

URGENT ACTION

MASS KIDNAPPING OF MIGRANTS IN MEXICO

A mass kidnapping of irregular migrants travelling on a freight train between Oaxaca and Veracruz states, Mexico, took place on 24 June. The whereabouts of many of the men, women and children who were travelling on the train is unknown. Their lives are at risk.

On 24 June, a freight train carrying over two hundred irregular migrants on its roof left the town of Ciudad Ixtepec, Oaxaca state for the town of Medias Aguas, Veracruz state. Many of the migrants travelling on the train had stayed at "Brothers of the Road" ("Hermanos en el Camino") migrants' shelter, run by migrants right defender Father Alejandro Solalinde Guerra, before leaving for Veracruz state on route to Mexico's northern border with the USA. Several children were travelling on the train.

According to eyewitnesses, as the train was approaching Medias Aguas, the train driver stopped the train in an isolated area where three pickup trucks were parked. Once the train was stationary, at least ten armed men got out of the vehicles and began to round up the migrants shouting "get off the train son of a bitches, hurry up and get inside the pickups" ("*bájense hijos de su puta madre, bájense rápido y súbanse a las camionetas*"). Some of the migrants managed to escape but many were forced into the vehicles at gun point and driven away.

Several witnesses of the kidnapping who were able to escape returned to "Brothers of the Road" ("Hermanos en el Camino") migrants' shelter following the attack. According to these witnesses, there were women and children amongst those kidnapped. Some of the witnesses of the kidnap have filed a complaint with the authorities.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Urge the authorities to immediately investigate the mass kidnapping of irregular migrants, establish their whereabouts and ensure their safety, and bring those responsible to justice, including any public officials found to be acting in complicity with criminal gangs;
- Call on the authorities to provide the migrants who witnessed the kidnap with protection and temporary visas, so they can testify against those responsible without fear of reprisals or repatriation.
- Call on the Interior Minister to lead the implementation of an action plan to protect the rights of migrants in transit including the effective investigation and prosecution of those responsible for abuses, protection of migrants at risk and collection and publication of nationwide data on abuses.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 8 AUGUST 2011 TO:

Minister of the Interior

Lic. José Francisco Blake Mora
Secretario de Gobernación
Bucareli 99, 1er. Piso, Col. Juárez
Delegación Cuauhtémoc
México DF, CP 06600
Fax: +52 55 50933414 (a voice will
ask for the extension: dial 32356)

Salutation: Dear Minister

Attorney General of the Republic

Marisela Morales Ibañez
Procuradora General de Justicia de la
República, Av. Paseo de la reforma 211
– 213, Col. Cuauhtémoc, Del.
Cuauhtémoc, México D.F., México
Fax: +52 555 346 0908 (keep trying)
Email: mmoralesi@pgr.gob.mx

Salutation: Dear Attorney General

Governor of Veracruz

Lic. Javier Duarte de Ochoa
Palacio de Gobierno
Av. Enriquez S/N, Col Centro,
CP 91000, Xalapa,
Veracruz, Mexico.
Email: javierduarte@veracruz.gob.mx

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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.

According to a report launched by Mexico's National Human Rights Commission, over a six month period in 2010 over 11 000 irregular migrants were kidnapped in Mexico.

Amnesty International recently made a film documenting the plight of Central American migrant travelling through Mexico, you can watch it and take action here: www.youtube.com/invisiblesfilms

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