

via fax 011 52 55 5346 0908 <b>Arturo Chávez Chávez</b> Attorney General of the Republic of Mexico	via fax 011 52 55 5093 3414 <b>Lic. Fernando Francisco Gómez Mont</b> Minister of Interior of Mexico
Via fax 011 52 961 618 8050 <b>Lic. Juan Jose Sabinés Guerrero</b> Governor of Chiapas State, Mexico	

October 6, 2009

Dear Sirs:

We are writing to express our deep concern regarding the use of lethal force and ill-treatment of migrants in Mexico. On September 18, seven migrants who were traveling without the required documents were being transported in a pickup truck by two people smugglers near the town of Comitán, Chiapas state. When the driver failed to stop at a security check point, security forces gave pursuit and opened fire on the truck, hitting it repeatedly. One of the migrants, **Victor Alexander Melgar Lemus**, a Salvadoran national, was killed. The other five migrants and one of the smugglers received gunshot wounds. Three who were seriously wounded and unable to flee were interrogated; military and police officers kicked them and hit them with gun butts.

Two migrants are currently receiving treatment in a hospital and are being guarded by National Migration Institute officials; a third one is in detention and in the process of being deported to his country of origin. The National Human Rights Commission opened an investigation into the incident. Knowing that there have been numerous instances of human rights violations against irregular migrants in Mexico (see our letter of Feb 1, 2009), we are very concerned that these extremely vulnerable migrants may be intimidated or threatened by the security forces responsible in order to deter them from pursuing a complaint.

Therefore, **we strongly urge that you**

- open an investigation into the use of excessive force and the ill-treatment of the irregular migrants that led to the death of Victor Alexander Melgar Lemus and the wounding of six other persons;
- ensure that the safety of all the migrants who witnessed the events are guaranteed;
- provide these witnesses temporary visas so they can assist in the investigation into the incident and abuses without fear of reprisals or repatriation.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai  
Coordinator

CC: Enlace Comunicacion y Capacitacion ~ via email  
Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana, Mexican Ambassador to U.S. ~ via fax: 202 728 1698  
Ambassador Carlos Pascual, US Ambassador to Mexico ~ 011-52-55-5080-2834  
Mary Stickles, 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 ~ via email  
US Representatives Boccieri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Space, Sutton, Wilson ~ via email

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