

URGENT ACTION

DIRECTOR OF MIGRANT SHELTER AT RISK

A director of a shelter for migrants has been threatened in Salamanca, Guanajuato state, central Mexico. She has been targeted because of her human rights work on behalf of migrants, and is at risk of harassment and attack. Other staff working at the shelter could also be in danger.

On 23 September, **Marisela Aguirre Durán**, who manages the shelter for migrants, Casa de Migrante “San Carlos Borromeo”, was walking near the shelter when she realized a car with tinted windows was following her. As she continued walking, the car pulled up close to her and the unknown driver shouted at her three times to get into the car. When she refused, the man shouted “you are from the migrants’ shelter; I said get into the car” (vienes de la casa del migrante verdad: te dije que te subas). She thought the driver was about to force her into the car, so she began to run. The car accelerated alongside her and the driver shouted “look at me, remember my face as you are going to see me again” (mírame, acuérdate de esta cara por que me volverás a ver)”.

The migrant shelter forms part of a network of shelters across the country affiliated to the Pastoral Dimension of Human Mobility of the Mexican Episcopal Conference (Dimensión Pastoral de la Movilidad Humana de la Conferencia Episcopal de México). They provide humanitarian assistance to irregular migrants (those without legal authorization to be in Mexico), principally from Central America, who travel through Mexico to reach the US. Migrants are routinely the victims of abuses by criminal gangs and public officials. Workers at the shelters have frequently faced threats and harassment in connection with their work to defend the rights and provide humanitarian assistance to migrants.

The threats against Marisela Aguirre Durán have been reported to the authorities and a petition has been filed for protection measures to be issued to guarantee her safety.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Spanish or your own language:

- Expressing concern for the safety of Marisela Aguirre Durán and others working at Casa de Migrante “San Carlos Borromeo”, in Salamanca, Guanajuato state;
- Calling for Marisela Aguirre Durán and other workers at the shelter to receive protection measures to guarantee their safety in accordance with their wishes;
- Calling for a full, prompt, and thorough investigation into the threat and intimidation suffered by Marisela Aguirre Durán, for those responsible to be brought to justice and for the authorities to report on the results of the investigation;

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 12 NOVEMBER 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 Guanajuato

Juan Manuel Oliva Ramírez
Gobernador del Estado
Paseo de la Presa No. 103
2º Piso
36000
Guanajuato
Fax: + 52 473 731 1241

Salutation: Estimado Gobernador, Dear Governor

Copies to:

Non-governmental migrants rights organization:
Dimension Pastoral de la Movilidad Humana
Email: promocionhumanadpmh@gmail.com

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

Every year thousands of migrants are assaulted, robbed, raped and even killed as they make their journey through Mexico to the US. 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. In April 2009 AI published a report highlighting these abuses, *"Invisible Victims: Migrants on the Move in Mexico"*, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/014/2010/en>

The network of migrants shelters in Mexico provide the few safe havens where migrants can obtain food, clothing and rest before continuing their journey.

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