

URGENT ACTION

CRIMINALS THREATEN MIGRANTS' RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

New death threats have been made against workers at the 72 migrants' shelter in Tenosique, southern state of Tabasco, Mexico. The authorities have not fully implemented agreed protection measures, leaving staff exposed to attacks.

Migrants' rights activist **Rubén Figueroa** was threatened on 8 June by an unidentified man. The man arrived at La 72 Migrants' shelter and warned Rubén Figueroa to stop interfering with the organised crime, or his body would be found "embalmed". The perpetrator was later arrested, along with three other individuals suspected of involvement in gangs that target migrants. All were later released by the Tabasco state Attorney General's Office, despite the apparent existence of evidence implicating at least one of them in kidnappings and extortion of migrants.

La 72 Migrants' shelter received precautionary measures on 19 April from the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, CIDH). However, the measures agreed with the shelter have not been fully implemented. The measures were aimed at protecting the migrants and the shelter's staff, including the director **Fray Tomás González**. In particular, Federal Police protection outside the shelter was unilaterally withdrawn without explanation and only temporarily returned after 20 days. The Federal Police did not provide any explanation to the defenders or government officials for this failure. Staff at the shelter report that some of the protection measures have not been adequately implemented, including effective street lights, surveillance cameras, a panic button and new locks to secure access.

Also, despite agreeing to do so, the Federal Attorney General's Office (Procuraduría General de la República, PGR) and the Tabasco State Attorney General's Office (Procuraduría General de Justicia del Estado) have not provided information or updates regarding previous threats and intimidation against La 72 migrants shelter staff.

Please write immediately in Spanish, English or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to provide immediate and effective protection to Rubén Figueroa, Fray Tomás González, and other shelter members, and migrants at the La 72 migrants' shelter, in accordance with the agreements established;
- Expressing concern at the unilateral withdrawal of Federal Police protection and the failure to fully and promptly implement other agreed protection measures;
- Urging them to conduct a full and effective investigation into all threats against Fray Tomás González, Rubén Figueroa, and other shelter members and bring all those responsible to justice, including those involved in criminal gangs allegedly behind the threats and kidnapping of migrants.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 JULY 2013 TO:

National Commissioner for Security

Manuel Mondragón y Kalb
Av. Constituyentes #947, Col. Belén de
las Flores, C.P. 01110
México D.F., México
Email: ceac@cns.gob.mx

Salutation: Dear Commissioner

Minister of the Interior

Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong
Bucareli 99, Col. Juárez C.P. 6600,
México D.F., México
Email: secretario@segob.gob.mx
Fax: +52 55 5093 3414 (keep trying)

Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

Local Organization
La 72 Migrants Shelter
Email: ruben_migrante@hotmail.com

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the fourth update of UA 62/13. Further information:
<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/027/2013/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Rubén Figueroa and Fray Tomás González work at the La 72 Shelter and have been victims of constant threats and intimidation due to their work in helping and speaking out for irregular migrants travelling through Mexico.

Hundreds of thousands of irregular migrants 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 has 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.

The Law for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists was unanimously approved by both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, and signed by the President, in 2012. The protection mechanism has been established, including the direct participation of representatives of civil society, but operational protocols, clear guidelines on cooperation between federal and state authorities and resources urgently need to be put in place to guarantee its effectiveness. It is vital that the authorities do not assume that their responsibilities are restricted to establishing a protection mechanism.

Amnesty International launched an action designed to make visible the plight of migrants travelling through Mexico and to provide much needed assistance to migrants travelling across the country. The action can be found at: <http://sendsocks.org/>

Name: Rubén Figueroa (m), Fray Tomás González (m) and members of La 72 Migrants shelter

Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 62/13 Index: AMR 41/031/2013 Issue Date: 14 June 2013