

# URGENT ACTION

## MIGRANTS AND DEFENDERS' SAFETY AT RISK

**Migrants and migrants' rights defenders were shot at in the vicinity of Lechería shelter, Mexico State, Mexico. There are concerns that the authorities are not taking the threat to migrants and defenders working with them seriously due to a delay in investigating the incident and in implementing effective protection mechanisms.**

On 5 April a group of eight migrants' rights defenders, among them **Jorge Andrade** and another member of the "You are Us" Collective (**Colectivo Ustedes Somos Nosotros**), were shot at by an unknown man while they prepared to offer food, medicine and clothing to migrants arriving on a freight train outside of Mexico City. As a result, a Central American migrant received a minor wound and others narrowly escaped injury. The injured migrant was taken to hospital and has now been discharged. According to reports, the shots were directed at the migrants' rights defenders and it is believed the aggressor could be part of the local criminal gang which targets migrants. Such criminal organizations, which often operate in collusion with local authorities, threaten and harass migrants' rights activists with impunity. The Central American migrant who was wounded by the bullet has filed a formal complaint at the Mexico State Attorney General's Office.

According to reports, police took several hours to respond to the incident and the Federal Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists has yet to reinforce protection measures for the migrants' rights activists working in the Lechería zone. Jorge Andrade and other members of the "You are Us" Collective have been harassed for their work previously, and the protection measures introduced by the Federal Mechanism have been ineffective. For example, a radio transmitter supplied to Jorge Andrade for emergencies is out of service, and to date, a promised risk assessment to strengthen security measures has not been implemented.

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

- Expressing concern for the safety of migrants and migrants' rights defenders in the Lechería area of Mexico State in the light of the shooting incident on 5 April, and requesting reinforced protection measures for defenders at risk;
- Urging for a full and impartial investigation into the incident and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- Calling on the authorities to provide effective protection for migrants in transit in Mexico State, and for criminal gangs targeting migrants to be effectively combated.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 MAY 2014 TO:

Minister of the Interior  
Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong  
Secretaría de Gobernación  
Bucareli 99, col. Juárez, Cuauhtémoc  
Distrito Federal, México, C.P. 06600  
Fax: +52 55 5093 3414  
Email: secretario@segob.gob.mx  
**Salutation: Dear Minister / Sr.  
Secretario**

Governor of State of Mexico  
Eruviel Ávila  
Lerdo Poniente No. 300, Palacio del  
Poder Ejecutivo, Col. Centro, Toluca,  
Estado de México, CP 5000, México  
Fax: +52 722 276 0046  
Email: eruviel.avila@edomex.gob.mx  
**Salutation: Dear Governor / Sr.  
Secretario**

**And copies to:**  
Local organization  
Colectivo Ustedes Somos Nosotros  
Email:  
ustedes.somos.nosotros@gmail.com

**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.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Human rights defenders and journalists often face attacks, threats, intimidation and abduction and killing in reprisal for their legitimate and vital work. Those behind the attacks are almost never brought to justice. Amnesty International has welcomed the establishment of the Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists in 2012. Nevertheless, many of the more than 100 defenders and journalists at risk who have sought protection have not received a timely or effective response, creating frustration, insecurity and disillusion. Despite the government's assertions that the mechanism is working effectively, it is far from being fully operational as it lacks trained staff, resources and the high level political support necessary to ensure that its protection measures are implemented by authorities at all levels. The impunity enjoyed by those responsible for attacks due to ineffective investigations, often conducted by state authorities who are suspected of involvement in threats, continues to foster tolerance of attacks. The Mechanism should be just one part of a comprehensive strategy to address violence against those defending human rights and journalists. The federal government has so far failed to respond convincingly to this prevailing climate of hostility to defenders and journalists in several states.

In 2013, 82,269 migrants were detained by migration authorities in Mexico and 75,704 were deported, the vast majority to Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. Far more Central American migrants tried to make the journey to the USA. In Mexico many migrants continue to suffer abuses at the hands of police and others are the victims of targeted kidnapping, trafficking, rape and killing by criminal gangs which often operate in collusion with local authorities. Migration legislation reforms which strengthened some rights of migrants, particularly the right to protection and access to justice, have not been implemented adequately. The National strategy to combat kidnapping of migrants continues to fail to hold to account criminal gangs and public officials preying on migrants. In 2011 the National Human Rights Commission reported the abduction of 10,000 irregular migrants over 6 month period by criminal gangs, often operating in collusion with public officials. Those responsible for abductions and other abuses against migrants are rarely held to account.

State level authorities largely ignore the plight of irregular migrants, while federal authorities increasingly regard migrant flows as a threat to national security, rather than ensuring respect for the human rights of migrants in transit. Recently, mothers of Central America migrants toured the country again searching for their loved ones and demanding investigations. The National Human Rights Commission recently issued an unsatisfactory report in relation to the killing of 72 migrants in San Fernando, Tamaulipas state, in August 2010. The failure of the authorities to protect the right to life of the migrants or establish full responsibility for the massacre was not included in the report, which focused solely on limited aspects of the case around the gravely flawed forensic procedures for identifying the remains. The bodies of other victims of mass killings, many believed to be migrants, remain to be established.

Amnesty International issued a report on the abuses suffered by migrants in transit in Mexico in 2010: *Invisible Victims: Migrants on the move in Mexico* (<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/014/2010/en>).

Name: Jorge Andrade (m), other members of Colectivo Ustedes Somos Nosotros, and migrants  
Gender m/f: both

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