

TRANSLATION - COMUNIQUE FROM LA 72, JUNE 20, 2019

To the authorities of the Mexican State
To the media
To national and international civil society

On May 27, days before Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard traveled to Washington to begin negotiations with the United States regarding the tariff threat, the Assistant Secretary for Border Affairs, Migrants and Human Rights of Tabasco, José Ramiro López Obrador, announced the deployment of 100 agents of Federal Police and 100 troops of the SEDENA (Secretariat for National Defense) in Tenosique to "reinforce the tasks of the National Migration Institute." The Federal Police had already been operating for 17 days in Tenosique at the time of the announcement. The military closure of the southern border of Tabasco was planned long before the signing of the agreement between Mexico and the United States. These actions have had a devastating effect on the lives and human rights of migrants. Through our monitoring and accompaniment, since the end of May, we have verified the following:

1. Strong migratory operations on the highways of Tabasco and on the train route have resumed. The National Migration Institute conducts detention and deportation activities in support of the Federal Police and the Army. There are frequent patrols on the migratory routes of a convoy of 5 federal vehicles.
2. Saturation of the Tenosique Immigration Station. Last week its numbers reached three times its physical capacity, with more than 300 people arrested. From the outside, it is possible to observe families sleeping on the floor of the reception area. Lack of attention and protection for children and adolescents, as well as other highly vulnerable groups is obvious. The Immigration Station is guarded by the Federal and Military Police, much like a high-security prison.
3. Separation of families. La 72 has been assisting 7 cases of families who were separated during immigration operations, including the case of the detention of a 4 year old child.
4. Mass deportations from Tabasco territory. Immigration authorities violate the right of access to information, denying the right to seek refuge and violating the principle of no return for refugee populations. To the numerous overland deportations, the Federal Police has added air deportations from Villahermosa for the first time, in military planes.
5. Violations of human rights. We receive on an ongoing basis testimonies of extortion and robbery of migrants on the migratory routes by agents of the Federal Police and the Army.
6. Increased violence against people in transit. The persecution of migrants forces them to take more uncertain routes, with greater exposure to street crime and organized crime as well. In just the four days between June 9th and June 12th, we accompanied 4 women who were victims of rape and 3 victims of sexual abuse on the migratory route, in addition to numerous victims injured in violent assaults. Meanwhile, the networks of coyotes and human traffickers continue intact and operate in impunity without any threat to their structure or modus operandi.

7. Criminalization and harassment of La 72, the Franciscan Migrant and Refugee Shelter. These activities include: Surveillance and patrols of the shelter by federal agents; the pursuit, at high speed, of the shelter's by the National Immigration Institute in Tenosique; and finally, the most worrisome was the publication of a communiqué on June 18, 2019 by the Economic and Patrimonial Intelligence Unit of the State of Tabasco (the state taxing authority), accusing shelters that serve migrants in Tabasco of having been a front for money laundering and corruption.

From La 72 we declare our absolute repudiation of the double-speak on the part of the government of Andrés Manuel López Obrador and the resumption of a migratory policy of military brutality, "where it is stigmatized, mistreated, persecuted, expelled, and the right to justice to those who seek with effort and work to live free from misery." Caving-in to the threats of Donald Trump not only abdicates the sovereignty of the Mexican State, but also the human life and the right to it for hundreds of thousands of people.

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