

# URGENT ACTION

## DEATH THREAT FOR DEFENDING MIGRANTS

**A man believed to be involved in extortion of money from irregular migrants has threatened to kill an activist for migrants' rights in southern Mexico.**

A man threatened to kill migrants' rights defender **Rubén Figueroa** on 4 March, at the La 72 migrants' shelter in the town of Tenosique, in the southern state of Tabasco. Shelter workers have said they refused to let the man into the shelter because they believed he was a threat to migrants. He blamed Ruben Figueroa for this, and said, *lo traemos entre ceja y ceja, dile a tu amigo Rubén que le vamos a dar piso, ya los contactos saben* ("we have our eyes on him, tell your friend Ruben that we are going to kill him, our contacts already know").

Shelter workers had seen the man on 3 March at the railway station in Tenosique, where irregular migrants board the freight train to head north to the US border. He is believed to be involved with criminal gangs which extort money from migrants to let them travel on the train. The threat occurred after the shelter workers had seen the man. He said he believed that Rubén Figueroa had told the shelter director, Fray Tomás González, the day before that he was in town and posed a threat to migrants.

Shelter staff have reported the threat to kill Ruben Figueroa to the Federal Attorney General's Office (Procuraduría General de la República, PGR) in Tenosique, which has opened an investigation. However, the local authorities have recently withdrawn protection measures provided after previous threats against La 72 shelter workers, including police patrols outside the shelter.

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

- Express concern that a suspected member of a criminal gang has threatened to kill Rubén Figueroa that other workers at the shelter are at risk;
- Call on the authorities to provide Rubén Figueroa, Fray Tomás González and other human rights defenders working at the La 72 migrants' shelter in Tenosique with protection, in accordance with their wishes and show clear public support for the work of the shelter.
- Urge the authorities to investigate fully and impartially the threats against Fray Tomás González and Rubén Figueroa, and bring those responsible to justice;

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 22 APRIL 2013 TO:**

#### Attorney General of the Republic

Jesús Murillo Karam  
Paseo de la reforma 211-213  
Col. Cuauhtémoc, Distrito Federal.  
C.P. 06500, México  
Fax: +52 55 5346 0908 (keep trying, and ask for "fax")  
Email: [ofproc@pgr.gob.mx](mailto:ofproc@pgr.gob.mx)  
Salutation: **Dear Attorney General**

#### Governor of Tabasco State

Arturo Núñez Jiménez  
Independencia # 2, Col. Centro,  
Villahermosa, Tabasco, México, CP  
86000  
Email: [gobernador@tabasco.gob.mx](mailto:gobernador@tabasco.gob.mx)  
Salutation: **Dear Governor**

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

Local Organization  
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.

**AMNESTY  
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 started, including the direct participation of representatives of civil society, but 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/>

Names: Rubén Figueroa (m), Fray Tomás González (m) and members of La 72 Migrants shelter  
Gender m/f: both

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