

The North American Old Catholic Church

Office of the Presiding Archbishop

July 3, 2008

Ambassador Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana
Embassy of Mexico
1911 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington DC 20006

Dear Mr. Ambassador,

I write to you today to urgently request that you act with the full authority of your office to protect the life of Father Alejandro Solalinde Guerra. Father Solalinde currently coordinates both the Catholic Pastoral Care Centre for Migrants in Southwestern Mexico, (Pastoral de Movilidad Humana Pacifico Sur del Episcopado Mexicano.) and directs the migrants' shelter in Ixtepec, Oaxaca.

On 24 June, Father Solalinde's life, as well as the lives of the shelter occupants was threatened by municipal officials who told him they would "burn down the shelter" if he did not close it in forty-eight hours. This threat was in the form of a mob of fifty residents, and fourteen local police. Reports also indicate that the mob included the Mayor of Ixtepec.

Apparently, this threat was made in response to the outrageous sexual assault committed on a six year old by a Central American migrant. The migrant, who at no time was a resident of Father's shelter, has been arrested by officials.

Father Solalinde has publicly condemned the rape in the local media. Despite his statements condemning the assault, he is being targeted, most likely due to his constant condemnation of the treatment by Mexican officials of irregular migrants, and other undocumented people in Ixtepec. It is widely reported that the ill treatment of migrants and immigrants in Ixtepec often includes extortion, beatings, and mass repatriations.

We urge you to act immediately to prevent Father Solalinde and his shelter residents from coming to any harm.

Additionally, we join our voice to the international outcry, and urge you to take into consideration the grave concerns expressed by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Migrants. The reports from the rapporteur's visit in March of this year, outlining the treatment of migrants by Mexican federal, state, and municipal authorities is chilling, especially on both the northern and southern borders of your country.

We urge you to work fervently on protecting the rights of all migrants, immigrants, and indeed Mexican nationals. This church, along with the international human rights organizations will settle for nothing less.

Cordially,

The Most Reverend Michael V. Seneco, SPSA, DD, L.Th.
Presiding Archbishop

cc: Evencio Nicolas Martinez Ramirez, Mexican Attorney General
Dr. Jose Luis Soberanes Fernandez, President Mexican Commission of Human Rights
Juan Camilo Mourino Terrazo, Mexican Minister of the Interior