

via fax 011 52 55 5093 3414 Lic. José Francisco Blake Mora Minister of the Interior of Mexico	via fax 011 52 993 314 2612 Q.F.B. Andres Granier Melo Governor of Tabasco
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August 2, 2011

Dear Sirs:

We are writing to express our deep concern for the safety of **members of the staff of the Usumacinta Human Rights Center in Tenosique**, Tabasco state, who have been repeatedly subjected to acts of intimidation and attack, as well as abuse by police authorities. On June 29, the Director of the Human Rights Center, **Ezequiel Serafin Esteban**, was leaving work on his motorbike when a van with tinted windows forced him off the road. He fell off his motorbike and was injured as a result.

Minelia Aguilar May, a member of the staff responsible for migrants' rights, reported that she has repeatedly noticed vans with tinted windows parked in front of her house. On July 14 she was followed by one of the vans as she left her house. The van narrowly missed her as it drove past her.

Fredi Flores Mecia, who also works on migrants' rights at the Center, has been repeatedly detained by the local Municipal Police based on unfounded allegations. Since May 2011 he has been detained three times, during which Municipal Police officers insulted the Usumacinta Human Rights Center. On June 19, during his latest baseless detention, Fredi Flores Mecia was handcuffed to the back of the police van and left out in the rain. He was threatened by the police officers who said that the detentions would not stop until he withdrew a complaint he had filed months earlier against the Municipal Police for the ill-treatment he suffered during a previous arrest on October 9, 2010.

We have no doubt that the acts of intimidation cited above are a consequence of the work that staff members of the Usumacinta Human Rights Center are doing to protect migrants' rights.

In view of this information, we therefore strongly urge that you

- provide immediate protection measures to be implemented in accordance with the wishes of staff at the Usumacinta Human Rights Center to guarantee their safety;
- investigate all attacks, threats and intimidation against staff who run the Usumacinta Human Rights Center, and bring those responsible to justice.

Unfortunately, defending human rights can be a life-threatening job in Mexico. Many activists have suffered death threats, intimidation, and harassment in the last few years. You have the power and the consequent responsibility to see that human rights activists within your jurisdiction are protected. We strongly urge you to do so.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai, Coordinator

Copies: Raul Gustavo Gutierrez Cortes, Municipal President of Tenosique ~ via fax
 Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana, Mexican Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 728 1698
 John Feeley, Charge d'Affaires, US Ambassador to Mexico ~ via fax: 011-52-55-5080-2834
 Greg Sprow, Mexico Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax: 202.647.5752
 Dinah Shelton, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: (202)458-3992
 José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez, Mexico member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: (202)458-3992
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Renacci, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

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