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## **Amnesty International and Gael García Bernal launch films on migrants in Mexico**

Amnesty International and Mexican actor and producer Gael García Bernal, launched today a series of films depicting the plight of irregular migrants in Mexico.

The four films, called *The Invisibles* (*Los Invisibles*) records the journey of hundreds of migrants from the border between Guatemala and Mexico on their way to the United States. The premiere of *The Invisibles* coincides with the start of this year's Global Forum on Migration and Development, taking place in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

Every year thousands of migrants are kidnapped, raped and sometimes murdered in Mexico. Driven by grinding poverty and insecurity back home, they travel through Mexico in hope of reaching the USA with its promise of a better life. But all too often their dreams are turned to nightmares.

*The Invisibles* exposes the truth behind one of the most dangerous journeys in the world and reveals the untold stories of the people who make the journey north through Mexico.

"The Mexican authorities must protect migrants in our country. The law must protect us all, whether nationals or foreigners. It's essential Mexico sets a good example in the way it treats migrants", said Gael García Bernal.

During several interviews with migrants, Amnesty International registered the experience of abuses against the migrants. Many are raped, kidnapped or killed by criminal gangs, or harassed by public officials. They were the stories of men and women who, despite the dangers, were determined to make it to the USA.

"We made *The Invisibles* to shine a light on the abuses migrants suffer in Mexico. As the world's experts on migration gather in Puerto Vallarta for the Global Forum on Migration and Development this week, hundreds of miles away migrants in Mexico are facing terrible dangers" says Sarah Shebbeare, Amnesty International Mexico campaigner and executive producer of the films.

"The Mexican government has promised to improve protection for migrants. It is time to turn that promise into action. As a first step, we are calling on the government to establish a clear action plan and to collect and publish nationwide data on abuses against migrants and on the action taken to hold those responsible to account." said Sarah Shebbeare.

Nine out of ten irregular migrants come from Central America, and Mexico is one of the few countries in the world that is both destination and transit route for migrants.

After the mass killing of more than 70 irregular migrants in Tamaulipas, in August this year, little has changed for those who cross Mexico.

*The Invisibles* offers a unique testimony of migrants, aid workers and medical professionals who speak about the danger and hopes of thousands of men and women who cross Mexico in search of a better life.

After the premiere in Mexico City, *The Invisibles* can be seen on YouTube

([www.youtube.com/invisiblesfilms](http://www.youtube.com/invisiblesfilms) and [www.amnesty.org/en/theinvisibles](http://www.amnesty.org/en/theinvisibles)) and other media outlets.

### **THE FILMS**

The four short films include:

#### **Seaworld:**

People are filled with hope of reaching the USA; a young girl travelling with her family dreams of visiting Seaworld. Filmed at a migrant shelter in southern Mexico, this film reveals the dangers that await

them.

**Six Out of Ten:**

Gael García Bernal talks to three women from Honduras who are travelling in search of a better life for their families. They are taking a huge risk. Six out of ten women who attempt the journey are sexually abused.

**What Remains:**

Relatives in Central America may never know what happened to their loved ones. In El Salvador a mother tells us of her desperation at not knowing where her son is tens years after he left for the USA saying he'd call home in 12 days.

**'GOAL!':**

Despite the danger and the risks, the migrants will keep coming. They sleep rough, beg for food and grab lifts by clinging to the outsides of moving freight trains. Many are seriously injured, but there will always be those prepared to brave the journey.

**Background information:**

As irregular migrants, the tens of thousands of people who leave their homes in Central and South America and journey north through Mexico, seeking a better life in the United States, do not have legal permission to enter or remain in the country.

In April 2010 we released a report exposing the truth of what is happening in Mexico. Human rights abuses against Mexican migrants in the USA attract a great deal of public concern, and rightly so. Public outrage over the crisis facing migrants in Mexico, on the other hand, has been much more muted.

In 2009, nearly 10,000 migrants were abducted in just six months with almost half of the interviewed victims asserting that public officials were involved to some degree in their kidnapping.

Inspired by the stories of the people who make the journey, actor and director Gael García Bernal and director Marc Silver joined forces with Amnesty International to make a film to shine a light on the abuses migrants suffer. Told over four parts, the film they made is a shocking look at a world many people would rather you didn't know about.

The Mexican government can no longer ignore this issue or the role the authorities play in this crisis. It is high time migrants travelling through Mexico were protected against these abuses.

We are calling on the President of Mexico to set up a task force of senior federal authorities to lead and co-ordinate actions to protect migrants in Mexico and hold to account those responsible for abuses.

You can help make a difference right now by emailing President Felipe Calderón and asking him to send a clear message that abuses will not be tolerated.