

via fax: 011 52 55 5624 6365 Almir. Mariano Francisco Saynez Mendoza Minister of Naval Armed Forces of Mexico	via fax: 011 52 55 5557 9865 Lic. Cecilia Romero Castillo Commissioner of the National Migration Institute of Mexico
via fax: 011 52 55 5346 0908 Lic. Eduardo Medina-Mora Icaza Attorney General of the Republic of Mexico	via fax: 011 52 55 5681 7199 Dr. Jose Luis Soberanes Fernandez President of the National Commission of Human Rights of Mexico

May 21, 2008

Dear Sirs/Madam:

We, members of the InterReligious Taskforce, are extremely concerned for the safety of photographer and migrants' rights activist **Ireneo Mujica Zarate**. On April 14, as he left a migrants' refuge in Arriaga, Chiapas State, he and a male migrant walking with him were followed. As they walked toward the railway lines, they were approached by two men on a motorbike and three men in a pickup truck. The men in the pickup truck signaled to those on the motorbike and shouted, "Not now!" and drove away.

On March 31 officials from the National Migration Institute (INAMI) and from the Mexican Navy carried out a joint operation in the municipality of Niltepec, Oaxaca State, in order to detain migrants who were attempting to travel north on a freight train. Ireneo Mujica was on the train to document the migrants' journey. Although he had previously notified INAMI of his project, navy officers confiscated his camera, arrested him, accused him of being a people trafficker and transported him to the nearest migrants' detention center in the town of Tapanatepec; he was released without charge that night.

The photographs on his memory card, which he had hidden, were published later in national media and via migrants' rights organizations. They showed beatings, other torture and ill-treatment suffered by the migrants, including possible evidence of rape against two migrant women.

Ireneo Mujica is a key witness in investigations opened by the Navy, the INAMI and the National Human Rights Commission. We believe he is at risk of reprisals for his work documenting the ill treatment of the migrants.

In light of these facts, we strongly urge you to:

- conduct a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the intimidation of Ireneo Mujica on April 14 in Arriaga, Chiapas State;
- conduct a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the operation carried out by INAMI and the Navy on March 31, including the detention of Ireneo Mujica, the allegations of beatings and possible rape of migrants;
- take appropriate protection measures to guarantee Ireneo Mujica's safety so he can carry out his legitimate activities.

Thank you for your prompt attention.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

cc: Sin Fronteras, a migrants rights organization ~ via mail
 Ambassador Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana, Mexican Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 728 1698
 Ambassador Antonio O. Garza, Jr., US Ambassador to Mexico ~ via fax: 011-52-55-5207-0091
 William Duncan, Mexico Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax: 202.647.5752
 Paolo Carozza US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights~ fax: (202)458-3992
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich and US Representatives Latta, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Regula, Ryan, Sutton, Tubbs Jones ~ via email

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The following people hereby urge that you take action on this matter as indicated in this letter: