

URGENT ACTION

MORE THREATS MADE AGAINST MIGRANTS' SHELTER

There are new reports of threats against La 72 migrants' shelter and its director in Tenosique, southern state of Tabasco, Mexico. The lives of the shelter director and workers are in grave danger.

On 17 March, a migrant told volunteers at the La 72 migrants' shelter that members of a criminal gang had told him they were going to attack the shelter to find all the workers and migrants who had filed criminal complaints against them, and that they knew how to get access into the shelter. **Fray Tomás González** (the La 72 migrants' shelter director) and **Rubén Figueroa** (his colleague) were on their way to report the threat to the Tabasco State Attorney General's Office (*Procuraduría General de Justicia del Estado*, PGJE) when they were called back to the shelter urgently.

Once at the shelter, a migrant told Fray Tomás González that while he was by the rail freight stop in Tenosique, where irregular migrants board the freight train to go north, an unknown person told him: "What we are interested in is the head of the Priest who is responsible for all this; and of all those who have spoken (to the authorities)...We are going today to the shelter to get all of them" ("*...Lo que nos interesa es la cabeza del Padre, que está al frente de todo esto; y de todos los que estan hablando...Hoy mismo vamos por todos ellos al albergue*").

These two events were immediately reported to the Federal Judicial Police (*Policía Federal Ministerial*, PGJE), Federal Police (*Policía Federal*), and the Mexican Army (*Ejército Mexicano*). The authorities have made three arrests, but apparently failed to detain the leaders of the criminal gang. A police patrol has been posted outside the shelter and the federal authorities have made commitments to strengthen protection, but such commitments in the past have not resulted in improved protection or those responsible for threats being held to account.

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

- Calling on the authorities to provide immediate and effective protection to Fray Tomás González, Rubén Figueroa, and other human rights defenders working at the La 72 migrants' shelter in Tenosique, in accordance with their wishes;
- Urging them to conduct a full and effective investigation into all threats against Fray Tomás González, Rubén Figueroa, and other shelter volunteers and bring all those responsible to justice, including leaders of the criminal gang allegedly behind the threats;
- Calling for federal and state authorities to combat criminal gangs targeting irregular migrants travelling through Tabasco state, and hold to account any public officials implicated in colluding with gang members.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 1 MAY 2013 TO:

Minister of the Interior

Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong

Bucareli 99, col. Juárez, Cuauhtemoc,

Distrito Federal, México, C.P. 6600

Email: secretario@segob.gob.mx

Fax: +52 55 5093 3414

Salutation: Dear Minister

Tabasco State Attorney General

Fernando Valenzuela Pernas

Av. Paseo Usumacinta No. 802 Col. Gil y

Sáenz (antes El Águila). Villahermosa,

Tabasco, Mexico

Email: procurador@pgjtabasco.gob.mx

Fax: +52 993 313 6550 (ask "tono de fax por favor?")

Salutation: Dear Governor

And copies to:

La 72 migrants' shelter

Email: ruben_migrante@hotmail.com

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. This is the first update of UA 62/13. Further information:

<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/010/2013/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 process for implementing the law has now begun, including the direct participation of representatives of civil society; however, 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/>

Names: Fray Tomás González (m), Rubén Figueroa (m), and members of La 72 migrants' shelter

Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 62/13 Index: AMR 41/012/2013 Issue Date: 20 March 2013