



national network for immigrant and refugee rights

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A CALL TO ACTION

INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS DAY

DECEMBER 18, 2009

Following another challenging year, the National Network for Immigrant & Refugee Rights (NNIRR) invites you to close the year by organizing and supporting events to commemorate **December 18th - International Migrants Day**, and by reaffirming our commitment to the rights of all immigrants by joining us to call for an end to police collaboration with ICE, detentions and deportations, and for climate justice as well as immigration reform that recognizes the dignity and human rights of all immigrants.

About December 18, International Migrants Day

On December 18, 1990, the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families* was approved by the United Nations General Assembly, after almost a decade of governmental negotiations and pressure from migrant rights advocates around the world. Following lobbying efforts by advocates and migrant groups including NNIRR, in December 2000 the United Nations proclaimed December 18 as **International Migrants Day**.

Since 2001, in solidarity with other migrant rights organizations around the world, NNIRR has commemorated this day with members and allies. Each year we assist growing numbers of local events and initiatives with widely-endorsed call-to-actions, educational and organizing materials, and commemorative posters and t-shirts.

(For more details about December 18, visit www.nnirr.org/december18; for international events, visit www.migrantwatch.org and www.december18.net.)

International Migrants Day 2009

2009 has been a challenging year in the struggle for immigrant rights, as heated debates around immigration reform coincided with ongoing attacks and abuses in immigrant communities.

In spite of a new Administration, we have continued to witness and experience the assault on the human rights of immigrants: families, workers and entire communities subjected to intense policing, hundreds of thousands detained, and due process rights blatantly violated and ignored. NNIRR's recently-released human rights report, "*Guilty by Immigration Status*", documents how inter-agency and local police collaboration around immigration law enforcement, especially through the 287g agreements and the Secure Communities Program, have undermined community safety and made immigrants even more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

The global economic crisis further burdened already vulnerable immigrant communities around the world, and those in the U.S. were no exception. For the first time in decades, immigrants were forced to reduce their remittances to their families abroad, who themselves faced increasing hardships as most countries in the Global South were not immune to the crippling effects of the crisis. Many immigrants also become subject to scapegoating, as xenophobic rhetoric blamed immigrants and clouded failed economic policies. Many ruthless employers also used the crisis to further exploit their immigrant workers.

As this year's International Migrants Day also falls during the pinnacle of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UN Climate Summit) in Copenhagen, we also recognize the estimated 25 million people around the world who have suffered from forced displacement from their homelands and communities due to the devastating effects of climate change, more than those displaced by war. This number is expected to go up to 250 million in less than 50 years. By 2100, more than 20 countries are expected to experience 30-60% of agricultural and food production loss, 2.3 billion people will be threatened by mega-droughts, and almost 90% of people in rural communities around the world will lose their livelihoods.

Also on December 18 this year, NNIRR will be part of an international coalition that will launch a year-long international campaign to ratify the Migrant Workers Convention, to culminate on the 20th Anniversary of the adoption of the campaign on December 18th, 2010.

In recognition of the challenges ahead of us, NNIRR calls on organizations and individuals around the country to commemorate this year's International Migrants Day with a local event or action highlighting the following:

- **Real immigration reform that recognizes and respects the dignity and human rights of immigrants, regardless of status.**
- **An end to immigration policing, raids, detentions and deportations. In particular, we call for immediate moratorium of all immigration enforcement measures through July to help ensure a safe, equitable, and thorough 2010 Census;**
- **Protection and redress for communities displaced by the effects of climate changes, and an immediate halt and reversal of the levels of carbon emissions;**

We also renew our call for the United States to ratify the 1990 UN Convention on the Protection of Rights All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

We encourage activities and messages that challenge the Administration and Congress to implement humanitarian policies and practices -- to decriminalize immigration status and protect the rights of all workers. We must continue to demand a fair and just immigration policy that is "de-linked" from national security, and which includes the demilitarization of our borders.

Especially on International Migrants Day, when we recognize and honor migrants throughout the world, we need to raise awareness about the need for policies that ameliorate involuntary displacement and forced migration, including climate justice, fair trade and sustainable community development, and fulfilling the need and access to healthcare, education, housing, jobs and safe, healthy environments.

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To spotlight these urgent petitions, NNIRR encourages you and your community to organize a local event on or around December 18, 2009. Coming at the year's end, these events can also serve to bring together your constituents, communities and allies for a moment of reflection, celebration, and/or protest – and to recommit to the challenges and opportunities we will have to fight for the human rights of all immigrants in the coming year. These can take place at any number of places and in various forms, including an afternoon action at a Federal Building, an evening gathering at a place of worship, a potluck dinner at a local community center, a film showing at a local community college etc. This year, we also encourage you to consider joining TIGRA (Transnational Institute for Grassroots Research and Action) in one of their local events around the country from December 10-18 (contact: info@laligaglobal.org).

We encourage you to publicize your activity in the media to call attention to the significance of the day. We also encourage groups to coordinate their efforts with others locally, and to reach out to allies through this event.

NNIRR will collect information on all these activities to publicize them nationally and internationally, to raise the collective power of grassroots community action. **We will also circulate a national press release on December 15, 2009, highlighting your events, and post this information on our website.**

If you plan to organize an activity for International Migrants Day, please send details by going to this webpage (<http://org2.democracyinaction.org/o/5702/t/4329/signUp.jsp?key=1538>) and filling out the details of the action/event. For more information, contact:

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