

via FAX: 011 52 951 501 5000 Ext 40068
Lic. Gabino Cué Monteagudo
 Governor of Oaxaca State, Mexico

via FAX: 011 52 55 5346 0908
Marisela Morales Ibáñez
 Attorney General of the Republic of Mexico

May 3, 2012

Dear Sir and Madam:

We are extremely concerned about death threats and an attempted attack on **Father Alejandro Solalinde Guerra**, Coordinator of the Catholic Pastoral Care Centre for Migrants in Southwestern Mexico and director of a migrants' shelter in Ixtepec Municipality, Oaxaca State. On April 15, as a group of 1,500 migrants were walking from a freight train to the shelter, two men intercepted them and began shouting insults at them. When Father Solalinde spoke to the men, they began shouting abusively and threatened to kill him.

On March 31 the dismembered body of a local young man was found next to a bar near the train tracks that pass through Ixtepec. Members of the Urban Rescue Group, which reports on accidents and other events in Ixtepec and is linked to the municipal authorities, publicly tried to blame migrants for the murder. Father Solalinde told the victim's family this accusation was untrue. While Father Solalinde was conducting the funeral of the murdered man, members of the victim's family blocked two men who attempted to attack him. The following day a contact told Father Solalinde that an assassin had been contracted to kill him.

We are concerned that migrants and their defenders continue to be threatened and assaulted in southern Mexico. Father Alejandro Solalinde Guerra has been threatened, harassed and the victim of arbitrary arrest by local authorities for the past few years. We have written at least two previous letters urging his protection and demanding that local authorities respect his right to assist migrants (cf letters December 5, 2008 and November 25, 2010.)

In April 2010 the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ordered Mexican authorities to take action to protect Father Solalinde and other staff members at the shelter because of prior acts of intimidation and harassment that they have suffered as a result of their work defending migrants' rights. The threats described above occurred in the context of a continuing dialogue between the shelter and the municipal authorities about effective implementation of the protection measures.

We **strongly urge** that you

- strengthen protection provided to Father Solalinde and other staff at the shelter in Ixtepec, in strict accordance with their wishes, as ordered by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights;
- take immediate steps to guarantee the safety of all migrants staying at the shelter run by Father Alejandro Solalinde in Ixtepec and to prevent attacks against migrants and migrant rights workers;
- conduct a full, prompt and impartial investigation into the killing of the young man found dead in Ixtepec on March 31, make the results public and bring those responsible to justice.

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
 Earl Anthony Wayne, 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, Chair, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: (202)458-3992
 José de Jesús Orozco Henríquez, First Vice-Chair, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: (202)458-3992
 US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
 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: