

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 41/029/2008

2 July 2008

UA 191/08 Fear for safety

MEXICO **Father Alejandro Solalinde Guerra (m), Catholic priest and migrants' rights worker
Migrants at the *Hermanos del Camino* shelter in Ixtepec, Oaxaca state**

Father Alejandro Solalinde Guerra, coordinator of the Catholic Pastoral Care Centre for Migrants in Southwestern Mexico (*Pastoral de Movilidad Humana Pacífico Sur del Episcopado Mexicano*) and director of a migrants' shelter in the municipality of Ixtepec, Oaxaca state, was told by municipal officials that the shelter would be burned down if he did not close it. The lives of Father Alejandro Solalinde and migrants staying at the shelter are in danger.

On 24 June, a group of about 50 residents led by municipal officials, including the mayor and 14 municipal police, broke into the Brothers of the Road (*Hermanos del Camino*) shelter run by Father Alejandro Solalinde, threatening to set the building on fire if it was not shut down within 48 hours.

This followed the arrest of a Central American migrant over the rape of a six-year-old girl in Ixtepec a few days before. In interviews with local newspapers, Father Alejandro Solalinde had condemned the rape, but clarified that the arrested man had not been staying at his shelter. Father Alejandro Solalinde told journalists that the rape had led to increased resentment against Central American migrants who travel through Ixtepec attempting to reach Mexico's northern border.

In recent years, Father Alejandro Solalinde has publicly condemned Mexican officials' treatment of irregular migrants (those without legal permission to remain in the country). This treatment has included beatings and extortion.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years, migrants' rights organizations have been voicing concerns about abuses suffered by migrants, mostly Central and South Americans attempting to reach the United States. The reports of human rights violations committed by Mexican officials have included beatings, extortion and mass repatriations. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Migrants visited Mexico's northern and southern borders in March and has expressed grave concern about the treatment of migrants by Mexican federal, state and municipal authorities, particularly in southern Mexican states.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- calling on the authorities to take appropriate protection measures to guarantee Father Alejandro Solalinde's safety so he can continue his work to defend the rights of migrants in Ixtepec municipality;
- calling on the authorities to take appropriate protection measures to guarantee the safety of migrants staying at the *Hermanos del Camino* shelter in Ixtepec;
- calling for a prompt and impartial investigation of the threat by local officials to burn the shelter down and ensure those responsible are held to account;
- calling on the authorities to take urgent steps to prevent attacks against migrants and migrant rights workers;
- reminding the authorities that the UN Declaration on the Rights and Responsibilities of Individuals, Groups and Institutions to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms

recognizes the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders and their right to carry out their activities without any restrictions or fear of reprisals.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Interior

Lic. Juan Camilo Mouriño Terrazo
Secretaría de Gobernación
Bucareli 99, 1er. piso,
Col. Juárez, Del. Cuauhtémoc,
México D.F., C.P.06600,
MEXICO

Fax: +52 55 5093 3414
E-mail: secretario@segob.gob.mx
Salutation: Señor Secretario/Dear Minister

State Attorney General of Oaxaca

Lic. Evencio Nicolás Martínez Ramírez
Procurador General de Justicia del Estado de Oaxaca
Avenida Luis Echeverría s/n,
Col. La Experimental,
San Antonio de la Cal, Oaxaca C.P. 71236,
Oaxaca, MEXICO

Fax: +52 951 511 5519
Salutation: Dear Attorney General/Estimado Procurador

President of the National Commission of Human Rights

Dr. José Luis Soberanes Fernández

Presidente de la Comisión Nacional de los Derechos Humanos (CNDH)

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México D.F., C.P. 01040, MÉXICO

Fax: +52 55 5681 7199
Salutation: Señor Presidente / Dear President

COPIES TO:

Foro Migraciones – non-governmental organization

Email: foromigraciones@gmail.com

And 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 27 August 2008.