

URGENT ACTION

FURTHER THREATS FOR MIGRANTS' RIGHTS ACTIVIST Migrants' rights defenders working at a migrants' shelter in Tenosique, Southern Mexico have been threatened and intimidated by state police and members of the military.

According to eyewitnesses, on 17 September, **Fray Tomás González**, director of La 72 migrants' shelter and President of the Usumacinta Human Rights Centre (Centro de Derechos Humanos del Usumacinta, CDHU), and migrants' rights activist **Ruben Figueroa** were travelling with two migrants to Tenosique to buy clothes for migrants staying at the shelter. They were stopped by members of the military who demanded to search their pick up truck. On the grounds that there was no legal justification for the search, the human right defenders refused to cooperate. Two state police vans then arrived and surrounded the truck. One of the state police officers slapped Ruben Figueroa on the face.

An unidentified man in civilian clothes then arrived on the scene and ordered the military officers to search the pick up truck and force the four people in the truck to get out. Fray Tomás González took photos of the unidentified man, who began insulting him, saying "Son of a bitch, I'm going to break you into pieces, fucking Indian, you're not worth a thing" ("Hijo de tu puta madre, te voy a romper todo lo que tienes, pinche indio taimado no vales nada"). Moments later a member of staff from the National Human Rights Commission called Fray Tomás González on his mobile. The member of staff asked to speak to the unidentified man but he refused saying that human rights didn't count for anything. Neither the state police nor the members of the military who witnessed the threats took action.

Shortly afterwards, three municipal police vans and another twenty heavily armed soldiers wearing balaclavas arrived on the scene. In this intimidating environment, Fray Tomás González, Ruben Figueroa and the two migrants continued to refuse to get out of the pick up truck. The incident lasted four hours, until members of the staff from the National Human Rights Commission arrived and the military and police left the scene.

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

- Express concern for the safety of Fray Tomás González, Ruben Figueroa and other human rights defenders working at the migrants shelter La 72 and the Usumacinta Human Rights Centre in Tenosique;
- Call for protection measures, including police patrols, to be implemented immediately in strict accordance with the wishes of those at risk;
- Call on the authorities to fully and impartially investigate the threats and intimidation against Fray Tomás González and Ruben Figueroa and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- Remind the authorities of their obligation to ensure that human rights defenders can carry out their legitimate work without fear of reprisal, as established in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 31 OCTOBER 2011 TO:

Minister of the Interior

Lic. José Francisco Blake Mora
Secretario de Gobernación
Abraham González No.48
Col. Juárez, Del. Cuauhtémoc
México, D.F, C. P. 06600
México

Fax: +52 55 50933414 (a voice will ask for the extension: dial 32356)

Salutation: **Dear Minister**

Governor of Tabasco

Q.F.B. Andrés Granier Melo
Independencia # 2, Col. Centro,
Villahermosa, Tabasco,
México, CP 86000
México

Fax: +52 993 314 2612

Email: gobernador@tabasco.gob.mx

Salutation: **Dear Governor**

And copies to:

Municipal President of Tenosique

Lic. Raúl Gustavo Gutiérrez Cortés
Calle 21 X 26 Frente al Parque Central
Col. Centro 86900, Tenosique, Tabasco
México

Fax: +52 934 3420036 (ask for fax tone)

Email: presidenciatenosique2010-2012@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 first update of UA 274/11. Further information:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/054/2011/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Fray Tomás González has received a previous threat on 9 September. He received a telephone call at his local parish in Tenosique. The caller told him "something is going to happen to you" ('algo te va a pasar') before hanging up. Staff at the local human rights centre and migrants' refuge have come under increasing pressure in recent months after municipal and migration officials were publicly denounced for alleged human rights violations.

Human rights defenders frequently face threats and intimidation in reprisal for their work. Migrants' rights defenders have been particularly targeted due to their work highlighting abuses against migrants by public officials and criminal gangs. Amnesty International recently made a film documenting the plight of Central American migrants travelling through Mexico and the people who defend them. You can watch it and take action here: www.youtube.com/invisiblefilms .

Name: Fray Tomás González and Ruben Figueroa

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 274/11 Index: AMR 41/055/2011 Issue Date: 19 September 2011

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