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Expulsion of multiple religious minorities

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (06.12.2017) - <http://bit.ly/2BRVavW> - Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) has also been informed that 13 adults are expected to be expelled on 6 December, along with a group of minors, because of their religious beliefs.

On 4 December, 42 Jehovah's Witnesses were forcibly displaced from their homes in Tuxpan de Bolaños, along with 7 Protestant adults and 15 Protestant children. They were violently removed from the town and taken by truck into the mountains, where they were abandoned. Dr Jorge Lee Galindo, director of the Mexican religious freedom organisation Impulso 18, told CSW the local authorities destroyed most of the homes, so it will be difficult for them to return.

According to Dr Lee Galindo, the Emanuel Regional Baptist Convention, which oversees Baptist churches in the area, sent transport to the area to provide support to the victims.

The twenty-two Baptists are now sheltering in Puente de Camotlán Church in Nayarit State, while the 42 Jehovah's Witnesses are currently in the municipal auditorium in Bolaños, Jalisco State.

Government officials took no action to defend the expelled groups or their properties.

These expulsions of religious minorities from Tuxpan de Bolaños follow the forcible displacement of 20 Protestant families (approximately 50 individuals including children) in January 2016, after threats were made against them in December 2015. A resolution adopted by the village assembly that month stated that the Protestant members of the community would be expelled if they refused to convert to Roman Catholicism. The Jalisco State Human Rights Commission recommended community dialogue to resolve the issue in December 2015, but religious intolerance persists.

CSW believes that the failure by the Mexican State or Federal authorities to protect freedom of religion or belief by addressing the threats made against these religious minorities, including the first expulsion of Protestants from Tuxpan de Bolaños, has created an environment of impunity that likely contributed to the most recent expulsions.

CSW's Chief Executive Mervin Thomas said:

"We are deeply concerned that almost two years on from the illegal expulsion of 20 families because of their religious beliefs, both state and federal governments have failed to protect religious minorities in Tuxpan de Bolaños and as a result even more men, women and children have now been forcibly displaced. Once again we call on the Mexican government, at both federal and state levels, to act swiftly to facilitate a safe return for and the restoration of property to all of those who have been forcibly displaced from the village, and to prevent further expulsions. It must also ensure that fundamental human rights, including freedom of religion or belief, are respected and upheld by the authorities at every level."

Catholic priest stabbed in Mexico Cathedral

Father Miguel Ángel Machorro, who was stabbed Monday evening, May 15, at the main altar in Mexico's Metropolitan cathedral, is hovering between life and death, according to a press release issued in the cathedral itself.

ACN (18.05.2017) - <http://bit.ly/2rz6dc4> - Speaking on behalf on the cathedral chapter, Father Ricardo Valenzuela, the senior sacristan and liturgical director of the cathedral, expressed his concern for the health of the priest and asked for the prayers of all the Catholic faithful. He explained that Father Machorro was close to the cathedral of Mexico City and involved in some of its liturgical ceremonies.

Father Valenzuela also announced that Holy Mass would continue to be celebrated at the normal times and that Cardinal Norberto Rivera Carrera, the Archbishop and Primate of Mexico, was currently in Rome. He will decide on the need to celebrate a special Mass of atonement on account of this sacrilegious attack. The Cardinal will be returning to Mexico in time to celebrate the Sunday Mass.

Dr. Armando Martínez, the president of the College of Catholic Lawyers, energetically condemned the attack and called for a full investigation and the rigorous application of the law. He confirmed that the attacker had been arrested by the federal police and was being dealt with by the public prosecutor, and he also thanked the Mexico City authorities for having transferred the wounded priest by helicopter to a private hospital, where he is currently being cared for.

Dr. Martínez explained that in recent years there had been almost 30 violent incursions during religious worship in the cathedral, most of them carried out by factional groups, as a result which increased levels of security had been introduced.

However, the police units assigned to the cathedral have been more focused on the security of the ordinary Catholic faithful and of the property itself.

Never before has there been a direct attack of this kind against any priest of the cathedral, nor indeed against the Cardinal, Norberto Rivera Carrera. This attack had taken everyone by surprise.

The authorities are currently investigating the incident, and consequently it has not yet been possible to give detailed answers to all of the questions asked by the press.
