

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety

MEXICO

Cástulo Benavides Rodríguez (m), director of the *Foro Laboral del Obrero Campesino* (Farm Labour Organizing Committee, FLOC)
Other members of the FLOC

Killed:

Santiago Rafael Cruz (m), FLOC staff member

Migrants' rights defender Santiago Rafael Cruz was murdered on 8 April in the office of the *Foro Laboral del Obrero Campesino* (Farm Labour Organizing Committee, FLOC), where he worked, in the town of Monterrey, in Nuevo Leon state, northeastern Mexico. The director of FLOC, Cástulo Benavides Rodríguez, and other staff members of the organization, may also be at risk of attack.

When Santiago Rafael Cruz's body was found, his hands and feet had been tied, and he had been severely beaten on his head and face. Nothing had been stolen from the office. While the motive for the murder is still not clear, Amnesty International is concerned that it may be in reprisal for his work for FLOC, where he worked with Cástulo Benavides Rodríguez. Santiago Rafael Cruz had only worked in Monterrey for a few weeks, having previously worked for FLOC in the US state of Ohio for four years.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

FLOC works to protect the human rights of Mexican migrants who go to the USA as seasonal farm workers. The organization has a number of offices in both USA and Mexico, including in Monterrey, where many migrants and migrant labour recruiting agents (*enganchadores*) congregate to arrange seasonal farm work in the USA. On two occasions, this office has been broken into, and the organization's computers stolen.

Since 2004, when the USA's 'H2A Guest Workers' Programme' (*Trabajadores Huéspedes H2-A*) was introduced, there has been increased pressure on US ranchers to improve work conditions for Mexican migrant labourers. In 2005, FLOC won a legal ruling in North Carolina requiring ranchers to pay the visa fees of seasonal migrant farm workers. In this context, FLOC has reportedly faced hostility and intimidation from farmers and landowners.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern at the murder of migrants' human rights defender Santiago Rafael Cruz;
- expressing concern for the safety of Cástulo Benavides Rodríguez and others working with the organization *Foro Laboral del Obrero Campesino* (Farm Labour Organizing Committee, FLOC) in Mexico;
- calling for the authorities to ensure their protection in accordance with their wishes;
- calling for a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the murder of Santiago Rafael Cruz;
- reminding the authorities that the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms recognizes the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders and their right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior

Lic. Francisco Javier Ramírez Acuña

Secretario de Gobernación, Secretaría de Gobernación

Bucareli 99, 1er. piso, Col. Juárez, Del. Cuauhtémoc

México D.F., C.P. 06600, MEXICO
Fax: + 52 55 5093 3414
E-mail: frjramirez@segob.gob.mx
Salutation: Señor Secretario / Dear Minister

Governor of Nuevo León

Lic. José Natividad González Paras
Gobernador del Estado de Nuevo León
Palacio de Gobierno
Zaragoza y 5 de Mayo
Monterrey 64000, Estado de Nuevo León
MÉXICO

E-Mail: gobernador@nl.gob.mx
Fax: + 52 81 2020 1226 (if someone answers, say “me da tono de fax, por favor”)
Salutation: Señor Gobernador / Dear Governor

Attorney General of Nuevo León

Lic. Luis Carlos Treviño Berchelmann
Procurador del Estado de Nuevo León
Av. Ocampo 470 Pte., 1er piso, Centro
Monterrey 64000, Nuevo León
MÉXICO

E-Mail: ltrevino@nl.gob.mx
Salutation: Dear Attorney General/ Señor Procurador

Human Rights Commission of Nuevo León

Lic. Daniel Garza Garza
Presidente de la Comisión Estatal de Derechos Humanos de Nuevo León.
Av. Dr. Ignacio Morones Prieto 2110-2 Pte. Edificio Manchester
Col. Loma Larga
Monterrey 64710, Nuevo León
MÉXICO

E-Mail: cedhnl@prodigy.net.mx
Fax: (+52 81) 83 44-91-99
Salutation: Dear President/ Señor Presidente

COPIES TO:

Human rights organization

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and to diplomatic representatives of Mexico accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 29 May 2007.