

# URGENT ACTION

## SAFETY CONCERNS FOR MIGRANTS' SHELTER GROW

**There are increasing concerns for the safety of staff and migrants at La 72 migrants' shelter in Tenosique, southern state of Tabasco, Mexico. This follows further intimidation against the shelter by a man who had been detained on charges of abuses against migrants, but was recently released.**

On 9 April one of three men accused of abuses against migrants in Tenosique stood outside La 72 shelter talking to police stationed there to provide protection to the shelter. The three men had been taken into custody in March on charges of extortion and death threats on the basis of complaints and eyewitness statements filed by at least two migrants who had been victims of abuses. Despite this, on 6 March a federal judge ordered the three men's release on the grounds of insufficient evidence. On release the three men, who are themselves irregular migrants, were not brought before migration authorities, but allowed to return to Tenosique. Amnesty International believes the presence of one of the men outside the shelter was intended to show their ability to operate with impunity.

On 10 April, the media reported that the three released men had filed a complaint for defamation and moral damage (*daño moral*) with the Tabasco State Attorney General's Office (Procuraduría General de Justicia del Estado) against the director of La 72 shelter, **Fray Tomás González** and migrant's rights activist, **Rubén Figueroa**, who volunteers at the shelter. As a result a criminal enquiry has been opened against them. There is concern that these allegations have been made in order to harass the men and undermine their reputations.

After the recent threats, security measures for the shelter have been reinforced, including police presence outside the premises. However, migrants who testified against those allegedly responsible for abuses remain at risk and no action has been taken against the alleged perpetrators to prevent them from approaching the shelter or migrants.

### **Please write immediately in Spanish, English or your own language:**

- Calling on the authorities to provide immediate and effective protection to Fray Tomás González, Rubén Figueroa, and other volunteers and migrants at the La 72 migrants' shelter, in accordance with their wishes;
- Expressing concern at the authorities' failure to take effective legal action against criminal gangs responsible for abuses against migrants and threats against human rights defenders and calling for the authorities to ensure that unfounded or fabricated complaints against human rights defenders are not used to harass them or undermine their legitimate activities;
- Urging them to conduct a full and effective investigation into all previous threats against Fray Tomás González, Rubén Figueroa, and other shelter volunteers and bring all those responsible to justice, including leaders of the criminal gang allegedly behind the threats and abuses against migrants;

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 23 MAY 2013 TO:**

#### Minister of the Interior

Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong  
Bucareli 99, col. Juárez, Cuauhtemoc,  
Distrito Federal, México, C.P. 6600  
Email: [secretario@segob.gob.mx](mailto:secretario@segob.gob.mx)  
Fax: +52 55 5093 3414 (keep trying)  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

#### Tabasco State Attorney General

Fernando Valenzuela Pernas  
Av. Paseo Usumacinta No. 802 Col. Gil y  
Sáenz (antes El Águila). Villahermosa,  
Tabasco, México  
Email: [procurador@pgjtabasco.gob.mx](mailto:procurador@pgjtabasco.gob.mx)  
**Salutation: Dear Attorney**

#### **And copies to:**

La 72 migrants' shelter  
Email: [ruben\\_migrante@hotmail.com](mailto:ruben_migrante@hotmail.com)

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.**

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the second update of UA 62/13. Further information: <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/012/2013/en>

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INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Rubén Figueroa and Fray Tomás González work at the La 72 shelter and have been victims of constant threats and intimidation due to their work in helping and speaking out for irregular migrants travelling through Mexico.

Hundreds of thousands of irregular migrants attempt to travel through Mexico from Central and South America every year to reach the USA. Many are detained by the Mexican migration authorities and returned to their countries of origin. Amnesty International has visited Mexico to investigate reports of human rights violations against these people. During the visit, Amnesty International found that many had been kidnapped by gangs, sometimes with the complicity of local officials. Impunity for abuses against migrants, who are extremely vulnerable, has allowed these abuses to increase, despite government commitments to ensure respect of migrants' rights.

The Law for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders and Journalists was unanimously approved by both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, and signed by the President, in 2012. The process for implementing the law has now begun, including the direct participation of representatives of civil society; however, operational protocols, clear guidelines on cooperation between federal and state authorities and resources urgently need to be put in place to guarantee its effectiveness. It is vital that the authorities do not assume that their responsibilities are restricted to establishing a protection mechanism.

Amnesty International launched an action designed to make visible the plight of migrants travelling through Mexico and to provide much-needed assistance to migrants travelling across the country. The action can be found at: <http://sendsocks.org>.

Name: Fray Tomás González (m), Rubén Figueroa (m), and members and migrants of La 72 migrants' shelter

Gender m/f: m& f

Further information on UA: 62/13 Index: AMR 41/018/2013 Issue Date: 11 April 2013