

URGENT ACTION

FEAR FOR SAFETY OF ABDUCTED MIGRANTS

Irregular migrants in Tamaulipas state, north east Mexico are at risk of abduction by criminal gangs. There are fears for their safety and concerns that authorities are not taking measures to ensure the safety of migrants in the area.

According to information received on 19 March, at least forty Central American irregular migrants were being held captive by a criminal gang in Reynosa, on Mexico's northern border. Following their release during a military operation, none of the migrants were provided with any support or protection as victims of crime. Seventeen from Guatemala, among them at least one woman and some teenagers, sought refuge at the shelter for migrants, Our Lady of Guadalupe (Albergue Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe) run by the Catholic Church in Reynosa. According to shelter workers a further group 10 Central American migrants arrived in the afternoon. They had been freed earlier, but were stopped by a group of armed men outside the shelter, threatened and forced into three pickup trucks. The fate of the 10 migrants remains unknown. Despite reporting the abduction, official investigators have not visited the shelter to establish the facts or the whereabouts of the migrants.

In a separate incident reported to the a local migrants shelter in nearby Matamoros, on 18 March three Mexican women who had been deported from the US and were apparently abducted near the border crossing by a group of men as they waited to cash money at a Western Union. A fourth woman escaped and ran to a nearby bus terminal, where she informed police. A search failed to provide any leads as to the fate of the three women.

Local migrants' rights defenders have increasingly observed that migrants on the US border are targeted by criminal gangs who commit grave abuses against the migrants, often with the collusion of corrupt officials. Migrants are at risk of kidnapping, extortion, rape and people trafficking.

Please write immediately in Spanish, English or your own language:

- Urging for a full and impartial investigation into the whereabouts of migrants abducted outside the Our Lady of Guadalupe shelter in Reynosa and three women abducted in Matamoros;
- Calling on the authorities to provide effective protection for migrants released from captivity of criminal gangs or deported from the US;
- Urging the authorities to respect article 7 of the General Victims' Law guaranteeing the physical and psychological well-being, as well as safety of victims of crime, including irregular migrants.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 6 MAY 2014 TO:

Minister of the Interior

Miguel Ángel Osorio Chong
Secretaría de Gobernación
Bucareli 99, col. Juárez, Cuauhtémoc
Distrito Federal, México, C.P. 06600
Fax: +52 55 5093 3414
Email: secretario@segob.gob.mx

**Salutation: Dear Minister / Sr.
Secretario**

Governor of Tamaulipas state

Egidio Torre Cantú
Palacio de Gobierno
15 y 16 Juárez - 3er Piso
Cd. Victoria, CP 87000
Tamaulipas, México
Email: egidio.torre@tamaulipas.gob.mx

**Salutation: Dear Governor / Sr.
Gobernador**

And copies to:

Local NGO
SMR Scalabrinianas: Misión para
Migrantes y Refugiados
Email:
migrantes.scalabrinianas@gmail.com

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In 2013, 82,269 migrants were detained by migration authorities in Mexico and 75,704 were deported, the vast majority to Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. Far more Central American migrants tried to make the journey to the USA. In Mexico many migrants continue to suffer abuses at the hands of police and others are the victims of targeted kidnapping, trafficking, rape and killing by criminal gangs which often operate in collusion with local authorities. Migration legislation reforms which strengthened some rights of migrants, particularly the right to protection and access to justice, have not been implemented adequately. The National strategy to combat kidnapping of migrants continues to fail to hold to account criminal gangs and public officials preying on migrants. In 2011 the National Human Rights Commission reported the abduction of 10,000 irregular migrants over 6 month period by criminal gangs, often operating in collusion with public officials. Those responsible for abductions and other abuses against migrants are rarely held to account.

State level authorities largely ignore the plight of irregular migrants, while federal authorities increasingly regard migrant flows as a threat to national security, rather than ensuring respect for the human rights of migrants in transit. Recently, mothers of Central America migrants toured the country again searching for their loved ones and demanding investigations. The National Human Rights Commission recently issued an unsatisfactory report in relation to the killing of 72 migrants in San Fernando, Tamaulipas state, in August 2010. The failure of the authorities to protect the right to life of the migrants or establish full responsibility for the massacre was not included in the report, which focused solely on limited aspects of the case around the gravely flawed forensic procedures for identifying the remains. The bodies of other victims of mass killings, many believed to be migrants, remain to be established.

Amnesty International issued a report on the abuses suffered by migrants in transit in Mexico in 2010, *Invisible Victims: Migrants on the move in Mexico*.

Amnesty International launched an action designed to make visible the plight of migrants travelling through Mexico and to provide much-needed assistance to migrants travelling across the country. The action can be found at: <http://sendsocks.org>.

Name: Irregular migrants in Tamaulipas state, north east Mexico
Gender m/f: both

UA: 73/14 Index: AMR 41/013/2014 Issue Date: 25 March 2014