

Governor of Chiapas state
Lic. Juan José Sabines Guerrero
Gobernador del Estado de Chiapas
Palacio de Gobierno, Col. Centro
29000, Tuxtla Gtz, Chiapas, Mexico

Dear Governor:

On 18 September, seven migrants, all irregular as they were traveling without the required documents, were being transported in a pick up truck by two people smugglers near the town of Comitán, Chiapas state, southern Mexico. They report that as their driver approached a security check point he was told to stop, but sped off. The security forces opened fire on the pick up truck, hitting it repeatedly. Víctor Alexander Melgar Lemus, was fatally wounded and all other migrants, as well as one of the people smugglers, received gunshot wounds. The authorities have not disclosed whether the police or the army was staffing the check-point or who opened fire on the pick up truck.

Despite being injured in the attack, three irregular migrants fled the scene. The other three, who were seriously wounded, only managed to walk a short distance from the truck. The irregular migrants have said that both military and police officers arrived at the scene and started to interrogate them, then kicked and hit them with gun butts. One of the men reported that he was struck directly on a gunshot wound.

I am writing to urge you to open an investigation into the apparent use of excessive force and the ill-treatment of the irregular migrants that lead to the death of Víctor Alexander Melgar Lemus and the wounding of six others.

I also ask for the safety of all the migrants who witnessed the events to be guaranteed and for them to be provided temporary visas so they can assist in the investigation into the incident and alleged abuses without fear of reprisals or repatriation.

Thank you in advance for your action on this matter.

Sincerely,

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