



*International Women's Day 2017:*

## **For Mobilization and Resistance To Claim the Human Rights of Women in Migration**

From Johannesburg to LA, from Buenos Aires to the UK, an upsurge of detentions, deportations and returns of migrants and refugees is taking place in an environment of heightened racism and xenophobia. Many governments and politicians are using right-wing populism and authoritarianism to whip up fears and unleash anti-migrant, misogynist, racist policies. And they are finding fertile terrain for scapegoating in nations ground down by decades of neo-liberalism and austerity. The impact can be devastating, as families are divided and women experience a high toll among those who migrate, remain behind, and see their loved ones deported.

**On this International Women's Day, the Women in Migration Network (WIMN) affirms that human rights are extended to all migrants and refugees, regardless of citizenship or migration status.**

WIMN's members around the world are reporting the multiple ways that migrants are being demonized and criminalized -- realities that include all sectors, races and ages of migrant men, women and children:

- In Argentina, formerly a model for the human rights of migrants, the President has issued a new executive order that gives migration authorities broad discretion and promotes deportation, blaming migrants for crimes, and the country has opened its first detention center for migrants.
- There was xenophobic violence and an anti-immigrant march in Pretoria, South Africa in February. The Mayor of Johannesburg is blaming crime and prostitution on migrants and there is fear of raids and mass deportations as happened after xenophobic violence two years ago.
- In France and the Netherlands, upcoming elections include right-wing populists who are using anti-immigrant rhetoric for political gain.
- In the UK, the government has worked to create a hostile environment for undocumented migrants, including restrictions to primary health care and the right to rent accommodation in the private sector. They are seeking private data on school children to help target migrant parents and families for deportation. They are separating families where a spouse is a migrant by enforcing strict income thresholds that are discriminatory on grounds including gender, ethnicity, and location within the UK.
- In the United States, a Muslim ban restricts entry from six Muslim-majority countries and immigration agents have wide discretion to round up and deport undocumented immigrants, sowing confusion and fear in communities.

**There are also important signs of organizing, solidarity and resistance around the world --** such as when dozens of "sister marches" took place in January, connecting to the massive women's marches in the U.S. the day after Donald Trump's inauguration.

Today, International Women's Day, WIMN reaffirms its call for human rights FOR ALL, and demands that states deliver on these rights, including economic and social rights, and fulfil their commitments to international law.

***We recognize that barriers to realizing rights are greater for women who experience multiple oppressions, including race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, immigration status, age, or disability.***

WIMN embraces the spirit of the global call for an **International Women's Strike** and for a feminism of the 99% that challenges neo-liberalism, racism and xenophobia, neo-colonialism, war, intervention, occupation, and militarization of law enforcement within national borders. Around the world today, women are taking to the streets and in many cases will stop paid and unpaid work, to lift up the essential contribution that women make to the economy.

**WIMN member organizations will be joining marches today** in New York, Buenos Aires and other cities. In Chicago, a women's circle hosted by Casa Michoacan and Alianza Americas will share stories and discuss opportunities for cross-network actions, while showcasing women artists.

We join global partners in affirming "**No Borders on Gender Justice**," a call to stand together for gender justice and migrant rights. Inspired by the March 8<sup>th</sup> International Women's Strike, this coalition works to ignite resistance to the conditions that have produced right-wing populism and given rise to authoritarian governance. New travel bans in the US have made it impossible for many in civil society to participate in United Nations deliberations such as the UN Commission on the Status of Women (UN-CSW). We join in demanding their access to this and other UN spaces.

As the UN addresses women's economic empowerment at the UN-CSW, and embarks on negotiations for a new Global Compact on Migration, we lift up the role of women in migration in the global economy. Women's unpaid work sustains households when spouses, sons and daughters have migrated. Migrant women workers are an essential part of a global care, production, and service economy chains; yet are frequently underpaid, abused and criminalized. Nations want migrant women's work without extending them rights and citizenship. **We demand living wages, full human rights and labor protections for women, including women in migration, an end to austerity and women's full access to all social welfare benefits necessary to live free of poverty, regardless of migration status.**

Governments must take measures to prevent and to ensure justice and reparations for all forms of violence, including gender-based violence, whether committed by private actors, police, soldiers, border agents or other state actors. Governments must remove barriers to migrants seeking safety and economic stability, end the criminalization of migration, and stop raids, arrests, deportations, detentions and other police actions against immigrant communities. States should ensure safe passage, legal status and lives of dignity for migrants and refugees, including those fleeing wars, civil and gender-based violence, poverty and climate disasters. Women human rights defenders and their families must also be protected. Migrant women, including migrant domestic workers, are among the most abused in the workplace. WIMN lifts up the call of Global Unions to end gender-based violence in the workplace, including the need for an ILO convention to address this reality.

WIMN creates spaces that give voice to women in migration at all levels, including national and international policy arenas. We support building strong cross-sectoral movements to hold governments accountable. We salute all those women who are impacted by migration and who daily take courageous acts for themselves, their families and their communities. As we embark on an intense period of global negotiations on migration policy, ***we pledge to intensify our efforts to mobilize and advocate for full human rights for women in migration, their families and communities.***