

# URGENT ACTION

## STAFF AND MIGRANTS AT SHELTER AT RISK

**Staff, volunteers and migrants at the San Juan Diego migrants' shelter in Lecheria, Mexico state, are at risk of attack and arson after threats from the local community were made against them. There are fears over their safety.**

On 13 August, a group of over 30 people from the local community of Lecheria assembled in front of the San Juan Diego migrants' shelter to call for its closure. The community threatened to burn down the shelter if it was not closed down and to storm in and remove the migrants themselves. They chanted "close down the migrants' shelter" ("*fuera la casa de migrante*"). The community remained outside the shelter for six hours. They were protesting because they claim that the migrants' shelter attracts trouble to their neighbourhood, such as drugs and people traffickers. During this time the migrants stayed inside the shelter while a group of migrants' rights defenders stood outside it trying to reason with the local community and to stop them from forcing their way inside the building.

A few days earlier, in the early hours of 7 August, the body of a Guatemalan migrant, **Julio Fernando Cardona Agustín**, was found by the side of the train tracks close to the Lecheria migrants' shelter. According to witnesses, the injuries sustained suggest that he was beaten to death in the head. Several migrants claim that they had witnessed Municipal Police arresting Julio Fernando Cardona Agustín several hours before he was found dead. So far the police investigation has not led to any arrests and the perpetrators remain at large.

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

- Express concern for the safety of staff, volunteers and migrants at the San Juan Diego shelter in Lecheria after the threat;
- Call for immediate protection measures to be implemented in accordance with the wishes of staff and others at risk at the shelter;
- Call for a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the murder of Julio Fernando Cardona Agustín and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- Remind the authorities of their duties to guarantee that human rights defenders can carry out their work without fear of reprisals as established in the 1998 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 SEPTEMBER 2011 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](mailto:secretario@segob.gob.mx)

**Salutation: Dear  
Minister/Estimado  
Señor Secretario**

#### Governor of Mexico state

Enrique Peña Nieto  
Lerdo Poniente Numero 300,  
Primer Piso, Puerta 216,  
Palacio Del Poder Ejecutivo,  
Colonia Centro, CP 50000  
Toluca, Estado de México, México  
Fax: (+52) 722 2760046  
Email: [cnm@gem.gob.mx](mailto:cnm@gem.gob.mx)

**Salutation: Dear  
Governor/Estimado  
Gobernador**

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

Albergue San Juan Diego  
Cerrada de la Cruz # 15  
Esquina con Av. 11 de Julio y Vías  
del ferrocarril  
Col. Lecheria  
CP 54680, Tultitlán  
Estado de Mexico  
México

**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 first update of UA16/11. Further information:  
[www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/003/2011/en](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/003/2011/en)

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Hundreds of thousands of irregular migrants (those without official travel documents) 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 recently 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.

Defending human rights can be a dangerous job in Mexico. Scores of activists have suffered death threats, intimidation, and harassment in the last few years. Human rights defenders, particularly local priests and lay workers who run a network of migrants' shelters providing humanitarian aid, are the backbone of the support extended to migrants. Defenders also play a crucial role in registering abuses by agents of the state and by private individuals or groups and in encouraging them to seek justice. Those who stand up for irregular migrants are themselves often targeted for attack. Some have received death threats and in some cases shelters have been physically attacked. Others have been subjected to smear campaigns and threats of false charges of people smuggling.

Amnesty International recently made a film documenting the plight of Central American migrant travelling through Mexico, you can watch it and take action here: [www.youtube.com/invisiblesfilms](http://www.youtube.com/invisiblesfilms)

Name: Staff and migrants at the San Juan Diego migrants' shelter  
Gender m/f: Both m and f

Further information on UA: 16/11 Index: AMR 41/051/2011 Issue Date: 15 August 2011