

ASYLUM ACCESS MEXICO STAFF THREATENED BY MEXICAN GOVERNMENT FOR DEFENDING REFUGEES

- A Central American family sought asylum at Mexico's southern border but were denied by Mexican border officials, detained in an immigration detention center, and illegally held for over 10 days despite a court order.
- **Asylum Access Mexico lawyers represented the family, fought for their release and reported the border officials. As a result, Asylum Access staff were victims of threats.**

Mexico City, August 28, 2019. Since 2015, Asylum Access Mexico (AAMX) A.C. has accompanied and provided legal representation to asylum seekers and refugees on Mexico's southern border, and has advocated to ensure access to justice and due process of those in need of international protection.

Our offices in Tenosique, Villahermosa, Palenque, and Acayucan have documented increased violence against migrants under the immigration agreement signed between Mexico and the United States. There is a policy of mass deportation of those entering through Mexico's southern border, without a prior process to determine if those deported wish to apply for asylum in Mexico. Migration checks by the National Guard have increased both on roads and in bus terminals, leading migrants to use much more dangerous routes to enter the country. Immigration stations have become overcrowded, violating migrants' rights to freedom and integrity.

As part of its work, Asylum Access had provided accompaniment and legal representation to the Central Americans wishing to apply for legal admission to the country and international protection. Upon receiving the request for legal admission, INM agents refused to accept the application. INM instead sent them to an immigration detention center to initiate immigration proceedings, ignoring their asylum applications.

As a result, AAMX requested precautionary measures from the National Commission for Human Rights (CNDH) to prevent the detention and filed a legal claim for protection against the attacks on their personal freedom having been sent to an immigration detention center contrary to regular procedure.

The District Court ordered the immediate release of the migrants. However, despite this court order, it took over 10 days for the INM to release them. This implies a further violation of the migrants' right to freedom and integrity. This was reported to both the CNDH and the Federal Attorney's Office.

In the context of defending persons seeking asylum, Asylum Access staff received threats for carrying out their work. They were told that if the crime report was not withdrawn then there would be consequences for their safety. We hereby state our concern and rejection of the threats to which the staff at Asylum Access have been subjected.

In this regard, we, the undersigning organizations, are emphatically calling upon the **Secretary of the Interior, Dr. Olga Sánchez Cordero, the Undersecretary for Human Rights, Population and Migration, Mr. Alejandro Encinas Rodríguez, the Commander of the National Guard, Mr. Luis Rodríguez Bucio and the Commissioner of the National Institute of Migration, Mr. Francisco Garduño Yañez**, so that:

- The human rights of those who seek to request refugee status in Mexico are respected.
- The widespread deportations that do not allow for the guarantee nor evaluation as to who needs international protection are stopped.
- The participation of the National Guard in immigration operations is prevented for being contrary to the Law on Migration.
- Migration officials are trained to respect international treaties regarding human rights and that they abstain from carrying out any act of intimidation, threat, or obstruction of the work of human rights defenders.

Upon the **Attorney General of the Republic, Mr. Gertz Manero**, so that:

- He instructs his staff to carry out a thorough investigation into the threats reported by the staff of Asylum Access.

Upon the **National Commission on Human Rights (CNDH)** so that:

- They carry out a thorough investigation into the facts constituting violations of human rights against refugees and those seeking asylum, as well as the violations committed against human rights defenders.

Copied:

- The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) Rapporteur on the Rights of Migrants.
- The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).
- The Office of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC).

Signatory organizations:

- **Alianza Américas**
 - **CAFAMI A.C.**
 - **Clínica Jurídica sobre Refugiados “Alaide Foppa”**
 - **Families Belong Together**
 - **Formación y Capacitación A.C.**
 - **Fundación para la Justicia y Estado Democrático de Derecho (FJEDD)**
 - **Instituto de Estudios y Divulgación sobre Migración A.C.**
 - **Instituto para las Mujeres en la Migración (IMUMI) A.C.**
 - **OXFAM MÉXICO**
 - **Washington Office of Latin American Affairs (WOLA)**
 - **Sin Fronteras, I.A.P.**
 - **Uno de Siete Migrando A.C.**
- **Mexico Coordinating Group:** American Friends Service Committee - Asylum Access México (AAMX) A.C. - Casa del Migrante de Saltillo (Frontera con Justicia A.C.) – Red por los Derechos de la Infancia en México (REDIM) - Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de Derechos Humanos - Programa Casa Refugiados - Sin Fronteras I.A.P.
- **Organizations that make up the Working Group On Migration Policy:** Aldeas Infantiles SOS México, I.A.P.; Alianza Americas; American Friends Services Committee; Asylum Access México; Casa del Migrante Saltillo (Frontera con Justicia A.C.); Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Matías de Córdova, A.C.; Coalición Pro Defensa del Migrante de Baja California; Fundación Appleaseed México, A.C.; **DHIA**. Derechos Humanos Integrales en Acción, A.C.; **FUNDAR** Centro de Análisis e Investigación, A.C.; **IMUMI** Instituto para las Mujeres en la Migración; Iniciativa Ciudadana para la Promoción de la Cultura del Diálogo, A.C.; **INEDIM** Instituto de Estudios y Divulgación sobre Migración; **INSYDE** Instituto para la Seguridad y la Democracia; **M3** Movimiento Migrante Mesoamericano; **REDIM** Red por los Derechos de la Infancia en México; Save The Children México, Sin Fronteras, IAP; **SJM México**, Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes – México; **SMR** Scalabrinianas: Misión para Migrantes y Refugiados; Leticia Calderón, Analista en temas migratorios; Brenda Valdés; Manuel Ángel Castillo, Investigador. **Melissa Vértiz Hernández. Secretaría técnica.**
- **Regional Network of Civil Society for Migration (RROCM):** - **BELIZE:** Help for Progress, Universidad de Belice. - **CANADA:** Canadian Council for Refugees. - **COSTA RICA:** Red de Jóvenes Sin Fronteras, Centro Internacional **CIDEHUM**, Enlaces Nicaragüenses, Hermanas Scalabrinianas, Asociación de Consultores y Asesores Internacionales, Iglesia Luterana Costarricense, HIAS, Fundación GESO, Centro de Derechos Laborales Sin Fronteras, The RET. – **El Salvador:** Grupo de Monitoreo Independiente de El Salvador (**GMIES**), Aldeas Infantiles SOS, Save the Children, Soletterre Strategie di Pace (**ONLUS**), American Friends Service Committee (**AFSC**), Ministerio de San Francis, Instituto Salvadoreño del Migrante (**INSAMI**), Renaceres, Asociación Salvadoreña de Retornados (**ALSARE**), Universidad Centroamericana “José Simeón Cañas” (**UCA**), Fundación para la Justicia y el Estado

Democrático de Derecho (**FJEDD**), Comité Internacional de la Cruz Roja (**CICR**), Alianza Américas. – Estados Unidos: Kids in Need of Defense (**KIND**), El Rescate, Justice in Motion, Alianza Américas, International Detention Coalition (**IDC**). – **GUATEMALA**: Instituto Centroamericano de Estudios Sociales y Desarrollo (**INCEDES**), Misioneros de San Carlos Scalbrinianos, American Friends Service Committee (**AFSC**), Pastoral de Movilidad Humana, Fundación para la Justicia y el Estado Democrático de Derecho (**FJEDD**), Lambda Legal, La Alianza, Programa de Atención, Movilización e Incidencia por la Niñez y la Adolescencia (**PAMI**). – **HONDURAS**: Foro Nacional para las Migraciones en Honduras, Fundación para la Justicia y el Estado Democrático de Derecho (**FJEDD**). – **HAÍTÍ**: CONAMICIDH – **NICARAGUA**: Nicas Migrantes, Grupo de Ex migrantes, Mujeres, Adolescentes y Jóvenes. **MEXICO**: Asylum Access México (**AAMX**) A.C., Fundación para la Justicia y el Estado Democrático de Derecho (**FJEDD**), International Detention Coalition (**IDC**), Sin Fronteras I.A.P. – **PANAMA**: Centro de Asistencia Legal Popular (**CEALP**), RET Internacional, Cruz Roja Panameña, Casa Latinoamericana (**CASALAT**), Asovic, Comisión Asilo del Colegio de Abogados de Panamá, Comisión de Migración del Colegio de Abogados de Panamá, Comisión de Justicia y Paz. **DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**: Mesa de Migrantes y Refugiados de República Dominicana: Fundación Étnica Integral (**LA FEI**), Confederación Autónoma Sindical Clasista (**CASC**), Sociedad Dominicana de Asistencia Jurídica (**SUDAJU**), Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos (**CNDH**), Sociedad de Trabajadores Técnicos (Soy Natec), Pueblo Inmigrante Haitiano (**PUMA**), Fundación Bienestar en Acción (**FBA**), Unión Solidaridad de Inmigrantes (**USI**), Fundación Social de Desarrollo Humano (**FUSDHU**), Plataforma de Iglesias de la Restauración, Centro de desarrollo de trabajadores agrícolas y afines, Movimiento Socio Cultural de Trabajadores Haitianos (**MOSCCTHA**), Centro social y cultural de desarrollo Dominicano Haitiano (**CESCUDHA**), Fundación para el Bienestar Dominicano Haitiano, Pastoral Evangélica de Derechos Humanos, Federación Dominicana de Organizaciones Comunitarias independiente (**FEDOCOMIN**), Organización Manos a manos para salir de la pobreza, Confraternidad Evangélica Cristianas Migrantes, Asociación solidaridad derecho y desarrollo de los huérfanos, Asociación de desarrollo integral de la mujer y jóvenes, Organización de Mujeres Migrantes y Diáspora, Comité de desarrollo de los Bateyes, Iglesia Bautista Fuente de vida Eterna, Iglesia Bautista RD, Asociación de la Comunidad de Inmigrantes y Dominicano Haitianos - **ACMDH.**, Movimiento de Venezolanos Viviendo en RD (**AMOVERD**), Fundación Familia Escogida, Asociación socio Cultural de Ahorro de los inmigrantes Haitianos en RD.

• **Monitoring Collective in Tijuana**: Aldeas Infantiles S.O.S México, American Friends Service Committee, Oficina Regional para América Latina y el Caribe (AFSC), Asylum Access, México (AAMX) A.C. , Espacio Migrante A.C., Families Belong Together, México, Programa de Asuntos Migratorios de la Ibero CDMX- Tijuana.