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August 2018

National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

An update for our supporters

From the Executive Director

Dear Friends,

As one of our summer interns commented, “*Time flies when every day is a crisis*”. Indeed, this year has been a particularly wild ride, with an almost daily onslaught of anti-immigrant actions, announcements and policies under the Trump Administration.

The most prominent and traumatic issue, of course, has been the separation of families at the border. Although immigrant families have been separated over the decades due to workplace raids, targeted and “collateral” arrests, detentions and deportations throughout the country, the purposeful, manipulative and inhumane separation of families deeply affected the hearts and minds of millions of people.

For days on end, we received calls from people from around the country—people who simply wanted to know what they could do to stop this unthinkable government action. We answered calls from the media wanting to visit detention centers and interview families, and were glad to welcome many new donors and members who stepped forward against the cruel policies we have all witnessed this year.

We share our thanks for those who have traveled with us and who continue to join us in this fight for rights and justice for ALL.

As we head toward the end of summer and look toward the important mid-term elections this November, we give this look-back of the year-to-date for NNIRR, and for the migrant rights movement here and internationally.

Best,

Catherine Tactaquin



photo by Lillian Galeo

Immigrant Rights & Justice: Mounting Public Pressure

As we have mentioned, the family separation issue has dominated the immigrant rights movement and national media for the past few months. Not only is the issue unresolved, it has spurred awareness and expanded calls for justice. There is mounting public pressure against actions of ICE—the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement—and the surfacing of the calls to #AbolishICE. Our blog, *The Problem is Bigger than ICE*, raised awareness about the major policies that fuel ICE. See <http://bit.ly/biggerthanICE>

We raised the bigger issues of criminalization of immigration policy, the unnecessary detention of immigrants, and the deportations of undocumented immigrants—resulting in the separation of hundreds of thousands of children from their parents in recent years alone. We also made clear that the separation of families is not just a recent border concern; it has been embedded in the criminalization of undocumented workers for more than 30 years, and has been used historically by the US government against other populations, including Native Americans. Finally, we called attention to the need for Congress to slash funding for Trump’s dangerous enforcement budget, a key step towards dismantling a system of inhumane, punitive criminalization of immigrants.

Non-Stop Protest & Advocacy

- **Urged support for the “Dream Act” and a resolution to the “DACA issue”**, as the program was slated to end in March, endangering the status of hundreds of thousands of young undocumented immigrants (legal action has kept it in place, including the filing of renewals—but we may see more legal activity before year’s end).
- **Co-signed letters to Congress opposing punitive immigration legislation and policy announcements**; supported Temporary Protective Status (TPS) for Nepal, Honduras, Nicaragua, and other countries denied renewal of status by the Trump Administration; and opposed Trump’s Muslim Ban, which the Supreme Court let stand.
- **Organized a national sign-on letter opposing National Guard deployment at the border.**
- **Rallied members to June 1 and 14 national action days on separated families**, joining hundreds of thousands of people throughout the country in a wave of protests against the government’s “zero tolerance” policy, detentions, and deportations.
- **Continued to monitor legislation, sharing news and updates** to the NNIRR Legislative Tracker on our website: <http://bit.ly/LegislativeTracker>
- **Shared on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram** need-to-know news and critical commentary on issues such as access to asylum; Administration efforts to “de-naturalize” U.S. citizens; the significant expansion of workplace raids throughout the country; and much more.



photo by Lillian Galeado

From the International Desk

NNIRR has worked with global migrant rights partners for more than 25 years, and this past year we focused on advocacy for a strong UN Global Compact for Migration during intergovernmental negotiations at the UN in New York. The monthly negotiations concluded in July, with final approval set for December in Morocco. While the Trump Administration had withdrawn from the process last December, NNIRR and other U.S.-based groups continued to press for an agreement that centered human rights standards and addressed the critical issues of migrants “in vulnerable situations”—such as those who come to the U.S. seeking safety and survival.

Our experience at borders, engaging national, state and local policies to address due process, adjustment of status, detention, social protections and more, informed our advocacy towards a more inclusive and non-punitive, non-deterrent approach to global migration. Even though the Compact will be a “non-binding” document, it provides a platform for the global human rights community to press for government adherence and accountability in implementation. For more background go to our website: <http://bit.ly/CompactforMigration>

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Climate Change, Migration & Human Rights

Working for many years to bridge environmental justice and immigrant rights, NNIRR is now helping to lift up migrant rights within the movement for climate justice. We are participating in activities around the Global Climate Action Summit in September in San Francisco, and will draw connections as well during the UN and GFMD events in Morocco at the end of the year.

In September we will moderate a panel on “Migration, Immigration & Climate Change” during the Global Climate and Health Forum side event, and we will work with grassroots and progressive climate justice partners to raise awareness on this important intersection. We will also debut our latest educational resource fact sheet on Climate Justice and Migration.

During UN negotiations in February, NNIRR Executive Director Catherine Tactaquin presented at a multi-stakeholder hearing on “Combating xenophobia and stereotypes with evidence-based narratives”. She emphasized the important role public officials at multiple levels can play in countering anti-immigrant narratives and hate speech, and moreover, in leading and enacting policy changes that promote equity and inclusion.

She also provided comments to the Compact process Co-Facilitators in February and in May, urging that a **spectrum of options to regularize immigration status should be considered as an alternative to returns and deportations of irregular migrants**, and reiterated support for an expansion of legal pathways for migration. For full statement go here: <http://bit.ly/NNIRR-UN-Statement>

NNIRR co-convoked a side-event in March with the Women in Migration Network (WIMN) during Compact negotiations and the annual session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, addressing the intersections of the #MeToo movement and the experiences of migrant women who face rampant sexual assault, harassment, abuse and ultimately lack of access to justice.

During the remainder of this year we are collaborating on proposed plans for implementation of the Global Compact, and organizing participation in three global convenings in Morocco in December: the Civil Society Days of the Global Forum on Migration & Development (GFMD); the Peoples’ Global Action on Migration, Development and Human Rights (PGA); and the Intergovernmental Conference to adopt the Compact. We hope to engage with partners in activities to spotlight border and other deterrent policies in the U.S. and elsewhere.



Media & Education

Staff and interns have worked around the clock to provide members, the media and public audiences information and analyses of the fast-moving developments stemming from the Trump Administration’s attacks on immigrant communities—and to share strategic responses and actions from the movement.

- Catherine Tactaquin, NNIRR’s ED, has appeared on Berkeley’s Pacifica radio station KPFA more than half a dozen times this year, and has fielded media questions from across the country, getting our messaging into mainstream and local media, and also referring reporters to speak with border advocates.
- We co-hosted an event with Haas Institute for Race and Culture & Priority Africa Network (PAN) called “People on the Move”, a visual performance and conversation about global migration.
- Catherine presented at numerous events and conferences to diverse audiences, including Bennington College, VT on detention; at Merritt College on “Immigration Under Trump” and at Lincoln Families in Oakland on “UndocuJoy”.
- We sent regular informative e-blasts—critical news and analysis and action alerts to our 8,000 supporters and to thousands more on Facebook and Twitter.
- Our trusty and diligent interns helped us research, update and push out five timely fact sheets:
 - The Immigration & Border Enforcement Budget
 - What is Operation Streamline?
 - Corporate Interests and Immigration Detention
 - Corporate Interests & Border Militarization
 - Climate Change & Migration.

photo from Delaware Public Media



CALLS TO ACTION

- Reunite and release immigrant families
 - Pass the Dream Act!
 - Save Temporary Protected Status (TPS)
 - Welcome 75K refugees

nnirr.org



Local Spotlight:

The **South Texas Human Rights Center**, STHRC, in Falfurrias, Texas has been on the frontlines fighting for human rights at the border under the direction of Eddie Canales, also NNIRR's Board Chair. The STHRC's mission is "dedicated to the promotion, protection, defense and exercise of human rights and dignity in South Texas", and works to end migrant deaths and help families find their missing loved ones.

STHRC has built and resupplied 100+ life saving water stations in desert areas covering 1200 sq. miles. They operate a hotline for families to report the missing, conduct search and rescue with the family information provided, and run a forensic recovery and identification project to allow closure for families who have lost a loved one crossing the border.

Mr. Canales has been all over the media this past year, appearing on 60 Minutes and quoted in articles in the Houston Chronicle, Washington Post, Texas Observer, and many more, highlighting the impacts of militarization of the border and the human rights crisis of increasing migrant deaths. Canales says that about 50 % of the people reported missing eventually are located, mainly in detention centers, but the whereabouts of the other half remain unknown. Watch Mr. Canales' 60 Minutes interview here: <http://bit.ly/STHRC-60Minutes>

On the inside...

■ NNIRR's Board of Directors met in January for a 2-day retreat to map the future of NNIRR in the Trump era and beyond with a renewed commitment as a center for human rights advocacy and education for immigrants and refugees.

■ NNIRR hosted 3 interns this year and we want to give a giant shout out to thank them for the dedication, hard work and humor they brought to the office. They each leave us having produced quality research and educational materials that are now available resources. Hannah Schnell, Mrittika Ghosh and Ruby Ferguson



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