

via fax: 011 52 55 53 46 09 08 <b>Lic. Eduardo Medina-Mora Icaza</b> Attorney General of the Republic of Mexico	via fax: 011 52 55 56 81 81 25 <b>Dr. José Luis Soberanes Fernandez</b> President of the National Human Rights Commission
via fax: 011 52 55 5557 9865 <b>Lic. Cecilia Romero Castillo</b> Commissioner of the National Institute of Migration	

December 5, 2008

Dear Sirs and Madam:

We are extremely concerned for the safety of **Father Alejandro Solalinde Guerra**, coordinator of the Catholic Pastoral Care Centre for Migrants in Southwestern Mexico and director of a migrants' shelter in the municipality of Ixtepec, Oaxaca state and also for a **group of 11 migrants who witnessed an armed gang kidnapping of 12 women migrants in Las Anonas, Oaxaca**, on November 5. As the 12 migrant women were boarding a freight train, they were kidnapped by a group of armed men, some of whom were wearing military fatigues. According to witnesses' testimony, the train driver was paid by the armed men to stop the train and other migrants present were threatened by them. Since the incident, the gang has tried to locate the witnesses who were staying in shelters in the area.

The kidnapped migrants had been aided by Father Alejandro Solalinde Guerra, who has been threatened repeatedly by criminal gangs and Mexican officials for his public condemnation of the treatment of migrants. Recently he was told that his shelter would be burnt down if he did not close it. These threats are part of a pattern of impunity that continues to allow abuses against the migrants, who are extremely vulnerable.

On November 10 there were reports that another group of armed men attacked a migrant holding cell (garita) in San Pedro Tapanatepec, Oaxaca, run by the National Migration Institute of the Federal Interior Ministry. There were 13 migrants waiting to be transported to the main migrant detention center in Tapachula, Chiapas state. According to witnesses, the armed men kidnapped as many as eight women.

We **strongly urge** you to:

- take appropriate protection measures to guarantee the safety of the 11 witnesses to the November 5 kidnappings so they can testify without fear of reprisals;
- take appropriate protection measures to guarantee the safety of Father Alejandro Solalinde so he can continue his work to defend the rights of migrants in his area;
- take appropriate protection measures to guarantee the safety of all migrants staying at the shelter Hermanos en el Camino in Ixtepec, Oaxaca, coordinated by Father Alejandro Solalinde;
- conduct a prompt and impartial investigation into the kidnappings of migrant women in Las Anonas and from the migrant detention cell in San Pedro Tapanatepec, and ensure that those responsible are found and held to account;
- take urgent steps to prevent attacks against migrants and migrant rights workers.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
 Coordinator

cc: Padre Alejandro Solalinde Guerra ~ via US mail  
 Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana, Mexican Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 728 1698  
 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, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Regula, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

UA 317/08Mexico

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