solidarity,
International Network for the Freedom of Milagro Sala
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