



national network for immigrant and refugee rights

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For Immediate Release

December 17, 2009

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On International Migrants Day, December 18:

U.S. Immigrant Rights Groups Call for Immigration Reform That Recognizes Dignity and Human Rights of Immigrants

(Oakland, CA) Immigrant rights groups urged today, International Migrants Day (December 18) that the U.S. government adopts immigration policy reforms and practices that recognize and respect the dignity and human rights of all immigrants, regardless of status. The National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (NNIRR) commended Rep. Luis Gutierrez for introducing landmark legislation in the House of Representatives to reform immigration policies this week but also called for an end to existing policies and programs that criminalize and abuse immigrant communities.

“We still have a long way to go to achieve meaningful immigration reforms,” declared Catherine Tactaquin, NNIRR’s Executive Director. “In the meantime, immigrants are experiencing intense policing, tens of thousands are detained, and their due process rights blatantly violated and ignored.” She continued, “While Rep. Gutierrez’s proposed legislation includes some needed protections for our vulnerable communities, it continues to treat immigration as a ‘national security’ issue and stops short of doing away with the most egregious aspects of our flawed immigration system.”

NNIRR’s recently-released human rights report, “*Guilty by Immigration Status*”, documents how inter-agency and local police collaboration around immigration law enforcement, especially around the “287g” agreements and the Secure Communities Program, has increased racial profiling against immigrants and has actually undermined community safety, making immigrants more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation

“Reprieve from these inhumane enforcement practices and a pathway to legalization go hand-in-hand,” stated Laura Rivas, co-author of the report. “Until these abuses are immediately

addressed, immigration reform will remain a pipe dream for millions of immigrants around the country.”

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, NNIRR also called attention to the estimated 25 million people around the world who have suffered from forced displacement due to the devastating effects of climate change, more than those displaced by war.

“Scientists expect the number of those displaced by climate change to reach 250 million in less than 50 years,” continued Tactaquin. “As one of the world’s top polluters, the U.S. is obligated to respond to this crisis and offer protection to the millions of climate refugees who have lost their homelands and communities directly due to U.S. policies and corporate practices.”

International Migrants Day was recognized by the United Nations in 2000 to commemorate the passage of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (commonly referred to as the Migrant Workers’ Convention) on December 18, 1990. NNIRR is also joining in an international campaign launched today, towards the 20th anniversary of Convention’s passage, to promote its ratification around the world, and is renewing its call to the U.S. to ratify this critical Convention as an essential step towards securing humane immigration policy.

Immigrant community groups around the country are marking International Migrants Day with press conferences, candle-light vigils, cultural events, film-screenings etc. in cities such as Tucson, AZ; San Francisco, CA; Chicago, IL; New York, NY; and Seattle, WA. (To view a partial list of events as well as details and contact information for each, go to: www.nnirr.org/resources/docs/Dec18ListofEvents2009.pdf)

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