



## **AMERICA/MEXICO- Assaults and threats against defenders of immigrants in the country are increasing**

Mexico City (Fides Service) - According to the report of the Commission of the pastoral care of human mobility of the Mexican Episcopal Conference (MEC), in recent years aggressions, threats and harassment against defenders of migrants in Mexico have increased. Since 2004, 62 accidents have been recorded. In the "Report on the situation of the defenders of migrants in Mexico", states that from 2004 to 2009 only 18 incidents were recorded, while in 2010 alone 29 and another 15 were recorded between January and June 2011. "In these years (2004-2011) two defenders of migrants were killed. We were threatened, hit, harassed, prosecuted for our commitment to denounce, a defender was exiled, a house for the migrant and a center for human rights were forced to close down for lack of security", this is what is read in a note by His Exc. Mgr. Rafael Romo, Archbishop of Tijuana and head of the Pastoral of Human Mobility of the EMC. The report was presented a few days before the arrival of the rapporteur of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of Migrant Workers in Mexico, to analyze the current situation in the country.

Thousands of migrants, mostly central Americans, try to cross the Mexican territory to reach the United States every year, despite risks, extortion, kidnappings and murders by criminal gangs and even by the authorities. Mgr. Romo also highlighted the fact that violence is also extended to the priests who welcome them. The Pastoral of Human Mobility has about 50 houses and hostels for migrants throughout the country. One of these is managed by Father Alejandro Solalinde, who was the victim of several threats for his commitment that gave visibility to the problem of migrant kidnapping (see Fides 20/7/2011). The National Human Rights Commission has recently reported that, between April and September 2010, at least 11,333 migrants were kidnapped in 214 mass kidnappings, most of which have never been clarified. In many cases, the drug dealing cartel Los Zetas have been accused. The Mexican authorities have admitted the involvement of some officials. The country has recently passed a new law that recognizes and protects the rights of migrants, regardless of legal status, in an attempt to minimize the risks they face in the country. The Immigration law provides that migrants have the right to receive education and healthcare as well as access to social justice system, and can submit complaints about violations of their human rights, even if they do not have documents. (PA) (Agenzia Fides 07/23/2011)