

# URGENT ACTION

## PROTECT MIGRANTS FROM KIDNAPPING

**Criminal gangs continue to target migrants travelling to the U.S. border, this time by kidnapping some of them, in the southern state of Tabasco, Mexico. The authorities' response has been slow and inadequate. Kidnapping puts the migrants in immediate danger.**

On 14 May, a group of at least five irregular migrants were kidnapped by a criminal gang near Tenosique, Tabasco State. The kidnapped migrants had been travelling with many others on a freight train when the criminal gang stopped the train and attacked them, the group included women, men and children. The five migrants have since been released after their relatives in Central America were forced to pay ransoms to prevent their ill-treatment and murder.

Two migrants who witnessed the attack and had relatives who were also kidnapped, arrived later that day at La 72 Migrants' Shelter seeking help. On 20 May, some of the migrants who had been kidnapped on 14 May were released after ransoms were paid at the La 72 Shelter. They provided accounts of their experiences when they arrived back at La 72 Shelter the same day.

Formal criminal complaints and related evidence of the kidnapping have been filed at the Office of the Tabasco State Attorney General (Procuraduría General de Justicia del Estado de Tabasco, PGJE), but authorities have reportedly failed to take action against the criminal gang. The failure of federal and state governments to effectively combat widely documented assaults on, and abductions of, irregular migrants has left such gangs at large to commit further abuses against irregular migrants. These gangs often operate with the collusion of corrupt public officials, and spread fear of reprisals amongst those who file reports with the authorities, including human rights defenders. Migrants and human rights defenders who have filed complaints have previously faced reprisals.

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

- Urging the authorities to ensure protection of the migrants who were the victims of, and witnesses to the kidnappings on 14 May and to improve security of irregular migrants in transit in Mexico by effectively combating criminal gangs responsible;
- Expressing concern at the apparent failure of the authorities to take timely and effective measures to bring all those responsible for the kidnappings of irregular migrants on 14 May to justice and ensure that the victims have access to justice. Including temporary residence visas in order to pursue the criminal complaint;
- Ensure the safety of human rights defenders from the 72 shelter who may face increased insecurity as a result of supporting the victims of this latest kidnapping incident.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 03 JULY 2013 TO:**

Minister of the Interior  
Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong  
Bucareli 99, col. Juárez, Cuauhtemoc,  
Distrito Federal, México, C.P. 6600  
Email: [secretario@segob.gob.mx](mailto:secretario@segob.gob.mx)  
Fax: +52 55 5093 3414 (keep trying)  
Salutation: Dear Minister

Tabasco State Attorney General  
Fernando Valenzuela Pernas  
Av. Paseo Usumacinta No. 802 Col. Gil y  
Sáenz (antes El Águila). Villahermosa,  
Tabasco, México  
Email: [procurador@pgjtabasco.gob.mx](mailto:procurador@pgjtabasco.gob.mx)  
Salutation: Dear Attorney

### **And copies to:**

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. This is the third update of UA: 62/13. Further information: [www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/018/2013](http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AMR41/018/2013)

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



# URGENT ACTION

## PROTECT MIGRANTS FROM KIDNAPPING

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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.

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.

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 begun, including the direct participation of representatives of civil society; however, 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>.

Name: men, women and children

Gender m/f: m & f

Further information on UA: 62/13 Index: AMR 41/027/2013 Issue Date: 22 May 2013