

via fax: 011 52 55 5093 3414 Lic. José Francisco Blake Mora Minister of the Interior of Mexico	via fax: 011 52 55 5531 4041 Lic. Gabino Cué Monteagudo Governor-elect of the State of Oaxaca
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November 25, 2010

Dear Sirs:

We are quite concerned about the safety of migrants' rights defender **José Alberto Donis Rodríguez**, who was assaulted and threatened with death on November 11 by a suspected gang member in Ixtepec, Oaxaca.

On November 11 at around 11am, José Alberto Donis approached a man in his late twenties who was standing at the entrance of the *Hermanos en el camino* migrants' shelter, where he has been working since 2008. He told the man that all those who stay at or regularly visit the shelter have to be photographed and have their personal details recorded for security reasons. The man refused, and José Alberto Donis asked him to leave. An argument began, and the man attempted to punch José Alberto Donis, threatened to kill him, and left the shelter. At around 2pm a colleague of José Alberto Donis ran into the man at the local train station and overheard him telling others that he was going to kill José Alberto Donis.

Local sources believe that the man in question is a member of a gang that is operating a migrant trafficking ring. The gang has tried to lure migrants with the promise of taking them to the US border. Hundreds of migrants are kidnapped every year in Mexico. Many suffer abuses, including rape and murder, after they fall prey to these trafficking rings.

The work of defending migrants in Mexico is also dangerous. **Father Alejandro Solalinde**, the director of the shelter has suffered arbitrary arrest and intimidation at the hands of local authorities and members of the community since at least 2007. In April 2010 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ordered the Mexican authorities to provide Father Solalinde and his colleagues with adequate protection. Father Solalinde has since held meetings with representatives of the Ministry of the Interior, and they have agreed on a plan to implement specific protection measures. To date, very few of these measures have been put into practice.

In light of our concern for the safety of José Alberto Donis Rodríguez and for Father Alejandro Solalinde and the other staff and volunteers of *Hermanos en el camino*, we strongly urge you to:

- provide José Alberto Donis and his colleagues with effective protection, in strict accordance with their wishes and in compliance with the request issued by Inter-American Commission on Human Rights;
- carry out a full and prompt investigation into the operations of trafficking rings around the migrants' shelter;

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

cc: Dr. Raul Plascencia Villanueva, President of the National Human Rights Commission ~ via fax: 011 52 55 5668 0767
 Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana, Mexican Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 833 4320
 Carlos Pascual, US Ambassador to Mexico ~ via fax: 011-52-55-5080-2834
 Mary Stickle, Mexico Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax: 202.647.5752
 Dinah Shelton, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: (202)458-6002
 José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez, Mexico member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: (202)458-3650
 US Senators Brown & Voinovich and US Representatives Boccieri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Space, Sutton, Wilson ~ via email
 UA240/10_Mexico

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