



VII Summit of the Americas Public Statement

Panama 2015

Public statement by the Regional Network of Civil Organizations for Migration (RROCM); Jesuit Network for Migrants, The Children's Shelter (Guatemala), the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL), participants at the Forum for Civil Society and Social Actors in the Framework of the VII Summit of the Americas, developed in Panama.

Faced with the challenges that the new reality of migration has presented to us in the countries of origin, transit, destination, and return, social organizations that work to defend and promote the human rights of migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, displaced persons, and children and adolescents, call on all the States present at the VII Summit of the Americas, to dialogue and remain conscious of the situation of migrants and the need to maintain full respect for their human rights.

Conscious of the ways in which the human rights of migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees have been gravely violated, we urge the States to implement a comprehensive approach, rather than a response confined to economic considerations, or that relies on deportations, security infrastructure and arbitrary detentions.

While it is true that the population of migrant workers and the remittances contribute to development, all the same, without dignified work, respect and a guarantee of their economic, social and cultural rights, these people and their families cannot fully integrate into their home countries or the countries where they arrive.

Violence and insecurity that accompany migrants

Violence caused by the operations of transnational criminal organizations in their distinct expressions throughout Mesoamerica, complicity and abuses by the armed security forces, as well as the levels of impunity in the countries of origin and transit, have provoked extreme examples of violations of fundamental human rights. These conditions facilitate the trafficking

of persons and illicit smuggling of migrants, especially women and children, who fall into the hands of criminal networks.

The current situation in the countries of the Northern Triangle of Central America (Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras), has a direct impact on the dynamics of migration in the region, as well as on the Southern Triangle countries (Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama). Given the response by these governments to those seeking protection, the creation of mechanisms to quickly and efficiently identify those in need of protection in mixed migratory flows is urgently needed.

Child Migrants

In regards to the children and adolescents, we are worried that mass deportation of children and adolescents and the deprivation of their freedom have become the principle responses to the effects of migration. These decisions are made at the expense of what is in the best interest of these young people.

Plan for Prosperity

We are greatly concerned that the “humanitarian crisis” of child migrants, has been used to reinforce militarized borders and to propel the Plan for Prosperity forward. This plan includes initiatives to solidify this security model for the hemisphere. Still more, we are concerned about the way in which the countries in the Northern Triangle have interpreted the concept of security to mean militarized borders. This is to the detriment of the construction of civil institutions. In addition, the Plan attempts to consolidate an economic model based on the extraction of natural resources in our countries; something, which will generate more exclusion and civil unrest. This policy will only exacerbate the problems that currently drive people to leave. We are also concerned that these proposals are being approved of behind the public’s back and only take the interest of powerful companies into consideration. Finally, human rights are only being superficially discussed in the plans and not made an integral part.

Regional Integration, Access to Justice and Migration

It is vital that the System of Central American Integration (SICA) becomes increasingly proactive and participatory. Considering the reality of the countries and the region as a whole, we are concerned that the issue of migration is not a priority on the regional agenda.

We wish to issue a warning about the lack of clear political will to safeguard full access to justice and due process for migrants, forcibly displaced persons, refugees and asylum seekers. In addition, we want to call attention to how this phenomenon is facilitating corruption, weakness of institutions, and impunity, which results in the failure to report violations of human rights, and leaves the migrant population without any type of protection.

The signatory organizations to this declaration, urge governments to incorporate and apply the full definition contained within the Cartagena Declaration, as well as the recommendations in the Brazil Declaration “*A Framework for Regional Cooperation and Solidarity to Strengthen the International Protection of Refugees, Displaced Persons, and Stateless Persons in Latin American and the Caribbean*” (Brasilia, December 3, 2014).

We highlight the fundamental responsibility that the States of origin, transit, destination, and return have to guarantee, protect, and promote the human rights of migrants in the region as well as of their advocates so that they may carry out their work free of fear. In addition, we exhort the States to design, implement, and evaluate, together with civil society, public policies and a regulatory framework in accordance with international standards to address the specific needs of the aforementioned situations. We believe it is necessary that actions of return and reintegration to home communities be considered. It is important to identify the realities and the risks of those who return, guaranteeing their integrity and their full development through local empowerment, as well as the creation of socio-economic and psychosocial abilities.

Signatories:

Regional Network of Civil Organizations for Migration (RROCM)

International Center for the Human Rights of Migrants

Pastoral for Human Mobility, Honduras

Jesuit Network for Migrants, Guatemala

Children’s Shelter, Guatemala

Independent Monitoring Group, El Salvador

Sin Fronteras, Mexico

National Table of Migrants and Refugees, Dominican Republic

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