

URGENT ACTION

DEFENDERS HIT AND MIGRANTS DETAINED

Migrants' rights defenders were injured by police and migration authorities during an operation to detain irregular migrants in the Municipality of Zapata, Tabasco State, south east Mexico. The whereabouts of the detained migrants is uncertain.

On 30 April migrants' rights defenders **Rubén Figueroa, Fray Tomás González** and **Fray Aurelio Montero Vásquez** reported receiving minor injuries by members of the National Institute of Migration (Instituto Nacional de Migración, INM), federal police and Tabasco state police during an operation to detain irregular migrants in Zapata. According to information received, Rubén Figueroa and Fray Aurelio Montero Vásquez were hit in the face by members of the police. Fray Tomás González was pushed over by INM officials, causing him to fall heavily.

The incidents occurred when Rubén Figueroa and Fray Aurelio Montero Vásquez were trying to provide food and other humanitarian assistance to a group of around 320 irregular migrants, including children and pregnant women, who had tried to board a freight train travelling from the area toward northern Mexico. When the migrants' rights defenders arrived in Zapata, they realized the INM officials and police were detaining the migrants, and separating women and men and some mothers from their children before bussing them away. The authorities did not say where the migrants were being taken. Some migrants escaped into the surrounding countryside and others took refuge in the migrants' shelter, La 72, in Tenosique. Those who managed to escape reported that several migrants had been hit by members of the INM and police during the operation.

Fray Tomás González arrived unaccompanied by police protection that had been granted to him two weeks prior. In March 2013 Fray Tomás González and La 72 Migrants' shelter received special protection orders (*medidas cautelares*) by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos, CIDH). The limited compliance of the authorities with the protection orders, however, has resulted in deficient and delayed measures, such as the recently-provided police protection.

Please write immediately in Spanish or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to make public the whereabouts of the 320 detained migrants and ensure that they have access to non-governmental human rights organizations and lawyers;
- Calling for a prompt, full and impartial investigation into incidents that occurred during the operation, for the results to be made public and for those responsible for the abuses to be brought to justice;
- Urging the authorities to provide immediate and effective protection to Rubén Figueroa, Fray Tomás González, and other migrants at the La 72 shelter;
- Expressing concern that the INM and police's operation to detain migrants on 30 April reportedly resulted in human rights violations against migrants and migrants' rights defenders Rubén Figueroa, Fray Tomás González and Fray Aurelio Montero Vásquez.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 13 JUNE 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

Tabasco State Attorney General
Fernando Valenzuela Pernas
Av. Paseo Usumacinta No. 802 Col. Gil y
Sáenz (antes El Águila). Villahermosa,
Tabasco, Mexico
Email: procurador@pgjtabasco.gob.mx
Fax: +52 993 313 6550 (ask "tono de fax
por favor?")
Salutation: Dear Attorney General / Sr.
Fiscal General

And copies to:
Local Organization
La 72 Migrants Shelter
Email: ruben_migrante@hotmail.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 in Mexico 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 over 6 month period the National Human Rights Commission reported the abduction of 10,000 irregular migrants 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 American migrants toured Mexico 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.

Name: Rubén Figueroa (m), Fray Tomás González (m) and Fray Aurelio Montero Vásquez (m) and migrants
Gender m/f: both