

URGENT ACTION

MIGRANTS' RIGHTS DEFENDER AT RISK

Migrants' rights defender José Alberto Donis Rodríguez was assaulted and threatened with death on 11 November by a suspected gang member in the southern Mexican state of Oaxaca. Local sources believe the gang member is part of a migrant trafficking ring operating in the area. José Alberto Donis and his colleagues are at risk.

José Alberto Donis is a staff member at the "Brothers on the road" ("Hermanos en el camino") migrants' shelter in Ixtepec city, Oaxaca state. He is a Guatemalan migrant himself who arrived at the shelter in 2008 and decided to stay to support the work of the other staff and volunteers.

On 11 November at around 11am, José Alberto Donis approached a man who was standing at the entrance of the migrants' shelter. As José Alberto Donis had seen the man wandering near the shelter for several days, he told the man that all those who stay at the shelter or who regularly visit the shelter have to be photographed and have their personal details recorded for security reasons. The man refused, and José Alberto Donis asked him to leave the shelter. An argument began and the man attempted to punch José Alberto Donis, threatened to kill him and left the shelter. At around 2pm a colleague of José Alberto Donis ran into the man at the local train station and overheard him telling others that he was going to kill José Alberto Donis.

The man, who is in his late twenties, could be part of a trafficking ring which operates in the area. The gang has tried to lure migrants with the promise of taking them to the US border. Hundreds of migrants are kidnapped every year in Mexico, and many of them are eventually killed after they fall prey to these trafficking rings.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern at the assault and death threat suffered by human rights defender José Alberto Donis on 11 November;
- Urging the authorities to provide José Alberto Donis and his colleagues with effective protection, in strict accordance with their wishes and in compliance with the request issued by Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on 23 April 2010;
- Calling on the authorities to carry out a full and prompt investigation into the operations of trafficking rings around the migrants' shelter;
- Reminding the authorities of their duties to guarantee that human rights defenders can carry out their work without fear of reprisals as established in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 28 DECEMBER 2010 TO:

Minister of the Interior

Lic. José Francisco Blake Mora
Secretaría de Gobernación
Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez
Delegación Cuauhtémoc
México D.F., C.P.06600, MÉXICO
Fax: (+52) 55 5093 3414
Email: secretario@segob.gob.mx
Salutation: Dear Minister/Estimado
Señor Secretario

Governor-elect of Oaxaca state (takes office on 1 December)

Lic. Gabino Cué Monteagudo
Gobernador electo del Estado
Representación del Estado de Oaxaca
en la Ciudad de México
Shakespeare 68, Col. Nueva Anzures,
Del. Miguel Hidalgo, México, D.F., C.P.
11590, MÉXICO
Fax: (+52) 55 5531 4041, 5545 7362
Email: goboaxdf@prodigy.net.mx

And copies to:

President of the National Human Rights Commission

Dr. Raúl Plascencia Villanueva
Presidente, Comisión Nacional de
Derechos Humanos (CNDH)
Blvd. Adolfo López Mateos 1922, 6°
piso, Col. Tlacopac San Ángel, Del.
Álvaro Obregón, México D.F., C.P.
01040, MÉXICO
Fax: (+52) 55 5668 0767
Email: secpartpresidencia@cndh.org.mx

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

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Defending human rights can be a life-threatening job in Mexico. Scores of activists have suffered death threats, intimidation, and harassment in the last few years. Some of them have been killed for doing their job. The authorities have recognized that adopting and implementing an effective and comprehensive protection programme (mecanismo de protección), as requested by human rights defenders, is paramount. However, they have not fulfilled their promises yet.

Father Alejandro Solalinde, the director of the "Brothers on the road" shelter, has suffered arbitrary arrest and intimidation at the hands of local authorities and members of the community. On 10 January 2007 Father Solalinde was arrested and detained for several hours by police while carrying out human rights work. On 24 June 2008, a group of about 50 residents of Ciudad Ixtepec led by municipal officials, including the mayor and 14 municipal police, broke into the shelter and threatened to set the building on fire if it was not shut down within 48 hours.

Following further acts of intimidation in later 2009, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ordered the Mexican authorities to provide Father Solalinde and his colleagues with adequate protection. Since 23 April 2010, when the request was issued, Father Solalinde has held meetings with representatives of the Ministry of the Interior and they have agreed on a plan to implement specific protection measures. To date, very few of these measures have been put in practice.

Every year, thousands of undocumented migrants from Central America travel across Mexico in order to reach the US border. Many of them suffer beatings, kidnapping, rape and even murder. In most of the cases the attacks are carried out by criminal gangs, but officials are known to have been complicit or acquiescent in many of the attacks. By and large, the authorities fail to investigate attacks against migrants and to bring those responsible to justice.

On 8 November Amnesty International and Mexican actor and director Gael García Bernal launched a series of films on the situation of undocumented migrants in Mexico. The films are available on youtube.com/invisiblesfilms.

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