

URGENT ACTION

MIGRANTS IN DANGER IN MEXICO

Migrants staying at a shelter in the northern Mexican city of Saltillo, Coahuila state, are at imminent risk of being abducted by people-traffickers. In addition, migrants and staff working at the shelter are at risk of harassment and attack. The authorities have done little to protect them.

On 8 August at around 11.30am, three Salvadoran migrants, all men, were approached by a man and a woman while they were waiting at the local railway station for a freight train which would take them towards the US border. The man, who had a gun in a holster around his waist, and the woman offered the migrants food and a free ride in their car. They also asked the migrants about the Saltillo Migrants' House (Casa del Migrante de Saltillo), where the three had just come from, and the migrants, in particular the women, who stay there.

The migrants refused to tell the couple anything. The migrants then saw, about 50 metres away, a group of armed men pushing four migrants into two vehicles and driving away. The three Salvadorans ran back to the shelter. When they arrived, they saw the same woman speaking to the migrants who were guarding the shelter's entrance. She said she was there to pick up two migrants. She also asked them about those staying there and the shelter's security arrangements. She left upon the arrival of the three Salvadorans. Three Honduran migrants said that the same woman and the armed man had attempted to lure them with the same offer on 5 August at around 7pm at the railway station.

Migrants and staff at the Saltillo Migrant's House have previously suffered intimidation. In October 2009 staff received several intimidatory phone calls and their electricity supply was cut off by vandals. Staff and migrants at the shelter are in such danger that Mexico's National Human Rights Commission and the Inter-American Human Rights Commission have called on the authorities to protect them. However, protection measures have not been fully implemented, and those at the shelter remain at risk.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of those working and staying at the Saltillo Migrants' House;
- Urging the authorities to implement the protection measures ordered by the National Human Rights Commission and the Inter-American Human Rights Commission and already agreed by the shelter's director and the authorities;
- Calling on the authorities to investigate all abuses against migrants and the human rights defenders who run the shelters;
- Calling on the authorities to set up a task force of senior federal authorities to lead and coordinate actions to protect irregular migrants in Mexico and hold to account those responsible for abuses.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 24 SEPTEMBER 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 Secretary/Estimado
Señor Secretario

Governor of Coahuila

Profesor Humberto Moreira Valdés
Gobernador del Estado de Coahuila
Palacio de Gobierno, 1er. Piso Juárez e
Hidalgo s/n, Saltillo, C.P. 25000
Coahuila, MÉXICO
Fax: +52 844 411 8560

Email: s.particular@coahuila.gob.mx

Salutation: Dear Governor/Estimado
Señor Gobernador

State Attorney General

Lic. Jesús Torres Charles
Fiscal General del Estado
Humberto Castilla Salas 600
Saltillo, C.P. 25050
Coahuila, MÉXICO
Fax: +52 844 438 0728

Email: pgje_coah@yahoo.com

Salutation: Dear Attorney General/
Estimado Señor Fiscal General

Also send copies to the diplomatic representatives of Mexico accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the second update of UA 277/09 (Index: AMR 41/053/2009). Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/053/2009/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Every year thousands of migrants are assaulted, robbed, raped and even killed as they make their journey through Mexico to the USA. The majority of these crimes are committed by criminal gangs, but there is also evidence of involvement or complicity of state officials at different levels. According to the National Human Rights Commission (Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos), as many as 9,758 migrants were kidnapped between September 2008 and February 2009.

All irregular migrants are at risk of abuse, but women and children are especially vulnerable. They face serious risks of trafficking and sexual assault by criminals, other migrants and corrupt public officials. Although few cases are officially registered and virtually none are ever prosecuted, independent sources estimate that as many as six in 10 women and girl migrants experience sexual violence during the journey.

More than 90 per cent of these migrants are from Central America and enter Mexico through its southern border. From there, they journey north to what they hope is a new life in the United States with the promise of work and an escape from the poverty they have left behind.

Migrants who experience or witness abuses are offered few options. They can opt not to make a complaint and therefore fuel the cycle of impunity and further risk for themselves and others. Otherwise, they can risk reporting abuses to officials in Mexico, who may dismiss their complaints or further compound the abuses suffered. Even if migrants succeed in registering a complaint, they then face a system which has routinely failed to deliver justice.

Saltillo Migrants' House is one of the many shelters which provide humanitarian aid to migrants. It is formally registered under the name of Belén Migrants shelter (Belén, Posada del Migrante).

In April 2010, Amnesty International launched a campaign focusing on the crisis facing Central American migrants travelling through Mexico's southern states towards the US. The campaign calls on the Mexican government to set up a taskforce of senior federal authorities to lead and coordinate actions to protect irregular migrants in Mexico and hold to account those responsible for abuses. To take action on this issue, please go to: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/appeals-for-action/protect-migrants-mexico>

Further information on UA: 277/09 Index: AMR 41/060/2010 Issue Date: 13 August 2010

