



The Americas and the Caribbean, August 22, 2018

To Regional Governments
 To all Pertinent International Organizations
 and society in the Americas and the Caribbean

We urge States across the region and members of the international community, to redouble their efforts and work together in the face of the massive forced displacement of more than two million Venezuelans, currently spread among several countries in the Americas. In tandem with the working group standing in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Venezuela, we would like to underscore the importance of generating a coordinated regional response grounded in a stronger protection and prevention of the violation of the rights of migrants, some of whom may be in need of international protection.

The crisis currently faced by the region is unparalleled in the history of our continent due to the sheer quantity of people leaving the country and the relative speed at which this displacement is occurring. As a result, all actors and stakeholders share equal responsibility in strengthening, improving and developing new internal mechanisms that collectively address this increased human mobility.

As concerned citizens, we reject any regressive measures that result in the restriction, elimination or suspension of the fulfillment of the rights of all migrants and asylum seekers, irrespective of their human mobility situation. In this regard, it is with great concern that we note the recent measures adopted by the governments of Ecuador and Peru requiring all Venezuelans to present their passports as the only means of identification to access either country.

Likewise, we reject all attempts, legal or otherwise, to close the borders to prevent the passage of this or any other population in need of international protection or humanitarian aid. These measures are not only contrary to international standards on human rights and international refugee law, but in some cases, laws found in the constitutional order of the countries concerned. Moreover, these types of measures only serve to place people in a situation of extreme vulnerability and facilitate human trafficking, contribute to the separation of families, and limit the ability of a State to identify and provide the specialized attention that certain groups need, among them children, just to cite a few examples.

That is why we propose the following:

- 1.** Given the magnitude of the phenomenon of human mobility in the Americas, we ask States to address this issue through a concerted regional strategy that incorporates extensive consultations with civil society organizations. The goal will be to generate coordinated and complementary alternatives that provide long-term solutions with an integral approach to human rights.
- 2.** Due to the difficult and precarious conditions under which people travel, it is important to address this humanitarian crisis through effective and articulated mechanisms, such as the creation of humanitarian corridors in which people can exercise their right to free mobility with security. That is why we call on States to lead the delivery processes of humanitarian aid in each of their territories, which implies providing temporary places of rest, access to basic foods, access to healthcare systems, particularly for social groups in a situation of greater vulnerability, and any other services necessary to guarantee the life and safety of migrants.
- 3.** States must move forward to regularize the migratory status of these people, to guarantee the enjoyment of the rights of each individual, regardless of their situation of mobility, and thereby work to eliminate the greatest amount of possible risks. States should avoid placing emphasis on whether these people are in transit, temporarily or as a final destination, and focus their efforts on guaranteeing their human dignity. Alternatively, processes of flexibilization of requirements for access to migratory documentation or immigration amnesty could be developed.
- 4.** We request each State to adopt measures for the rapid and effective identification of persons who are in need of international protection, as proposed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Commission. Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR). These measures can be carried out in this context through the implementation of collective recognition of refugee status.
- 5.** Migration regularization measures, such as identifying the need for international protection, are fundamental steps to open up spaces useful for the local integration of migrants.
- 6.** There is a long-standing tradition of legal frameworks on human mobility in the region. As a result, States must ensure that the standards established in the international and regional legal frameworks on this matter are duly enforced. They must also respond to the implementation of the recommendations and advisory opinions of the specialized bodies and mechanisms of the Inter-American Human Rights System and the United Nations. For this reason, we reiterate our

call to States to take proactive measures in the defense of the rights of migrants and reject security-focused approaches that can lead to human rights violations, such as the closing of borders, deportations and collective expulsions, and other forms of criminalization of human mobility.

7. This crisis has activated a large number of social, humanitarian and human rights organizations, whose members and volunteers are dealing with addressing the needs of Venezuelans forced to migrate. States must recognize and support the work of these organizations, facilitating coordination spaces with official entities to ensure an effective response to the situation.

8. It is with special interest that we call on States to take measures to protect the defenders of the rights of migrants and refugees against any threats and reprisals arising from their work.

9. We urge the States to comply with the comprehensive exercise of rights by the Venezuelan population and in this way guarantee a mechanism for access to basic rights and services. In particular, we request greater consideration for the special needs of children, adolescents, women (particularly those who are pregnant), people affected by diseases and with special health requirements, LGBTI population, indigenous people, the elderly, people with disabilities, among others.

10. We call on civil society to act with empathy and solidarity towards all displaced persons, and to avoid any acts of discrimination, xenophobia and violence. We must remember that at some point in the region's history, many countries saw the exodus of its own citizens. For many decades, Venezuela was a receiving country for many. Just as humanitarian measures were demanded to guarantee rights of these groups, we must see an opportunity to repay the help given to their compatriots in each Venezuelan citizen forced to leave their home.

11. We call on the human rights organizations of the Inter-American System and the United Nations to monitor and condemn the human rights violations that occur more and more frequently due to the magnitude of the challenge facing the region in order to identify and work together to address the problem.

12. Finally, we call for the prompt establishment of a hemispheric forum in which all relevant actors can contribute to the identification and design of the best tools and mechanisms to achieve all the objectives set out in this declaration. In response, we express our total commitment to States and international organizations to collaborate in the realization of such an important event.

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Signatory organizations of the Working Group on Venezuelan Human Mobility

Regional

Amnistía Internacional
Asylum Access
Centro por la Justicia y el Derecho Internacional (CEJIL)
International Institute on Race, Equality and Human Rights
Mercy Corps
Oxfam, Regional
Red Jesuita con Migrantes en Latinoamérica y el Caribe (RJM_LAC)
Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados de Latinoamérica y el Caribe (JRS LAC)
Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)

Argentina

Comisión Argentina para Refugiados y Migrantes (CAREF)

Brasil

Caritas Arquidiocesana de São Paulo
Conectas Direitos Humanos
Instituto Migrações e Direitos Humanos (IMDH)
Missão Paz
Serviço Jesuíta a Migrantes e Refugiados Brasil (SJMR Brasil)

Chile

Clínica Jurídica de Migrantes y Refugiados de la Universidad Diego Portales

Colombia

Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento (CODHES)

Costa Rica

Asociación de Consultores y Asesores Internacionales (ACAI)

Ecuador

Misión Scalabriniana

Estados Unidos

Visión Democrática, Diáspora Venezolana (EEUU)

México

Sin Fronteras IAP

Perú

Coordinadora Nacional de Derechos Humanos
Encuentros Servicio Jesuita de la Solidaridad

República Dominicana

Centro de Reflexión y Acción Social Padre Juan Montalvo SJ
Centro para la Observación Migratoria y Desarrollo Social en el Caribe (OBMICA)

Venezuela

Acción Solidaria
Asociación Civil Movimiento Vinotinto
Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Católica Andrés Bello
Centro de Justicia y Paz - CEPAZ
Conferencia Episcopal Venezolana
Pastoral Social Cáritas de Venezuela
Programa Venezolano de Educación-Acción en Derechos Humanos (PROVEA)
Vicaría de Derechos Humanos de Caracas

Adhesions of organizations to the joint letter

A. C. Consorcio, Desarrollo y Justicia, Venezuela
A.C. María Estrella de la Mañana, Venezuela
Acceso a la Justicia, Venezuela
ACCSI Acción Ciudadana Contra el SIDA, Venezuela
ACDemocracia - , Ecuador
Alianza Américas, Regional
Asamblea de las Diásporas/PERUALLIANCE/CDP, México
Asociación Civil Fuerza, Unión, Justicia, Solidaridad y Paz (FUNPAZ AC), Venezuela
Asociación Civil Venezuela en Ecuador AC , Ecuador
Asociación de Pensionados y Jubilados de Venezuela en Uruguay (APEJUVENUR), Uruguay
Asociación Latinoamericana de Educación y Comunicación Popular - ALER, Regional (19 países de ALC)
Asociación Latinoamericana para el Desarrollo Alternativo, ALDEA, Ecuador
Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos- APRODEH, Perú
Asylum Access México (AAMX) A.C., México
C.C.S. - Consultores con Compromiso Social, Ecuador
Cabildo Migrante, Ecuador
CEDEAL, Ecuador

CEDESOC, República Dominicana
Centro de Acción y Defensa por los Derechos Humanos, Venezuela
Centro de Derechos Humanos de la PUCE, Ecuador
Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Metropolitana, Venezuela
Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Matías de Córdova, México
Centro de Documentación en Derechos Humanos "Segundo Montes Mozo S.J." (CSMM), Ecuador
Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS), Argentina
Centro Internacional para los derechos humanos de migrantes y refugiados. (CIDEHUM), Regional, Sede en Costa Rica
CIVILIS Derechos Humanos, Venezuela
Coalición Nacional de Mujeres del Ecuador, Ecuador
CODEVIDA, Coalición de organizaciones por los derechos a la salud y la vida, Venezuela
Colectiva Tejedora Calceta, Ecuador _ Manabí
Colectivo Atopia, Ecuador
Colectivo C.C.S. Consultores con Compromiso Social. Susan Engel, Carlos Leon, Paola C.C.S., Ecuador
Colectivo DDHH Kintyñan, Ecuador

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 Comisión de Derechos Humanos de la Federación del Colegio de Abogados de Venezuela Capítulo Lara, Venezuela
 Comisión Ecuamélica de Derechos Humanos (CEDHU), Ecuador
 Comisión Nacional de Derechos Humanos de la Federación de Colegios de Abogados de Venezuela-Mérida, Venezuela
 Comisión para los Derechos Humanos del Estado Zulia (Codhez), Venezuela
 Comisión para los Derechos Humanos y la Ciudadanía CODEHCIU, Venezuela
 Comité Permanente por la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, Ecuador
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 Federación Nacional de Sociedades de Padres y Representantes -FENASOPADRES-, Venezuela
 Foro Salud Pública Ecuador, Ecuador
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 Fuerza Liberal, Venezuela
 Fundación Aguaclara, Venezuela
 Fundación Causana, Ecuador
 Fundación Desafío, Ecuador
 Fundación Ecuatoriana Equidad, Ecuador
 Fundación Lourdel desarrollo integral de la familia, Ecuador Quito
 Fundación Pakta , Ecuador
 Fundación pro defensa del derecho a la educación y la niñez FUNDAPDEN , Venezuela
 Fundamedioa, Ecuador/Regional
 Fundamujer, Venezuela
 FunDanna, Venezuela Carabobo
 Grupo de Mujeres de San Cristóbal Las Casas, AC, México
 Grupo de Trabajo LGBTI Ecuador, Ecuador
 Grupo Rescate Escolar, Ecuador
 Humano Derecho Radio Estación, Venezuela
 Junta Cívica de Guayaquil, Ecuador
 Juventud Unida en Acción, Venezuela, América Latina y el Caribe
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 Monitor Social A.C. , Venezuela-Nueva Esparta
 Movimiento Autónomo de Mujeres, Nicaragua
 Movimiento Juvenil Scalabriniano Ecuador, Ecuador
 Movimiento MAHATMA GANDHI. Patricia Echeverría Andrade Vocera, Ecuador
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Red Nacional de Juventudes RNJ Nicaragua., Nicaragua
Redes Ayuda A.C., Venezuela
REDIM Red por los Derechos de la Infancia en México, México
RedOrgBaruta, Venezuela
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