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The prospects for improvement in the protection of worker rights in Guatemala were dramatically diminished with the May 25 presidential coup executed by President Jorge Serrano with the support of the military. Through a decree, President Serrano suspended many constitutionally-protected human and trade union rights including freedom of assembly and the right to strike. On May 27, President Serrano formalized implementation of the decree by requiring all organizations, including trade unions, to obtain official permission to hold meetings of more than three people.

In addition to the new restrictions facing trade unionists in Guatemala, hopes for implementation of previously-won advancements, including legal protection against reprisals for union activities, are dimmed. Two key elements in advocating better protection of worker rights are no longer present. The national legislature, which passed new labor code amendments last year, was summarily abolished by President Serrano. Moreover, Labor Minister Solorzano, a key advocate of improving the labor inspection and court systems, immediately resigned to protest the President's anti-constitutional maneuver.

Therefore, the AFL-CIO calls for the immediate termination of GSP and CBI trade benefits to Guatemala.

My 25, 1993 copy

See economist my 29, 1993 article for
coded as labor chg in 1993 report