

via fax: 011 52 55 5093 3414 Sr. Secretario Sr. Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong Minister of the Interior of Mexico	Via fax: 011 52 993 313 6550 Sr. Fiscal General Fernando Valenzuela Pernas Attorney General of Tabasco State, Mexico
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December 15, 2015

Dear Sirs:

We are deeply distressed about a series of threatening phone calls to **Fray Aurelio Montero Vásquez**, a migrants' rights defender in Tenosique, Tabasco State. The defender and his colleagues in Tabasco state had been recently working on a number of cases of mass kidnappings and sexual violence of migrants.

On November 14 Fray Aurelio Montero Vásquez received a threatening phone call during an emergency meeting with federal investigation authorities discussing recent incidents of kidnappings and sexual violence of migrants in the region close to Tenosique. The caller claimed he was the commander of a major drug cartel. Fray Vásquez passed his telephone to a police chief from the Federal Attorney General's Office. The caller, thinking he was still talking to Fray Aurelio Montero Vásquez, said "you have gone too far" and demanded 50,000 Mexican pesos or he would attack him. During the meeting the same caller phoned eight times. The authorities were able to track the call to a northern part of Mexico.

The threats occurred the same day that Fray Aurelio Montero Vásquez and other colleagues from La 72 migrants' shelter in Tenosique presented a legal complaint for the kidnapping of migrants. During the weeks prior, they had reported a spike in the number of cases involving kidnappings and sexual violence against migrants. Fray Tomás González has also been working closely on these cases and had reported security incidents to federal authorities in recent weeks.

On November 16 the state police patrols provided for protection at La 72 shelter failed to properly patrol the area and left the shelter unprotected for a number of hours in the middle of the night and early morning. This is an example of the continued vulnerability of migrants traveling through Mexico.

We are very concerned about Fray Aurelio Montero Vásquez's safety and that of his colleagues. We **strongly urge** that you

- ensure a prompt, full and impartial investigation into the threats against Fray Aurelio Montero Vasquez and other members of La 72 migrant shelter, and bring those responsible to justice;
- immediately improve the protection provided to the La 72 migrant shelter and the surrounding area in Tenosique because of the wave of crimes reported by the shelter.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai and Christine Stonebraker Martínez
Co-Coordinators

copies: La 72 Migrants Shelter ~ via email
 Dr. Miguel Basáñez Ebergényi, Mexican Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 833 4320
 Earl Anthony Wayne, US Ambassador to Mexico ~ via fax: 011-52-55-5080-2834
 Vaida Vidugiris, Mexico Desk, US State Dept ~ via email
 James Cavallaro, Rapporteur for Mexico, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via fax: (202)458-3650
 Felipe González, Rapporteur on the Rights of Migrants, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ via email or fax
 US Senators Brown & Portman and US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Jordan, Joyce, Kaptur, Latta, Renacci, Ryan ~ via email

Frontline Defenders 2015/11/18_Mexico

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

