

URGENT ACTION

MIGRANTS' RIGHTS DEFENDER THREATENED

Mexican priest Father Alejandro Solalinde Guerra has been threatened with death as a result of his work defending migrants' rights. His life is at risk.

On 15 April, **Father Alejandro Solalinde**, coordinator of the Catholic Pastoral Care Centre for Migrants in Southwestern Mexico (*Pastoral de Movilidad Humana Pacífico Sur del Episcopado Mexicano*) and director of a migrants' shelter in the municipality of Ixtepec, Oaxaca state, was receiving a group of around 1,500 migrants arriving on a freight train in Ixtepec. As they were walking to the shelter, two men intercepted them and began shouting insults at the migrants. When Father Solalinde spoke to the men, defending the migrants, the men began shouting abuse at him and threatened to kill him.

Around two weeks earlier, on 31 March, the dismembered body of a local young man was found next to a bar and near the train tracks that pass through Ixtepec. Members of the Urban Rescue Group (*Grupo de Rescate Urbano*) - a group that reports on accidents and other events in Ixtepec and that is linked to the municipal authorities - publicly tried to blame the murder on migrants. Father Solalinde told the victim's family that this accusation was untrue. While he was performing funeral rites for the murdered man, two men approached him, apparently intending to attack him, but they were blocked by members of the victim's family. The following day Father Solalinde was informed by a contact that an assassin had been contracted to kill him.

The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has told the Mexican authorities to take action to protect Father Solalinde and other staff members at the shelter as a result of prior acts of intimidation and harassment that they have suffered as a result of their work defending migrants' rights. These recent threats have occurred in the context of a continuing dialogue between the shelter and the municipal authorities about the effective implementation of the protection measures.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Demanding that the authorities strengthen protection provided to Father Solalinde and other staff at the shelter in Ixtepec, in strict accordance with their wishes, as ordered by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.
- Calling on the authorities to take urgent steps to prevent attacks against migrants and migrant rights workers, and to guarantee the safety of all migrants staying at the shelter run by Father Alejandro Solalinde in Ixtepec.
- Calling for a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the killing of the young man found dead in Ixtepec on 31 March, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 30 MAY 2012 TO:

Governor of Oaxaca State

Lic. Gabino Cué Monteagudo
Palacio de Gobierno (Planta Alta), Plaza
de la Constitución, Centro Histórico
Oaxaca de Juárez, Oaxaca, C.P. 68000
Mexico
Fax: +52 951 501 5000 Ext 40068
Email: spagoboaxaca@gmail.com

Salutation: Dear Governor

Attorney General of the Republic

Marisela Morales Ibáñez
Paseo de la reforma 211-213
Col. Cuauhtémoc, México D.F., C.P.
06500, México
Fax: +52 55 5346 0908 (keep trying and
ask for "fax")
Email: ofproc@pgr.gob.mx

Salutation: Dear Attorney General

And copies to:

Padre Alejandro Solalinde Guerra
Casa del Migrante "Hermanos en el
Camino"
Av. Ferrocarril Pte no. 60, Barrio de la
Soledad
Ciudad Ixtepec, Oaxaca CP 701101
México.

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

MIGRANTS' RIGHTS DEFENDER THREATENED

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Father Solalinde has been threatened repeatedly for his public condemnation of the treatment of migrants by both criminal gangs and Mexican officials. At one point he was told by municipal officials that the shelter would be burned down if he did not close it, (UA 191/08). In recent years, local officials and individuals believed to have criminal links have repeatedly been responsible for promoting anti-migrants protests and fomenting attacks on the shelter.

Hundreds of thousands of irregular migrants (those without official travel documents) attempt to travel through Mexico from Central and South America every year to reach the USA. Many are detained by the Mexican migration authorities and returned to their countries of origin. Amnesty International recently visited Mexico to investigate reports of human rights violations against these people. During the visit, Amnesty International found that many had been kidnapped by gangs, sometimes with the complicity of local officials. Impunity for abuses against migrants, who are extremely vulnerable, has allowed these abuses to increase, despite government commitments to ensure respect of migrants' rights.

Name: Father Alejandro Solalinde Guerra

Gender m/f: M

UA: 108/12 Index: AMR 41/024/2012 Issue Date: 18 April 2012