

via fax: 01152 55 5093 5321/5383 Lic. Felipe de Jesús Calderón Hinojosa President of Mexico	via fax: 011 52 55 5387 2484 Salvador Beltrán del Río Madrid Commissioner of the National Migration Institute, Mexico
via fax: 011 52 993 314 2612 Q.F.B. Andrés Granier Melo Governor of Tabasco State, Mexico	

January 14, 2012

Dear Sirs:

We continue to be deeply concerned for the Guatemalan citizens of Nueva Esperanza, Petén Department, who have been living in a makeshift camp in Nuevo Progreso in Tabasco State since August 23, 2011 (cf our letter of Dec. 2, 2011). Early on January 9, Mexican police officers raided the camp and detained 71 members of the community in a migrant detention center in Tapachula, Chiapas State. At least 45 of these persons are children whom the Mexican authorities went after first so as to lure their families to the transport vehicles. The makeshift camp was partially destroyed and at least one ten-year-old boy who remains in the camp is separated from his detained parents. The detention center is many hours' drive from where other family members were detained.

This is a direct violation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), of which Mexico is a signatory. The CRC states that children should not be deprived of contact with their families and that children should not be separated from their parents unless safeguards regarding the child's welfare are in place.

Over 100 members of the community who were able to flee the raid have now returned to the partially destroyed camp. They could still be detained or face other reprisals because some officials have threatened to return with more force if the members do not surrender themselves. Mexico's migration authorities have stated that their operation was a "humanitarian rescue" operation to stop the community from living in poor conditions. It is believed that repatriation proceedings have been initiated.

Detention, separation, threats and destruction are not elements of humanitarian rescue. Therefore, we again **strongly urge** that you

- ensure that the repatriations of members of the Nueva Esperanza community are carried out in line with international human rights standards and that no repatriation leads to the division of families;
- ensure that treatment of the families of Nueva Esperanza by Mexican authorities is in accordance with their obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- explain the procedures used in the raid on the community on January 9, including the partial destruction of the camp and the threats made to the remaining members of the community.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

CC: Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana, Mexican Ambassador to the US ~ via fax: 202 728 1698
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US Senators Brown & Portman ~ via email
US Representatives Fudge, Gibbs, Johnson, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Renacci, Ryan, Sutton ~ via email

UA 340/11/Update_ Mexico

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