



national network for immigrant and refugee rights

310 Eighth Street, Suite 303 | Oakland, California 94607 | 510.465.1984 | 510.465.1885 fax | nnirr@nnirr.org | www.nnirr.org

Celebrate International Migrants Day -- December 18

Raise awareness of the human cost of the detention and deportation of immigrant women, men and children

December 18 is International Migrants Day, and marks the 21st anniversary of the passage of the United Nations' International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

This will be the 11th year of worldwide celebrations and other activities. This annual day, proclaimed by the United Nations in 2000, recognizes the role and contributions of migrants throughout the world, raises awareness of their human rights, and calls attention to the continuing need for enhanced protections against exploitation, abuse and violence. *Migrant rights are human rights!*

In the United States, we call attention to a year of record deportations, coupled with ongoing detentions of immigrant men, women and children that separate and destabilize families and undermine community health.

Without an end to punitive immigration enforcement programs and practices, nor any foreseeable, durable solutions to regularize the status of undocumented immigrants, these most vulnerable members of our immigrant community will experience another generation of hardship. And with many immigrants living in "mixed status" families, these challenges and harsh conditions for the undocumented filter throughout our diverse immigrant community.

We urge members, friends and allies to organize activities to honor our immigrant communities and to call attention to the urgent need for fair and just reforms that will give access to safe, healthy and productive lives. Let's send a message to elected officials and government institutions at all levels—local, state and federal—to do away with discriminatory and anti-immigrant policies and initiatives and to engage in constructive policy debates in this upcoming election year.

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.

This year, International Migrants Day comes on the heels of the 5th Global Forum on Migration and Development held in Geneva, Switzerland where governments finally began to acknowledge “protections” for the most vulnerable migrants, including those in irregular status.

Coming at the year’s end, International Migrants Day activities 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.

NNIRR will issue a press release for December 18 that includes information on local activities. Please forward information on your activity along with contact information to Colin Rajah at crajah@nnirr.org. For questions, please email Colin or call 510.465.1984 ext. 306.

Background information and resources on International Migrants Day and the International Convention on the Protection of Rights for All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families are available at <http://www.nnirr.org/~nnirrorg/drupal/programs/international-migrant-rights/international-migrants-day>.

Information on December 18 activities in other countries is also available at <http://globalmigrantsaction.org>, website for the Global Day of Action: A Day of Global Action Against Racism and for the Rights of Migrants, Refugees and Displaced People.