

Mexico's migration chief charged with deaths of 40 migrants

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Mexico City, April 26 (RHC)-- Mexico's Attorney General's Office (FGR) has charged the head of the National Migration Institute (INM), Francisco Garduño, for the death of 40 migrants during a fire at the Ciudad Juárez migration station.

The head of the National Migration Institute was formally charged for improper exercise of public service, based on the accusations made in criminal case 237/2023. The Public Prosecutor's Office, stated in its indictment that Garduño incurred in the crime with which he is charged by failing to comply with "his obligations to guard, protect and provide security to the people and facilities under his charge."

He is also held responsible for damages to the shelter valued at nearly \$100,000. Francisco Garduño will not be removed from his position nor will he be remanded in custody as requested by the FGR.

Federal Judge Víctor Manilo Hernández in charge of the case ordered Garduño to report to court every 15 days as the only precautionary measure. The head of the INM refused to testify before the judge in the second hearing on Tuesday. Next Sunday, the magistrate must decide whether to uphold the Attorney General's Office's accusation against Garduño.

Eight other INM officials face criminal charges for the death of the migrants: five migration agents, a security guard, a migrant accused of starting the fire and the person in charge of Migration in Chihuahua, Salvador Gonzalez.

On March 26th, the Ciudad Juárez migrant station went up in flames, leaving 40 migrants dead, most of them Central Americans. According to authorities, it was started by migrants themselves, who burned a mattress in protest against their detention.

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