

Civil Society Organizations Across the Americas Condemn US Government Expansion of Title 42 and Regional Restrictions to Asylum Access; Sound the Alarm on Growing Humanitarian Crisis

The undersigned organizations condemn the [Biden administration's decision](#), with the cooperation of the [Government of Mexico](#), to expand Title 42. Under this policy, since the October 12th announcement, most Venezuelans who cross the US-Mexico border are denied the right to seek asylum by being expelled to Mexico. The reckless decision to expand Title 42, an unjustified public health policy, violates US and international refugee law and directly undermines commitments made by the administration and 20 other governments at the [Summit of the Americas](#) to provide efficient and adequate care to migrants, access to protection for refugees, and promote legal migration pathways and humane migration management. While the expansion of Title 42 was coupled with the announcement of a parole program for Venezuelans, the program's low numeric cap of 24,000 and strict eligibility requirements— including having a Venezuelan passport and US sponsorship— mean that many Venezuelans in need will not qualify, thus falling short of meaningfully protecting Venezuelans migrants and refugees through the region.

As a result of this cruel and poorly planned policy, thousands of Venezuelans are now [stranded](#) across the region, needlessly exacerbating existing humanitarian crises in Mexico and Panama and creating new humanitarian emergencies in Costa Rica, Honduras, and other countries. There has been an increase in requests for information on the asylum process in Panama, but due to challenges with an under-resourced and outdated asylum system most people do not present a claim. While Mexico has reported an increase in asylum applications among Venezuelans, it is very concerning that the governments of [Mexico](#) and [Panama](#) are increasingly relying on the Venezuelan government to respond to the consequences of Title 42 and sending Venezuelans back on flights with no protection screenings and without monitoring conditions upon return, thereby risking violating the principle of non-refoulement.

It is [well documented](#) that migrants and asylum seekers who are expelled from the United States under Title 42 and other programs face extreme threats such as kidnapping, sexual assault, extortion, and risk to life in Mexico, although Mexico has [increasingly](#) become a destination country for a significant number of asylum seekers. In Panama's Darién, migrants and asylum seekers face [numerous](#) and increasing perils including the use of more dangerous routes where they are victims of more violent crimes, including sexual gender-based violence to punish and humiliate, survival sex, trafficking, and involuntary servitude by criminal organizations. Options for swift access to protection remain limited in Mexico, Costa Rica, and Panama, and migrant and refugee services along the migratory routes, cities, and border areas in these countries were already overwhelmed.

The LA Declaration on Migration and Protection signed at the Summit still offers the signatory governments the opportunity to establish a rights-respecting, regional approach to protection and migration management. We welcome the [announcement](#) of over \$817 million in new U.S. assistance to support the declaration's efforts, including \$376 million in additional humanitarian assistance to respond to the Venezuela regional crisis. However, the **United States must lead by example in responding to the displacement of Venezuelans and take the immediate steps to:**

1. Take all legally permissible steps to restore access to asylum at the US-Mexico border for all asylum seekers, including by ending the expansion of Title 42 for Venezuelans.
2. Increase the cap for the special parole program for Venezuelans and make adjustments to the program's eligibility criteria so that it is accessible to vulnerable populations, including those Venezuelans currently stuck in Central America and Mexico.
3. Work to rapidly build capacity for the US refugee resettlement program throughout Latin America, to ensure Venezuelans and other refugees from the region are able to benefit
4. Consider, in coordination with governments in the region, additional rapid response resources to meet the urgent needs of refugees and migrants arriving in or transiting through the Darién Gap in Panama and the rest of the migratory route in Central America and Mexico.
5. Encourage the Government of Mexico to provide temporary resident status for humanitarian reasons with work authorization (TVRH), renewable for up to four years to all Venezuelans who entered the country before October 19th so that they are able to apply for the US parole program or seek refugee status in Mexico without the threat of deportation.
6. Work together with regional governments, in consultation with the International Organization on Migration (IOM) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), so that Venezuelans are properly screened for protection considerations, provided information about the US parole program and immigration options in other countries, and that they are never sent back to unsafe conditions, like the international community has recognized currently exist in Venezuela. Venezuelans who are [fleeing persecution](#) should not be sent back to Venezuela, in direct violation of the principle of non-refoulement.

We also urge **all signatory countries of the Los Angeles Declaration** to move quickly on the following recommendations **to adhere to the commitment to promoting humane migration management**:

1. Increase financial and humanitarian assistance to institutions and non-governmental organizations providing services to refugees and migrants along the transit route.
2. Invest in systems of welcome for individuals experiencing forced migration, including access to housing, translation services, psychological and medical care, access to education, legal representation, and employment opportunities.
3. Implement protection-sensitive entry systems that identify protection needs, prevent refoulement, and ensure timely access to asylum procedures, following the roadmap provided by the [UN Refugee Agency 10-Point Plan of Action on Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration](#).
4. Conduct regular human rights vetting and oversight for all security units involved in migration enforcement activities, including police, immigration, and other forms of non-military and military security in order to combat crime and human rights violations against refugees and migrants.
5. Cease externalization of borders, [including visa regimes](#) and other strategies that can negatively impact individuals without resources and create barriers for them to seek protection.

6. Provide financial support to undertake a rigorous capacity building program across the hemisphere employing the OHCHR – [UN Office of Counter-Terrorism Human Rights at International Borders: A Trainer’s Guide on border governance and the OHCHR Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights at International Borders](#). Such a program should target institutions and academies that train all stakeholders involved in migration management, including but not limited to migration services, border police, and national guards.
7. Conduct sustained consultation with migrants, asylum seekers, refugees, returnees, and host communities as well as migrants’ rights organizations, human rights organizations, and Indigenous-led organizations to receive input on plans related to the implementation of the LA Declaration and in monitoring progress.
8. Countries in the region should also establish communication, collaboration, and referral mechanisms to grant access to international protection and justice. Transnational mechanisms should be created to ensure appropriate protection screenings, access to justice, and case management for people on the move. For example, this could include creating a humanitarian corridor for the most vulnerable.

So long as signatories to the LA Declaration invest in and expand harmful policies of deterrence at the expense of investing in systems of welcome, regional cooperation on migration will effectively function as border externalization and burden-shifting, to the detriment of rights of those seeking protection and a secure and prosperous Americas region. Instead, all governments should work to support the integration, regularization, and access to international protection and other legal pathways for migrants and refugees across the Western Hemisphere as outlined in the LA Declaration.

Sincerely,

Al Otro lado
Alabama Latino AIDS Coalition (ALAC)
Alianza Americas
American Friends Service Committee
Anti-Defamation League (ADL)
Apoyo a Migrantes Venezolanos
Asociación Coordinadora Comunitaria de Servicios para la Salud GUATEMALA (ACCSS)
Asociación Pop No’j (Guatemala)
Asociación Rumiñahui
Asylum Access México (AAMX) A.C.
Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project (ASAP)
Bloque Latinoamericano sobre Migración
Break the Cycle Project
Casa Monarca. Humanitarian Aid for Migrants
Center for Democracy in the Americas (CDA)
Center for Gender & Refugee Studies (CGRS)
Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL)
Center for Victims of Torture
Centro de Acción Social Menonita, Honduras (CASM)

Centro de Atención a la Familia Migrante Indígena (CAFAMI)
 Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Universidad Católica Andrés Bello
 Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Matías de Córdova A.C.
 Centro de Derechos Humanos Texas Sur (CDHTS)//South Texas Human Rights Center
 Centro de Documentación en Derechos Humanos "Segundo Montes Mozo SJ" (CSMM)
 Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)
 Coalición Pro Defensa del Migrante, A.C.
 Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
 Colectivo de Asuntos Migratorios de Ixcán (CAMI)
 Comisión de Acción Social Menonita
 Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos
 Comité de Familiares de Migrantes Desaparecidos del Centro de Honduras (COFAMICENH)
 Communities United for Status & Protection (CUSP)
 Community Asylum Seekers Project
 Consultora Movilidad Humana, Género y Derechos Humanos
 Consultoría para los Derechos Humanos y el Desplazamiento (CODHES)
 Disciples Immigration Legal Counsel
 Dorothy Day House, Washington DC
 Equipo de Estudios Comunitarios y Acción Psicosocial (ECAP)
 Estancia del Migrante González y Martínez
 Familias Unidas en Acción
 Fe y Alegría- Panamá
 Fellowship Southwest
 Florence Immigrant & Refugee Rights Project
 Florida Immigrant Coalition (FLIC)
 Formación y Capacitación/RED mesoamericana mujer salud y migración
 Franciscan Action Network
 Fundación Defensoría Migrante
 Fundación para la Justicia y el Estado Democrático de Derechos, A C.
 Fundación para la Promoción de los Derechos Humanos y Justicia de Paz
 Grupo de Trabajo Sobre Política Migratoria-GTPM: Aldeas Infantiles SOS México, I.A.P.;
 Alianza Américas; American Friends Services Committee; Asylum Access México (AAMX)
 A.C.; 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;
 Comisión Mexicana de Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos; Fundación
 Appleseed México, A.C.; DHIA. Derechos Humanos Integrales en Acción, A.C.; IMUMI
 Instituto para las Mujeres en la Migración; Iniciativa Ciudadana para la Promoción de la
 Cultura del Diálogo, A.C.; 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; Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes México;
 Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados; SMR Scalabrinianas: Misión con Migrantes y Refugiados;
 Leticia Calderón, Analista en temas migratorios; Brenda Valdés; Elba Coria; Manuel Ángel
 Castillo, Investigador; Gloria Ciria Valdéz Gardea, fundadora y coordinadora del Seminario
 Niñez Migrante; IDC International Detention Coalition (Observadoras). Claudia Martínez
 Medrano, Jocelín Mariscal Agreda y Melissa A. Vértiz Hernández, Secretaria Técnica.
 HIAS

Hispanic Federation
Hope Border Institute
Human Rights First
Immigrant Defenders Law Center
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project
Immigration Equality
Instituto para las Mujeres en la Migración (IMUMI)
Interfaith Welcome Coalition - San Antonio
International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP)
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA
Justice in Motion
Kino Border Initiative
La 72, Hogar- Refugio para personas migrantes
La Raza Community Resource Center
Latin America Working Group (LAWG)
Latinas en Poder
Los Angeles Center for Law and Justice
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Mennonite Central Committee U.S.
Mesa de Coordinación Transfronteriza Migraciones y Género
Migrant Center for Human Rights
National Immigration Law Center
National Immigration Project (NIPNLG)
National Justice for Our Neighbors
National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
New York Immigration Coalition
Observatorio Ciudadano
Oxfam America
Project Amiga
Project Lifeline
Quixote Center
RAICES
Red Jesuita con Migrantes - Guatemala
Red Jesuita con Migrantes (RJM - CANA)
Red Jesuita con Migrantes Latinoamericana y el Caribe (RJM -LAC)
REDIM
Refugees International (RI)
San Bernardino Free Them All
Save the Children México
Scalabrinianas Misión con Migrantes y Refugiados (SMR)
Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes - México
Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados (JRS) México
Sin Fronteras IAP
Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice
Tahirih Justice Center
Texas Civil Rights Project

Unitarian Universalist Service Committee
Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA)
#WelcomeWithDignity
Wind of the Spirit Immigrant Resource Center
Witness at the Border
Women's Refugee Commission (WRC)
Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights