

UA 197/00

Fear for

**MEXICO Arturo Solís and other members of Centro de Estudios Fronterizos y Promoción de Derechos Humanos (CEFPRODHC), Centre for Border Studies and Human Rights Promotion, their relatives, and defence witnesses for Arturo Solís**

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Defence witnesses for Arturo Solís, who has been accused of defamation by a governmental body, have reportedly been threatened. Amnesty International is concerned for their safety and for that of Arturo Solís and other members of CEFPRODHC who are being harassed.

Arturo Solís is director of CEFPRODHC, a non-governmental human rights organization based in Reynosa, Tamaulipas state, which borders on the USA. Much of their work concerns the human rights abuses suffered by migrants attempting to cross the border.

An official complaint was made against Arturo Solís for defamation after he publicly accused officials of the Tamaulipas office of the governmental *Instituto Nacional de Migración* (INM), National Institute of Migration, of involvement in criminal gangs trafficking illegal migrants to the USA. He also accused INM officials of extortion and ill-treating migrants and denounced the apparent complicity of the authorities who have failed to take any steps to investigate the allegations. Arturo Solís also lodged a criminal complaint before the *Procuraduría General de la República* (PGR), Office of the Attorney General of the Republic, calling on the authorities to investigate these allegations.

Since then, several of Arturo Solís's defence witnesses have been threatened and at least one has received a death threat. Two witnesses have since retracted statements made in his defence. Arturo Solís and his family have reportedly been watched by unknown individuals in vehicles with concealed number plates. Amnesty International is concerned that public officials may be responsible for these threats.

Officials of the IMN are reportedly behind a public campaign in the local press attacking CEFPRODHC, and Arturo Solís in particular.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Human rights organizations have reported a range of abuses related to the trafficking of migrants to the USA. This includes migration officials who have attempted to conceal their involvement in illegal trafficking by implicating innocent people who are then detained and subject to torture in order to extract confessions.

Amnesty International has previously received reports of threats against those involved in exposing alleged official complicity in criminal activities. Human rights defenders are at particular risk of attack and harassment in Mexico. Official investigations rarely result in those responsible being brought to justice.

On 9 February 2000 CEFPRODHC received death threats from an anonymous caller, and on 27 January a freshly killed eagle was left outside their offices (see UA 37/00, AMR 41/07/00, 15 February 2000).

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Spanish or your own language:**

- expressing concern about the harrassment of Arturo Solís, other members of CEFPROD HAC, and their relatives;
- expressing concern at reports that defence witnesses have been threatened with death to prevent them from testifying in the defamation case against Arturo Solís;
- calling on the authorities to guarantee the safety of Arturo Solís, other members of CEFPROD HAC, their relatives, and the witnesses;
- urging the authorities to carry out a full, prompt and impartial investigation into all reports of intimidation against human rights defenders, their relatives, and witnesses and that the results be made public and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- reminding the authorities of their obligation to ensure the safety of all human rights defenders, as specified in their commitment to the resolution on Human Rights Defenders in the Americas, adopted by the General Assembly of the Organization of American States on 7 June 1999.

**APPEALS TO:**

If someone answers the fax number, please ask: "el tono de fax, por favor".

Minister of the Interior

Lic. Diódoro Carrasco Altamirano  
 Secretario de Gobernación  
 Secretaría de Gobernación  
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**Salutation: Señor Secretario / Dear Minister**

Attorney General of the Republic

Lic. Jorge Madrazo  
 Procurador General de la República  
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**Faxes: + 52 5 346 0906**

**E-mail: ofproc@pgr.gob.mx**

**Salutation: Señor Procurador General/ Dear Attorney General**

Governmental National Human Rights Commission

Dr. José Luis Soberanes Fernández,  
 Presidente de la Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos,  
 Periférico Sur 3469, 5o piso,  
 Col. San Jerónimo Lídice,  
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**Salutation: Estimado Dr. Soberanes / Dear Dr. Soberanes**

**COPIES TO:**

Non-governmental organization

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Derechos Humanos A.C. (CEFPRODHA)

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MEXICO

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 16 August 2000.