

# URGENT ACTION

## MIGRANTS AT RISK IN MEXICO STATE

**A temporary migrants' canteen in Huehuetoca, Mexico State, has been shot at by unknown men. This follows the closure of a migrants' shelter in Lechería by volunteers who worked there due to the violence and threats against them. The lives of migrants and the human rights defenders that work with them in Mexico State are at grave risk.**

On 7 July, a violent confrontation outside the San Juan Diego Migrant's Shelter took place between migrants and local residents, which was provoked by people not connected to the shelter. No police patrol was present, in breach of the obligations that the state has to provide the shelter with security. Following the confrontation, local residents blocked the roads and threatened the person in charge of the shelter. In the absence of effective state protection and hostility and violence from local residents, the volunteers that work at the shelter were forced to close it down two days later. They established two temporary canteens, the San José canteen for migrants in Huehuetoca, and another in one in Lechería, to provide food and humanitarian assistance to migrants.

On 21 July, between 2am and 3am, a group of armed men fired shots at the San José canteen for migrants. Around the same time, three migrants reported being chased by a group of people that were firing guns at them.

The human rights defenders responsible for the San Juan Diego migrants' shelter have met on a number of occasions with Mexico state authorities, including the Governor. The authorities have not fulfilled the promise made to support the relocation of the shelter, so that it can provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in secure conditions. In Huehuetoca, the Municipal President is reported to have blamed the volunteers for the attack on the San José migrants' canteen, as an attempt to call attention to their situation.

### **Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:**

- Calling on the authorities to provide effective protection to staff, volunteers and migrants at the San José migrants' canteen in Huehuetoca, and the temporary canteen in Lechería, in strict accordance with their wishes;
- Urging for a full and impartial investigation into the incidents that led to the closure of the San Juan Diego shelter and the attack on the San José migrants' canteen, and for those responsible to be held to account;
- Urging the State authorities to support the migrants' shelter and the temporary canteens, including through the relocation of the San Juan Diego shelter to a safe place and tackling discrimination against migrants.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 7 SEPTEMBER 2012 TO:**

#### Minister of Interior

Dr. Alejandro Poiré Romero  
Secretaría de Gobernación  
Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez  
Delegación Cuauhtémoc  
México D.F., C.P.06600, MÉXICO  
Fax: (+52) 55 5093 3414 (keep trying)  
Email: secretario@segob.gob.mx

**Salutation: Dear Minister/Estimado  
Señor Secretario**

#### Governor of Mexico state

Eruviel Avila Villegas  
Lerdo Poniente Numero 300,  
Primer Piso, Puerta 216,  
Palacio Del Poder Ejecutivo,  
Colonia Centro, CP 50000  
Toluca, Estado de México, México  
Fax: (+52) 722 276 0046

Email: cnm@gem.gob.mx  
**Salutation: Dear Governor/Estimado  
Gobernador**

#### **And copies to:**

Dimensión Pastoral de la Movilidad  
Humana (NGO)  
Email:  
movilidad.humana@yahoo.com.mx

**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 fifth update of UA 16/11. Further information:

<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/032/2012/en>

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Staff, volunteers and migrants at the San Juan Diego migrants' shelter in Lechería, Mexico state have been subject to a pattern of abuses and attacks. Parts of the local population have violently protested against the existence of the migrants' shelter, and these protests are once again flaring up. The shelter has been granted precautionary measures by the National Commission for Human Rights, but these are not sufficient to guarantee the protection of the staff, volunteers and migrants at the shelter.

On 30 January 2011, Guadalupe Calzada, who ran the shelter at the time, was informed of a plan to burn the shelter down, murder Guatemalan migrants and kill her "like a dog" ("*como un perro*") within three days. The threat is believed to originate from people-smuggler gangs operating in the area who consider the shelter a threat to their criminal activities. The authorities were informed of this threat and requested protection.

On 13 August 2011, a group of over 30 people from the local community of Lechería assembled in front of the migrants' shelter to call for its closure. Local residents also threatened to burn down the shelter if it was not closed down and to storm in and remove the migrants themselves.

On 11 December 2011, approximately 80 residents of the local community of Lechería, came together to demand the closure of the shelter. They were protesting because they claim that the migrants' shelter attracts trouble to their neighbourhood, such as drugs and people traffickers. Several of the residents also dismantled four makeshift huts made by migrants by the side of the train tracks, meters away from the migrants' shelter, and set fire to some of the migrants' belongings. According to staff working at the shelter, several of the protesters swore at them and tried to hit them.

On 11 July, to address the emergency humanitarian needs of the migrants in Lechería, the volunteers established a temporary canteen in a tent under a bridge in Lechería. On 21 July, local residents held demonstrations calling for the removal of the tent.

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.

Amnesty International recently launched an action designed to visibilise the plight of migrants travelling through Mexico and to provide much needed assistance to migrants travelling across the country, you can take action here; <http://sendsocks.org/>

Name: Staff, volunteers and migrants at the San Juan Diego migrants' shelter

Gender m/f: Both

Further information on UA: 16/11 Index: AMR 41/053/2012 Issue Date: 27 July 2012