

Via Fax: 011 55 5093 3414
Lic. José Francisco Blake Mora
 Minister of the Interior of Mexico

Via Fax: 011 52 9933 14 26 12
Lic. Andres Granier Melo
 Governor of the State of Tabasco, Mexico

March 7, 2011

Dear Sirs:

We, members of the InterReligious Taskforce on Central America, are extremely concerned for the safety of a **group of migrants** traveling through Tabasco State who were kidnapped on February 19, 2011.

After the train on which they were riding passed through the community of Faisán Vía on February 19, officials from the National Migrants Service intercepted the train and conducted an operation to detain all “irregular migrants” (those without legal permission to enter or remain in the country). The migration officials detained many of the migrants, but others who ran escaped detention. Minutes after the migration officials left, seven armed men appeared and rounded up about ten of the migrants who had escaped. One woman and two men sustained several gun shot injuries as they escaped from the armed men.

They reached a migrants’ shelter in Tenosique, Tabasco, where they told of witnessing, before escaping, the armed men pulling off the clothes of a female migrant and taking her away with two other men. The location of these migrants is unknown. A preliminary investigation has been opened with the Federal Prosecutors Office.

We believe that the lives of the kidnapped migrants and the witnesses are at risk. In their recent investigative visits to Mexico, Amnesty International found that many irregular migrants had been kidnapped by gangs, sometimes with the complicity of local officials. These gangs and the corrupt officials are rarely brought to justice; people who file complaints against them may face reprisals and swift deportation. This impunity has allowed abuses against these extremely vulnerable migrants to increase since 2003, despite government commitments to ensure respect of migrants’ rights.

Therefore, we **strongly urge** that you

- begin a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the kidnapping of at least 3 migrants on February 19, take immediate steps to establish their whereabouts, and secure their release;
- investigate operations carried out by migration officials that have coincided with attacks on migrants by criminal gangs;
- provide the migrants who witnessed the kidnapping on February 19 with temporary visas and protection so they can testify against those responsible without fear of reprisals or repatriation.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
 Coordinator

cc: Dimensión Pastoral de la Movilidad Humana, ~ via email
 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 Stickles, Mexico Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax: 202.647.5752
 Dinah Shelton, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: (202)458-3650
 José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez, Mexico member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: (202)458-3650
 US Senators Brown and Portman
 US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Renacci, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

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