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Our Future Lies in the Fight for the Rights of All!

**Defend the Rights of Refugees!
No Human Being Is Illegal**



Migrant caravan leaves Tapachula on Guatemala-Mexico border heading to U.S. border, December 24, 2023.

Around the world, peoples everywhere are fighting for the rights of refugees and demanding an end to the brutal repression they face, including mass unjust and illegal deportations and detentions. U.S. wars and interference have given rise to one of the largest ever increases in the numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons in just the past year. According to the UN Refugee Agency, by the middle of 2023, for the first time in recorded history, the number of people forcibly displaced is now over 110 million, with over 36.4 million refugees.[1]

The reality that criminal U.S. wars are main contributors is seen in the fact that 52 per cent of all displaced persons are from Afghanistan, Syria and Ukraine with all the others also involving the U.S. and former colonial powers. The worldwide crisis of the European nation-state, which is also the basis for the U.S. and many other states, is to blame for current catastrophes. The state arrangements have failed and the rule of law established no longer functions. It is no longer followed by the U.S. and former colonial powers or their appeasers, who are now seeking to eliminate any restraints on their striving for power and impunity to use police powers. This includes eliminating international conventions such as UN conventions on the treatment of refugees. It also

means that any notions that the people must define the state and its aims, beginning with their own rights and duties as members of the polity, are to be discarded. As Immigration Minister Marc Miller's recent comments about who "should be Canadian" indicate, new laws for asylum and citizenship are being considered. These are laws where it is the state that defines the citizens on a basis which conforms to the values the state decides. This is precisely what the apartheid Israeli state does. There is not even a hint of a modern democracy in such arrangements

According to attempts to introduce this foundation for laws, the peoples of the world are disposable and they are to have no say in the matter. This is why the U.S., Canada and their ilk had no difficulty depriving the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) of funds and why they stand by while starvation, dehydration and disease set in and genocide occurs before the eyes of the world. So too the situation in Sudan and other countries is desperate and the problem of providing for refugees is based on the most inhuman considerations possible.

Syrians account for a large percentage of refugees globally, 6.5 million people forced to leave. In Ukraine the U.S. continues to block a negotiated settlement, which Russia has called for, and pursues a proxy war where Ukrainians are used as cannon fodder and more than 5 million people are internally displaced and another 6.3 million have fled the country.

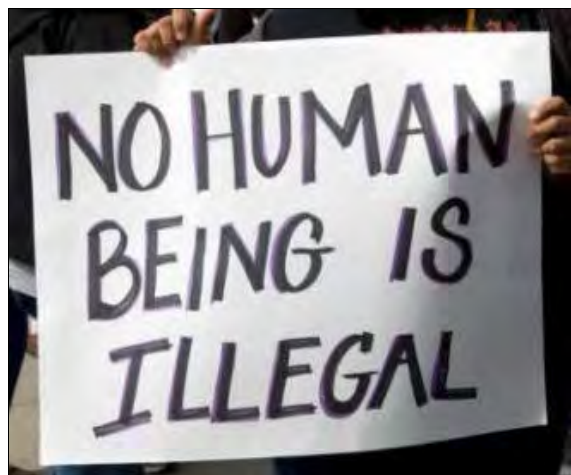
Conditions as a result of the U.S. war on Iraq mean nearly 1.2 million people continue to be internally displaced, though many are organizing to return to their homes. Palestine has one of the largest number of refugees per capita and nearly all are now internally displaced persons as the U.S./Israeli genocide continues and Israel threatens to invade Rafah where many went to seek refuge. Yemen has 4.5 million internally displaced persons, many facing starvation. This too is from a U.S. instigated and funded war using Saudi Arabia. There the people continue to stand in support of Palestine, facing down U.S. bombing and battleships and showing their spirit by demonstrating in the hundreds of thousands.

In Africa, France and the U.S. have long interfered in Sudan, inciting conflict. There is a major crisis now as a result, with more than 8 million people forcibly displaced, more than 6 million internally within Sudan. Showing its generosity, Africa as a whole is also home to 20 per cent of the global refugee population.

The large numbers at the southern U.S. border seeking asylum are the result of U.S. actions, including sanctions, economic and political interference and its war on drugs, known by many as a war for drug cartels. The U.S. has also used assassinations, coups and unjust trade agreements. All play a role in forcing millions to contend with difficult and violent conditions as they flee their homes. The recent march of more than 6,000 migrants to the U.S. border, banding together to defend their rights, and organizing to secure asylum, is but one example.

Everywhere, whether in the U.S., Canada, Britain, France, Germany, the big powers are blaming the refugees for problems the imperialists and their wars, exploitation and oppression have caused. They are proclaiming people illegal, even though it is the imperialists who are systematically going against international rule of law when it comes to asylum and refugees.

The stand of the peoples is clear: *No Human Being Is Illegal*. The problem rests not with refugees, but with the breakdown of the world order based on rule of law. U.S.-led imperialist wars and the existing international relations



permit the impunity and ongoing elimination of rule of law and the undermining of institutions like the UN and its refugee agencies. Solving issues of migration, especially refugees, lies in the immediate battles being waged and in efforts to develop anti-war governments and new institutions of governance that uphold relations of mutual respect and benefit between peoples.

Anti-war governments embrace ending wars, bringing troops home and eliminating the political and economic interference generating poverty and conflict and migration worldwide as well as exacerbating the degradation of the natural environment. It is evident from the U.S./Israeli genocide in Palestine and the massive, forced migration of so many human beings who would rather stay in their homes, that new international relations and institutions are required. Indications of this direction can be seen in the united efforts of people both sides of the U.S. border with Mexico defending rights. In El Paso nurses and workers continue to say *Not in Our Name, Not in Our Community*, as they reject detention camps and deportations. And Canadians and Quebeckers are doing the same.

Globalization has brought to the fore that workers everywhere are one humanity and a new world order is needed that ends unjust wars and harmonizes relations among all peoples and within each country.

Note

1. "Total number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) due to conflict and natural disasters worldwide in 2022, by country," Statista.

Regularization Program for Status for All Now!

Migrant Rights Network Holds Strategizing Meeting



On February 22, the Migrant Rights Network held a cross-Canada online meeting with a number of allied organizations. The Migrant Rights Network is an alliance of some 40 organizations building a migrant-led movement to win full and permanent immigration status for all migrants, including undocumented people. Those participating in the meeting hailed from all sectors of society. There were community and health groups that work directly with the undocumented, asylum claimants and refugees; those working on the legal and other fronts in their defence; as well as working class and other organizations involved in the struggle for status for all, among them the Communist Party of Canada (Marxist-Leninist).

The meeting's purpose was to hear updates and jointly develop strategies within the context of federal Immigration Minister Marc Miller's recent announcement. Miller said that he is working on

a "broad and comprehensive program" for certain undocumented migrants that he is planning to bring to Cabinet this spring.

Participants condemned the Immigration Minister's sketchy announcements and the fact that many would be excluded. They also brought attention to the fact that deportations are on the rise. They decried the hostile atmosphere towards refugee claimants being created by various politicians and the monopoly media that blame them for problems in housing, health care and education, which governments at various levels are themselves responsible for. Often refugee claimants seeking asylum are called "illegal," violating the letter of refugee law which affirms that a refugee can cross a border irrespective of whether it is an official border crossing or not. In the case of undocumented workers, the label "illegal" is for purposes of fearmongering and justifying their criminalization.



The representatives of the various organizations resolved to step up their work to exert maximum pressure on the federal government for a dignified regularization program that provides status for all. This will begin with a mass letter-writing campaign to the Prime Minister and the Immigration Minister before the latter takes his proposal to Cabinet. They are also planning and joining various actions to bring awareness to the need for status for all. This is part of a mass education campaign they are embarking upon to counter the federal government's racist policies and proposals by involving Canadians from all walks of life in the struggle.

**Federal Government's "Temporary Resident Pathway"
for Certain Palestinians in Gaza**

**Smoke and Mirrors to Cover Up Participation in
Genocide -- It Will Not Pass!**

– Diane Johnston –

From one end of the country to the other, Canadians have been expressing serious concerns about the Trudeau government's actions and its Temporary Resident Pathway, available to only certain Palestinians in Gaza and capped at 1,000 applicants. This minimal number is in the face of more than 29,870 deaths and more than 70,215 Palestinians wounded as of February 27 with almost 100 killed and more than 170 wounded in the past 24 hours. The majority are women and children. People view the program as a cruel joke, both the limited number and that even though the cap has almost been reached, not one Palestinian has exited Gaza thus far. As well, special qualifications to even apply show this claim of supporting Palestinian refugees is false.





Vigil in Toronto calling for government action to bring Gazans to Canada, February 11, 2024

The ongoing Israeli genocide has seen most of the population of 2.3 million in Gaza forcibly internally displaced over and over again, with the injured deprived of medical assistance and traumatized Palestinians now facing starvation. The U.S., Canada and others are also guilty of genocide, as they continue to defend and support Israel and place the blame on the Palestinian resistance.

Targeting Palestinian Resistance in Gaza

A CBC news item dated February 6, informs that, "no one registered with Canada has been able to flee Gaza under the new program" even though almost 1,000 applications under the program have reached the second phase "and are awaiting final admissibility decisions."

That same day during debate in the House of Commons, the NDP Member of Parliament for Vancouver East, Jenny Kwan, stated that, "The rollout of the special immigration measure for Gaza is riddled with problems. People have been rejected without any explanation. Some are rejected then later approved with exactly the same application. Now officials are saying the 1,000 cap has almost been reached, yet many have not received the code from IRCC [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada] to move on to the next stage."

Kwan then asked what action Immigration Minister Marc Miller was taking "to clean up this mess" and if he would "remove the arbitrary cap without further delay to save lives."



His response was that, "Right now, the challenge is actually getting an initial list of people out who are pre-approved to cross Rafah gates." "It is very difficult to extend these programs when we cannot even get people out," he added.

Ignoring the human factor involved by reducing the problem to a technical difficulty over which the Minister pretends Canada has no responsibility is par for the course but totally unacceptable.

Two days earlier on February 4, Foreign Affairs Minister Mélanie Joly, while on assignment in Ukraine, was also questioned by the CBC's Rosemary Barton about "the thousand or so Palestinians in Gaza who have been put on this list of extended family members of Canadians." "I've talked to a number of people now," Barton said, "whose family members are being killed. They're on the list,

they could get to Canada, if there's a way to get out. But in the meantime, people are losing their lives."

Asked if there was anything she could do, Minister Joly's response was that she and the Minister of Immigration have "been working" "on this issue." She said, "We are in contact with COGAT [Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories] which is the organization under the [Israeli] Defense Department that approves, basically, the passage to the Rafah Gate." Joly added that, "we'll continue to make sure that the people that were authorized by Canada to leave are able to" and that she and the immigration minister will "continue to pressure Israeli authorities, at the same time working also with them, but also with the Egyptian government, which we also need the authorization from. We were able to evacuate hundreds of Canadians out of Gaza, not necessarily at the pace we would have liked, Rosie, because it was long, but we had to deal with many authorities giving their authorizations. We're doing the same right now." Yet to date "hundreds" are still there and the unjust demands being made of Palestinians to qualify remain. These include having to list any body scars and injuries, as if this would prove whether someone was a "security threat."

One week after the program's launch on January 16, in a CBC radio interview, Immigration Minister Miller explained that his government's Temporary Resident Pathway had been set up the way it was because of certain "geopolitical realities to the war that are unique" such as "the inability of Canadian officials to actually get into Gaza and do security checks, do biometrics. So there is a first stage to pass, which is to get physically through the Rafah Gate controlled by Israel, Egypt" "and then a second stage in Cairo where people can be welcomed and we can do [...] proper security clearances."

"We are dealing with people that are not Canadians or Canadian permanent residents" he said, adding that "we cannot take security for granted."

"There are operational challenges," he continued, "things that [...] Canadian government officials do not control and [...] a big question mark, I think, is around the Rafah crossing and it's something that we'll have to work with on the ground, in real time."

In response to the program application's questions being hurtful to family members in Canada, in particular one about injuries and scars and why it was being asked, Miller replied that, "They're not Canadians, they're not permanent residents." "It is the best that we can do under the circumstances. It's something that we have done in Afghanistan." "[C]oming to Canada," he remarked, "to be quite frank, is not a right."

Specifically with regard to the 1,000-person cap, he said that, "The extreme version to the concept of emptying Gaza and verging on the cleansing of the situation and the optics of that, if you were to take a large amount of people out of Gaza, that is something that is geopolitically fraught. It's something that we object to, but this is a situation where we are only inviting close relatives just to keep alive. So really, two different categories." Why then is Canada not objecting to and trying to stop Israel's effort to do exactly that, to empty Gaza of Palestinians?

Double Standards

In response to why the program was so different from the one set up for Ukrainians (who have received over 936,000 temporary emergency visas since March 2022) as well as the fact that Ukrainians were not required to be sponsored or prove any connection with Canadians, the immigration minister said, "Look, I understand that there is an easy comparison to be made. The Ukraine policy is one that is really unique in our history," "one that was and is broad in scope. Very different geopolitical reality. First and foremost, we're dealing with an operational government under attack in Ukraine." The Palestinians have made clear they are prepared to negotiate a ceasefire and assist in evacuations as needed. It is Israel, the U.S. and Canada standing in the way.

Need for a Humanitarian Immigration Policy for Canada

Canadians in their hundreds of thousands have and continue to express their support for the just struggle of the Palestinian resistance against occupation and genocide and their right to be through all the organizational means at their disposal, such as ongoing demonstrations country-wide, collective statements, open letters and the signing of petitions in record-breaking numbers.

In light of government crimes and perfidy, including the violation of its international responsibilities, Canadians themselves are taking up the discussion on what immigration policy Canada needs and the role of the people in defining the qualifications and structures required to be equal members of the polity, including acquiring citizenship. The current promotion that Canada cannot provide for the many refugees seeking asylum is an old one. The idea that accepting refugees and determining citizenship is determined by self-serving anti-people notions of "absorptive capacity" was put to rest when this criteria was first raised in 1975 when the government released its Green Paper on Immigration. Canadians scathingly rejected the criteria of "absorptive capacity" as racist, anti-people and unacceptable. The subsequent *Immigration Act, 1976*, was the first immigration legislation said to "clearly outline the objectives of Canadian immigration policy, define refugees as a distinct class of immigrants, and mandate the Canadian government to consult with other levels of government in the planning and promotion of Canada's demographic, economic, social, and cultural goals, as well as the priorities of family reunion, diversity, and non-discrimination." Reviewing Canada's immigration history, treatment of refugees and racist and discriminatory political criteria which continue to this day is an urgent task facing the people of Canada. Canada urgently needs a truly humanitarian immigration policy which never again violates migrant and human rights, including the right to conscience.

(With files from Government of Canada, Parliament of Canada, CBC, CBC News, La Presse)

Federal Government's Cynicism Evident Once Again



Toronto Vigil calling for government to bring family members of Canadian residents and citizens to Canada, February 11, 2024

Despite repeated pleas by Canadians to do something to save the lives of Palestinians caught in the Israeli genocide in Gaza, it took the Trudeau Liberal government a full three months to respond. That response is a paltry temporary resident pathway, capped at 1,000 persons, for certain extended family members in Gaza of Canadian citizens and permanent residents.

The special measures, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) informs, provide temporary asylum for Palestinians who:

- live in Gaza;
- are related to a Canadian citizen or permanent resident who lives or intends to live in Canada; and
- will be supported in Canada by the Canadian citizen or permanent resident for a period of one year.

Eligible family members include a spouse, common-law partner, child, grandchild, sibling, parent or grandparent of a Canadian citizen or permanent resident, as well as their immediate family members (spouse, common-law partner, dependent child and dependent child of a dependent child).

"Once in Canada, eligible people can apply for a fee-exempt study permit or open work permit under the measures already announced."

"They will also have access to three months of health coverage under the Interim Federal Health Program to help address any urgent medical needs upon arrival, as well as settlement services such as language training and support connecting with the labour market and local community."

IRCC notes, however, that "movement out of Gaza remains extremely challenging, and may not be possible due to entry and exit requirements set by countries and other actors in the region. Applicants who are able to exit Gaza will also need to meet all admissibility requirements including biometrics before they can be approved to come to Canada."

The department further informs that the "exemptions for temporary resident visa applicants under the public policy expire January 9, 2025, or when 1,000 temporary resident visa applications have been received and accepted for processing, whichever comes first."

The "multiple entry temporary resident visas" are valid for up to three years or the length of the person's passport validity, whichever comes first."

(Source: Government of Canada)

Canada's Despicable Discrimination Against Palestinians and Further Complicity in Genocide

At the February 10 vigil in Ottawa to honour the tens of thousands killed by Israel in Gaza, the Palestinian Youth Movement distributed a leaflet -- *Families Belong Together* -- to explain the situation regarding to the Canadian government's temporary visa program.

The Palestinian youth inform that on January 9, Canada opened a Temporary Visa Program, ostensibly to help evacuate Gazans to Canada. A wait time of over 300 days, makes the visa program effectively useless. They note that hundreds of Palestinians in Gaza are being killed every day by the Israeli regime to whom Canada proudly provides material support and political cover.

Since the launch of the Temporary Visa Program, Canada has been slow to respond to family members who have applied to bring their loved ones to Canada to escape the Israeli genocide in the Gaza Strip. Three weeks after the program opened, only a small number of applicants have heard back from the Canadian government on the next step in the application process.

The Immigration Canada website confirms there is a wait time of 312 days -- almost a whole year

-- before Gazans will be given the green light to escape Israeli genocide. A small number of Palestinian-Canadians who have submitted a request to review eligibility have received the approval to go ahead and submit the application -- an estimated 10 per cent.

The leaflet states: "Instead of streamlining the process, the ministry has introduced complex and invasive measures. On December 21, Canada's Immigration Minister Marc Miller announced that Canada will only accept 1,000 applications in total, leaving the rest of Palestinians with Canadian relatives who weren't able to be part of the 1,000 applications to die. The cap on applications is arbitrary and notably much lower than normal."

The leaflet notes that the application process for the temporary visa for Gazans under Israeli genocide is very complicated. First, applicants must request that the Canadian government verify their eligibility using their inquiry system 'Web Form.' If an applicant receives the approval, they are then met with invasive and discriminatory requests for information that has not been required of applicants from countries such as Ukraine, Colombia and Venezuela for similar special measures programs.

"Applicants must provide the following: all their passport information (current and past), all their social media handles (current and past), detailed travel history in the past ten years, and any records of body scars, a request that is very discriminatory, violating, and questionable from the Canadian government," the leaflet points out.

The leaflet explains how limits on who is eligible to apply will split families apart: "As of now, the criteria include the Canadian's parents, husband/wife, children, siblings and their significant other as well as siblings' children under the age of 22. This means that the rest of the family members and first-degree relatives are left to be under the constant fire of the Israeli regime. We demand that Canada remove these criteria and open the door for the special measures to all the family members of Palestinian-Canadians."

The Palestinian Youth Movement's demands are:

1. An expedited application process;
2. Remove the 1,000 person cap on applicants;
3. Remove invasive and discriminatory criteria;
4. An immediate ceasefire.



No Criminalization of Those Seeking Asylum

Quebec Premier Blames Asylum Seekers for Government Attacks on Housing, Education and Services

For a second consecutive year, Quebec Premier François Legault wrote a letter to Prime Minister Trudeau blaming asylum seekers for a lack of housing in Montreal and for putting a strain on education and other services his government is responsible for providing everyone in Quebec.

In his letter of January 17 he wrote: "We take care of asylum seekers who come knocking at our door with all the humanity we're known for. We assist them in finding housing, feeding themselves, integrating well into our society by giving them access to French courses. We provide care to them, school their children. Quebecers are very proud of this."

"Unfortunately, we are very close to the breaking point due to the excessive number of asylum seekers who arrive in Quebec month after month. The situation has become untenable," he said. What Quebecers consider untenable is the fact that neither the federal nor the Quebec government fund the right to housing and education at the level needed to guarantee these rights while instead providing funding for pay-the-rich schemes and the U.S. war machine.



In 2022, Premier Legault informed, "Quebec took charge of more refugee claimants than the rest of Canada combined. Since the beginning of 2023, Quebec has welcomed close to half of all asylum seekers arriving in Canada. On a per capita basis, Quebec received three times more than the rest of Canada. Compared with equivalent nations, Quebec tops the list of those receiving the most asylum seekers in proportion to its population."

Recalling the closure of Roxham Road in March 2023, the Premier remarked that this provided only a momentary reduction in the constant influx of those seeking sanctuary. He said, shortly thereafter arrivals from other countries by plane continued to grow. "The number of people arriving with a visitor's visa and filing an asylum application is also significantly on the rise. Last November alone, close to 6,000 new refugee claimants were registered in Quebec," he said. This closure was broadly opposed as unjust and further endangering the lives of refugees.

The Premier then informed that during the last two years, Quebec had received over 120,000 asylum seekers and that the arrival of such a large number of people "generates very significant pressure." He said that this "results in refugee claimants having difficulty finding housing, which contributes to deepening the housing crisis. Many of them end up in homeless shelters that are overflowing. Others are homeless, thereby worsening an already acute problem, particularly in the winter. Again, the groups assisting and working them are not able to handle the load and are requesting aid, which is what happened last year, at the height of the Roxham Road crisis." Solutions to the housing crisis are well known and put forward by many organizing on this front, including minimal actions like government funding to build affordable housing, use of empty office and hotel space, etc. Instead, refugees are blamed.

"Our schools are overcrowded at a time when we cruelly lack teachers and space to receive these thousands of children, the majority of whom do not speak French," he continued. "This school year

alone, we have opened close to 1,150 newcomer reception classes, the equivalent of some 50 elementary schools, a non-negligible part of which are for francization and to provide appropriate accompaniment to the children of asylum seekers. To provide for their needs while they await a work permit, asylum seekers also receive last-resort financial aid from Quebec. Last October, some 43,200 asylum seekers received \$33 million. Asylum seekers now constitute 16 per cent of all last-resort aid [social assistance] recipients."

The Premier also expressed particular concern over Mexican nationals, who, he informed, represent a growing proportion of those seeking sanctuary. Being able to enter Canada without a visa is certainly part of the reason, he wrote. He then declared that airports, in particular in Toronto and Montreal, are in the process of becoming "sieves" and that "now is the time to act." Not a word about the conditions people of Mexico, and other countries face, stemming from U.S. and Canadian actions. Nothing about their security and violent oppression and fomenting of drug wars and cartels by the U.S. at the southern U.S. border. Instead, the Premier wrote that broadly speaking, "the loosening of visa policies" presents risks of "opening up loopholes used by organized crime gangs, which poses serious security concerns for Quebec and for Canada."

Noting that the arrival of asylum seekers falls under federal government responsibility, as do borders and visa policy, the Premier told the Prime Minister, "It is therefore your responsibility to limit and reduce the influx of asylum seekers into Canada. As the Canadian government, it is also your duty and responsibility to fairly apportion asylum seekers throughout the territory." He said, "Quebec is no longer able to receive" such "a disproportionate share."

"It is also your responsibility to financially compensate Quebec," the Premier continued. "Quebeckers, who are already making extraordinary efforts to take care of asylum seekers with as much humanity as possible, cannot carry ... such a completely disproportionate financial burden." He pointed out, "Quebec is also expecting the federal government to reimburse the \$470 million incurred for the years 2021 and 2022 and for it to do the same for subsequent years."

The Premier then formally requested that the Prime Minister reduce the influx of asylum seekers entering Canada by: tightening up his government's policy on visas; fairly apportioning asylum seekers across Canada in line with reception capacities, as was done in 2023 with asylum seekers at Roxham Road, such as by busing them to other provinces; closing all loopholes enabling criminal groups to infiltrate Canada; and reimbursing Quebec for expenses incurred in receiving asylum seekers.

Here one sees both the contending authorities between Quebec and the federal government and the reality that neither has solutions for the conditions described, whether for refugees, housing or education. Far from governments at all levels taking responsibility, the people are again blamed, and "security" raised as justification.

Busing migrants from one place to another, as is also occurring in the U.S., serves mainly to increase conflicts among the contending provincial and federal authorities, while doing little to assist the refugees. Quebecers, known for their hospitality and welcoming spirit, are instead demanding and fighting that the rights of all be respected.

The Premier echoes the stand of Quebeckers but then uses the tired excuse of "no money" saying, "This is an urgent matter and of the utmost importance, that must be resolved as a whole. It is our obligation to treat people knocking at our door seeking refuge with humanity and dignity. However, our resources are not infinite and are stretched to the limit. Let's not wait until the situation gets worse before acting."

(Quotations translated from original French by TML. With files from Canadian Press)

Federal Government Response Criminalizes Asylum Seekers

Prime Minister Trudeau said in response to Quebec Premier François Legault's letter, "We have been working closely with Quebec over the past years as we have with different parts of the country that have experienced a greater than expected influx of asylum seekers." He said, "We will continue to work with them because it's in all of our interests to make sure that we're doing everything to ensure that our provinces are as successful as possible."

Dominic Leblanc, Minister of Public Safety, Democratic Institutions and Intergovernmental Affairs, said that his government is taking Quebec's concerns over an influx of asylum seekers "very seriously." Leblanc said that his government is "working with partners and examining measures to ensure the integrity of Canada's immigration system. In addition, we are evaluating all possible measures to allow asylum seekers to travel to other provinces if they wish to do so." He added that his government "has recognized on more than one occasion that Quebec has done more than its share in welcoming and integrating people who seek refuge in Canada."

The Public Safety Minister also noted that border security is a priority for his government and that he would "continue these discussions" with the Legault government and "take the necessary steps" to "secure our borders." For the government, the problem is seen as one of securing borders. For the peoples, evident in many actions, it is one of securing rights. Further, given the border is with the U.S., "securing" it also means further militarization and integration into the U.S. border and war machinery.

As for the Quebec government's financial demands, Minister Leblanc said that his government is "committed" to work with its Quebec counterpart "to find solutions to the challenges posed by the significant number of asylum seekers that Quebec receives."

"We understand that this brings with it a financial issue. That's why, for the past five or six years, we've been a partner for Quebec in terms of costs as well," he said.

Minister Leblanc also informed that the Liberal government had "put in place several measures to support the Quebec government in its efforts to provide temporary accommodation for asylum seekers by providing significant funding as well as renting blocks of rooms in several hotels."

Between 2017 and 2020, he noted, his government had "paid \$374 million for services related to temporary accommodation ... in addition to the annual immigration transfers for reception and integration, which amount to more than \$700 million, and the \$3.6 billion granted annually through the Canada Social Transfer." Giving such figures is a means to hide the reality that the federal government is not meeting its duty to fully fund the rights of refugees and all to housing, education and health care. On the contrary, the anti-social offensive at both the federal and provincial levels has meant repeated cuts.

Minister Leblanc also spoke about avoiding having Mexico's visa-free access become "sort of a side door to get access to Canada." Immigration Minister Marc Miller said that although the loosening of visa policies has helped Canada's economy, it was also probably a factor in the rise of claims, even though the rate of Mexican applicants granted refugee status remains well below that of other countries.[1]

"Mexico is one of our principal economic partners," Miller said. "So any measures that we would take, we would contemplate, would require a diplomatic process that is not yet completed." Miller also informed that his government is looking into a number of options that remain unspecified, as disclosing them would only empower bad actors trying to "game the system."

Note

1. Between January and September 2023, there were 17,490 refugee claims made by Mexicans in Quebec, compared with 7,483 in 2022.

Refugee service providers in Montreal have said that Mexican families are fleeing violence, insecurity and a lack of jobs in Mexico.

An August 30, 2023 press release from the Office the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights informs: "Women human rights defenders searching for forcibly disappeared loved ones in Mexico are facing intimidation, attacks and even violent death, UN experts warned today. 'We are outraged that those searching for forcibly disappeared family members and loved ones continue to be targeted and face violence in Mexico,' the experts said."

(With files from Global News, BNN Bloomberg, Globe and Mail, Canadian Press, Government of Canada, United Nations)

Status For All Now! Reject "Broad and Comprehensive Program" for Some Only!



"Ottawa is preparing to create a path to citizenship for hundreds of thousands of people who have lived and worked in Canada" for years, starting with construction workers, a December 14 article in the *Globe and Mail* reads.[1]

The article reports that Immigration Minister Marc Miller is preparing a "broad and comprehensive program" for certain undocumented workers and their families to apply for permanent residency. Amongst those included, the article notes, are "people who entered the country legally, as temporary workers or international students, and then remained here after their visas expired."

We also learn that he plans to present a proposal to Cabinet this spring so that those selected can "regularize their status." The Minister stated that the policy could face opposition.

In Miller's estimation, there are anywhere from 300,000 to 600,000 people living in Canada without what official Canada considers "valid documents." As a result, many who have worked here for decades and with children, face the daily threat of deportation.

Before presenting his proposal to Cabinet, the Minister wants to "test the narrative." He plans to

introduce, in the very near future, a program enabling undocumented construction workers living in Canada to apply for residency. This is to help the country's "shortage of skilled workers able to build homes," he says.

"These are people that are already here, already contributing and have kids," he says. In his view, it "makes absolutely no sense" that people who have been here for decades and have children have not been able to obtain legal status. Where have the Liberals -- who have been in power these past eight and more years -- been hiding then, Minister?

Miller said too that Canada's immigration policy needs refining and "tailoring to the reality on the ground." Under the guise of bolstering the integrity of Canada's immigration program, the minister is planning other reforms, including changes to temporary foreign worker and international student programs. He is also looking at "adjusting our public policies to make sure we're being smart about the type of people coming to this country, and what they can contribute."

In areas such as construction and health care, Miller said that immigrants are indispensable. "But again, we just have to be a little more careful in how we are in our tailoring these policies to the reality on the ground."

"The conversation on regularizing people that are here, and by my estimation -- my belief -- should be Canadian, is not one that's unanimous in the country." Miller said. "We have to have a greater conversation as a country about that," he added. In this manner the government wants to normalize its ability to decide who is and who is not "Canadian," and justify punishing those it decides are not. This is already evident in how Palestinians seeking asylum are being treated, with very few even allowed to apply and answers to questions like whether they have "bodily scars" used to decide they cannot seek asylum. Further, such impunity concerning who "should be Canadian," can be extended far beyond refugees and immigrants.

On the need for a conversation on these matters, we could not agree more. What we mean, however, is that Canadians themselves must appropriate that conversation, by way of a cross-Canada informed discussion. Such a discussion would involve those working in defence of human rights and with undocumented migrant workers and their families, along with academics and experts advocating on their behalf and all concerned about rights and justice.

Note

1. "Ottawa plans to create Canadian citizenship path for undocumented immigrants," Marie Woolf, *Globe and Mail*, December 14, 2023.

Fitting Response to Government Attacks on Asylum Seekers from Those Working on the Ground with Them

On January 19, two days after Quebec Premier François Legault's letter to his federal counterpart blaming refugees for lack of housing and social services, the Roundtable for Organizations Serving Refugees and Immigrants (TCRI) issued a press release reminding the Quebec and federal governments of their "responsibilities and duties" in protecting and welcoming refugees. The communiqué of this group of 151 organizations who work with refugees, immigrants and people without status, was also aimed at shedding light "on the reality on the ground in relation to settlement and integration services for asylum seekers."

"Canada," it stated, "has international obligations towards people seeking protection. Forcibly

displaced persons flee situations of persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations and events disrupting public order (UNHCR 2023). These people have the right to seek asylum and start a new life in dignified conditions, without being stigmatized because of their life history.

"This right is recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees also establishes the obligation of non-refoulement. As a signatory to the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Canada has an obligation to offer protection to asylum seekers who request it. In June 2023, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) already counted 110 million forcibly displaced people in the world. This alarming figure does not take into account recent phenomena such as the humanitarian crisis in Palestine, and will continue to grow in the context of unprecedented humanitarian crises there and in Sudan, Congo, Mozambique and Ukraine in particular."

The TCRI's press release also emphasizes that "community organizations are calling on the federal government to expand its program for the reception of Palestinian refugees affected by the crisis." Further, it deplors "Quebec's refusal to participate in the special programs announced by the federal government for nationals of Haiti, Colombia and Venezuela, as well as the public interest policy aimed at nationals of Sudan.

"Using asylum seekers to explain the crisis in public services or announcing a 'breaking point' is tantamount to ignoring the multiple roots of this crisis," grounded "in decades of under-investment. The discourse presented speaks of the arrival of asylum seekers as a phenomenon at the heart of several structural problems in Quebec and the rest of Canada, problems that were widely decried by public sector employees last autumn."

The current situation, the TCRI suggests, "is more than ever an opportunity to put in place solutions that will benefit the entire population, including those newly arrived in Quebec. Community organizations are urging politicians to be extremely cautious about linking the presence of asylum seekers to the state of public services."

"Solutions exist," it declares. "Federal and provincial authorities repeatedly state that Canada and Quebec are already doing their part to welcome and settle people seeking refuge," however "[c]ommunity organizations reject this assertion. Despite refugee resettlement programs, more can and must be done to respond to asylum requests. Not only Canada, but also Quebec, must take note of the unprecedented global situation, and put in place sustainable solutions to meet their international responsibilities and obligations. These solutions include support adapted to the needs of community organizations." It adds that both governments "need to work together more effectively, particularly in the area of accommodation."

The TCRI also states, "Quebec is on the wrong track by proposing to transport asylum seekers to other provinces. Temporary accommodation infrastructures are not enough. The community setting plays a key role in welcoming and integrating these people, and Quebec has expertise not found in all the other provinces. Furthermore, there are still a number of barriers to the integration of asylum seekers, most of whom are recognized as refugees by the Immigration and Refugee Board, and who therefore settle permanently in Quebec.

"The Quebec government could do more to support their integration by giving them access to employability services, subsidized childcare or allowances for francization courses, for example. We need to stop seeing refugees and asylum seekers as a burden on Quebec society, when in fact they contribute to it in so many ways.

"At a time when international crises are multiplying -- crises to which the actions of states in the Global North and multinational corporations are no strangers -- this is not the time to close borders for people fleeing persecution and violence in all its forms."

With over 40 years of expertise, the TCRI's mission is aimed at the defence of the rights and

protection of refugees and immigrants in Quebec along their path towards immigration, settlement and integration on Quebec territory, in terms of aid, support, critical thinking and solidarity. It describes its vision as "community action for the welcoming of immigrants."

(TCRI)

Trudeau Government Called Upon to Do More for Refugee Claimants and "Other Newcomers"

The Trudeau Liberal government, through its Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Marc Miller, announced on January 31 that more than \$362 million in new money was being allocated to Quebec, the provinces and cities struggling to cope with a rising number of refugee claimants.

Of that money, \$100 million has been earmarked for Quebec and \$143 million for Toronto, under the federal government's Interim Housing Assistance Program (IHAP). Miller remarked that IHAP needs reform, which will have to be worked out in the coming months, as the system "has very much been a stopgap measure since 2017 to deal with large historic flows of migration."

A further \$19.75 million top-up is being provided to the City of Toronto's share of the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit, which provides direct financial support to low-income renters to help them cover the cost of rent.

In response to Miller's announcement on funding for Quebec, the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ) Immigration Minister Christine Fréchette said that this is a "first step," but wants more funding as well as changes made to the immigration system.

"We expect the federal government not only to reimburse us for the entire \$470 million," she said, "but also to change the way it manages visas to reduce the flow of asylum seekers," she said.

A Glimpse at the Bigger Picture

Bloc Québécois leader Yves-François Blanchet sponsored the following motion, which was adopted in the House of Commons on February 12, with 173 in favour (Bloc, Conservatives, NDP, Green Party) and 150 (Liberals) opposed:

"That the House:

"(a) recall its unanimous vote of November 1, 2023, calling on the government 'to review its immigration targets starting in 2024, after consultation with Quebec, the provinces and territories, based on their integration capacity, particularly in terms of housing, health care, education, French language training and transportation infrastructure, all with a view to successful immigration;'

"(b) call on the Prime Minister to convene a meeting with his counterparts of Quebec, the provinces and the territories in order to consult them on their respective integration capacities;

"(c) call on the government to table in the House, within 100 days, a plan for revising federal immigration targets in 2024 based on the integration capacity of Quebec, the provinces and the territories;

(d) call on the government to table in the House, within 100 days, a report on the gap between the resources that are needed to align federal immigration targets in 2024 and the capacity of Quebec, provinces and territories to successfully resettle newcomers; and

"(e) call on the government to table in the House, within 100 days, a plan to ensure adequate resources are provided to Quebec, provinces and territories to support the successful resettlement of newcomers."

(With files from CBC News, Government of Canada, Parliament of Canada)

For Your Information

Premier Legault's Assistance in Closing Irregular Land and Waterways Border with U.S. in 2023



Demonstration in Montreal against closure of Roxham Road border crossing in April 2023

Last year, Premier Legault's letter to the Prime Minister, dated February 19, 2023 was leaked to the press and two days later, on February 21, an opinion piece he contributed to the *Globe and Mail* was published, the former geared towards his Quebec audience and the latter to the rest of Canada.

One month later, on March 24, 2023, the federal government announced the re-negotiation of the Safe Third Country Agreement with the U.S., which both countries had been working on for over a year. The U.S. demanded the closure of Canada's irregular land border and waterways, including the safe passage for asylum seekers at Roxham Road, running between the state of New York and Quebec's Eastern Townships. A "safe third country" involves preventing asylum seekers who have left their home country and transited a "third country," in this case Mexico, said to be "safe," from entering the country where they seek asylum, in this case Canada or the U.S. The agreement and decision to close Roxham Road took place during President Joe Biden's first official visit to Canada.



Interestingly, many points in the two documents were similar, such as that since the fall of 2022, the rate of arrivals of asylum seekers, mainly through Roxham Road, had exploded. This claim ignored that on March 21, 2020, Canada closed its irregular border with the U.S. under the pretext of the pandemic and only re-opened it on November 22, 2021. As well, that Quebec had taken on a "completely disproportionate" share of asylum seekers in Canada. Ditto for the Premier's assertion that the situation raised several humanitarian considerations and that it was becoming increasingly difficult to receive asylum seekers with dignity.

In both texts, the Quebec Premier also asserted that the new arrivals struggled in Quebec to find adequate housing and were more likely to find themselves in a situation of homelessness. He declared that community organizations working with them were at their "wits' end" and that Quebec's public services were facing increased, unprecedented pressures, particularly with regard to health, education and social assistance, and that the pressure was unsustainable and could not continue. Roxham Road, he concluded, would have to be closed one day or another, "whether we like it or not." It was another example of targeting asylum seekers and denying government responsibility for housing and humane treatment of refugees.

Premier Legault's Letter to Prime Minister

His letter to the Prime Minister, directed towards his Quebec audience, informed that the weekend prior, the federal government had told Quebec that it would be redirecting asylum seekers to Ontario (while in actual fact it began this operation as early as the summer of 2022).

"You also apprised us of ongoing discussions with certain provinces regarding the transfer of a certain number of migrants," the document continued. Thanking his federal counterpart for these efforts, the Premier stressed the importance of this approach being maintained over time, as "tens of thousands of asylum seekers still in Quebec will continue to exert pressure on our public services for many months, even years, to come."

Premier Legault then raised his "serious concerns regarding the decline of the French language in Montreal" and how "the massive arrival in the Quebec metropolis... complicates our francization task and will demand considerable resources."

He requested that measures be taken, urgently and on a permanent basis, to apportion asylum seekers, upon arrival at the border, to other provinces and "that the federal government's temporary housing capacity on Quebec territory continue to be reduced."

He stressed the urgency of concluding the renegotiation of the Safe Third Country Agreement with the United States and that it apply "to all points of entry into Canada, whether regular or irregular," linking this with ensuring that "Canada's territorial borders are respected," which he described as one of the Prime Minister's main responsibilities, requesting that he make this matter "a priority" during his upcoming meeting with U.S. President Joe Biden.

He then declared that Quebec expected full reimbursement for all expenses related to the reception and integration of asylum seekers for 2021 and 2022, informing that "over the past year, expenses have exploded and now amount to many hundreds of millions of dollars." One can see that all the same arguments are being made today and that no problem has been solved.

Premier's Opinion Piece in *Globe and Mail*

The article ascribed the Prime Minister's invitation to "all those fleeing persecution, terror and war" to come to Canada as the reason for the explosion in the number of asylum seekers.

"It was generous on the part of Mr. Trudeau," the Premier wrote, adding that his "good intentions

turned into a real problem for Quebec and Canada."

As for the so-called pressure exerted on public services as a result, the Premier noted: "It's not mainly a question of money. The people working to receive and care for asylum seekers are limited. The number of new classes we can add to accommodate children, many of whom are distressed and traumatized, is limited, not to mention the shortage of teachers.

"Similarly, there is the scarcity of housing, which cannot be built in such a short time. As elsewhere in Canada," he continued, "the health care system is already fragile. It is therefore not a question of if we want to welcome asylum seekers, but if we have the ability to do so humanely.

"People must be able to find housing, children must be able to attend school and the sick must be able to receive treatment.

"We have therefore asked the federal government to settle new asylum seekers in other provinces that are capable of supporting them with dignity... in the coming months... while Quebec catches its breath.

"The federal government also has a responsibility to issue work permits to asylum seekers quickly. Currently, some have to wait two years before being able to work, which strongly affects their ability to live in dignity and contribute to their host society.

"Similarly, the processing times for refugee status applications are very long -- too long. The wave of migration is global and the federal government will have to adjust sooner or later. In the meantime, Mr. Trudeau should send the message loud and clear: would-be migrants shouldn't come via Roxham Road anymore.

"The basic problem is the Safe Third Country Agreement with the United States, which made it possible to open this breach in the border. Mr. Trudeau's government must conclude a new version of this agreement as soon as possible that applies to all points of entry into Canada, whether regular or irregular."

(February 19, 2023 letter from Premier Legault to Prime Minister Trudeau translated from the French original by TML. With files from Journal de Québec, Globe and Mail)

Military Recruitment of Permanent Residents

CBC News reports that since 2022 when the federal government opened up military recruitment to Permanent Residents (PR) to help address a critical shortfall in personnel, estimated at about 16,000 (16 per cent of the 100,000 regular and reserve forces that are said to be needed.) Out of 21,000 people who applied only 77 were accepted in the one year period from November 2022 to November 2023.

Brig.-Gen Krista Brodie, the commander overseeing military recruitment, said that PR applicants are told that it can take 18 to 24 months for security agencies to handle their files because they can require additional security screening. Canadian citizens usually get approved in about three months.

Defence Minister Blair says the process is taking too long and that he has asked his department to look at allowing permanent residents to serve on a probationary basis while they wait for their security checks to be completed. An incentive for permanent residents to apply was the announcement in 2022 that citizenship applications from Canadian Armed Forces members would be processed on a "priority basis."

Developments at U.S.-Mexico Border

How U.S. Is Undermining Asylum Law at Home and Criminalizing Asylum Seekers

– Kathleen Chandler –



Youth from New York participate in protest in Washington, DC, February 15, 2024, demanding Ceasefire Now! and permanent protection for immigrant rights and end to border militarization.

President Joe Biden, Donald Trump, Texas Governor Greg Abbott and others are promoting the idea that there is a surge of "illegal immigrants" crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. In fact, there is a large increase in people legally seeking asylum. Many are refugees fleeing violence and threats at home, largely imposed by the U.S. It is legal for people seeking asylum to cross the border at any point. They are not required to cross at a port of entry. They can cross at any point, as long as they then make a claim for asylum to a federal authority, like Border Patrol, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) or Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). This is what the vast majority of people, including women and children, are doing, and why the government has a record of them. The U.S. is obligated to review such claims and has a system, including immigration judges, in place for this.

One main way it is undermining asylum law is by "fast-tracking" claims, using limited or no judicial review. This is leading to unjust and illegal detentions and deportations, including tens of thousands of children.

Another main way asylum law is being undermined is to arbitrarily change and raise the requirements to be granted asylum. International law, including the United Nations 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol, specifies the standards. They define a refugee as a person who is unable or unwilling to return to their home country, and cannot obtain protection in that country, due to past persecution or a well-founded fear of being persecuted in the future "on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion."

Congress incorporated this definition into U.S. immigration law in the *Refugee Act of 1980*. The U.S. has been undermining or eliminating the standard for what constitutes persecution and "a well-founded fear." This includes arbitrarily increasing what is demanded to show a well-founded fear, such as unattainable documentation or unavailable witnesses, etc. Decisions concerning a "well-founded fear" are already relatively arbitrary in that it is a judgement call. Placing such judgement in the hands of an asylum officer or Border Patrol, and not an immigration judge, further undermines existing law and allows for greater impunity.



Migrants wait in Ciudad Juárez in Mexico waiting to cross into the U.S., December 20, 2023

The U.S. has also been undermining existing U.S. law by increasing and expanding detention of refugees, including families and unaccompanied minors (16 and under). ICE is not supposed to hold refugees with asylum claims for more than 72 hours, after which they are to be turned over to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). ORR then has responsibility to find shelter and assistance. Instead, families and children are being forced into detention centers that do not meet minimum standards of care, despite efforts of local nurses and surrounding communities to provide for them. Detention involves civil, not criminal law, but refugees are treated like criminals and effectively imprisoned, further undermining their legal and human rights.

As part of a recently released Senate supplemental funding bill for Ukraine and Israel, the Senate specifically extends the criminalization of refugees further. While the latest \$95 billion bill funding Israel and Ukraine passed the Senate without the immigration content, the House is insisting on including it and so far, refuses to pass the war funding bill without it.

The bills under discussion expand illegal U.S. refusals to hear claims. They arbitrarily expel people seeking asylum with no review of their claims. According to the provisions being introduced, whenever the number of refugee crossings between ports of entry averages more than 5,000 in a week or 8,500 in a single day, people will be automatically expelled with no review of their claim -- something the U.S. is legally obligated to do. The proposals also eliminate longstanding due process protections for those in the country, like court review of asylum cases. Far from removing criminalization, the various plans greatly increase funding for ICE detention, such as one providing \$3.2 billion dollars for expanded detention capacity, \$2.5 billion for "staging facilities," for deportations and \$1.12 billion for hiring additional ICE and CBP officers. Content for the current proposals comes mainly from Biden and New York Senator Chuck Schumer.

(Voice of Revolution)

Issues of Migration and the Necessity to Renew Mexico's Political Arrangements

– Pablo Moctezuma, Mexteki –

We are facing the current problems by envisioning the solutions that only an empowered people can fully apply so that they can live, work, be educated, receive medical care, develop their culture, enjoy the wealth they generate in their own country without having to flee to work in another country where they are criminalized.

Today 40 million Mexicans live in the United States and remit record-breaking amounts of money to Mexico -- U.S.\$64 billion in 2023. This comes at the expense of their well-being and that of their families and the country, from being subjected to modern slavery in neighbouring countries.

Many of the migrants are fleeing violence in their homelands. And we are fighting for the self-determination of the people and their economic, political, social, and cultural sovereignty so that they are not subject to sanctions. These sanctions, mainly by the U.S., force people to leave their countries as they cause a lack of food, medicine, gasoline, transportation, and more. It is time for people to design a new world that favours them.

In recent weeks there is a lot of talk about migration because at times 10,000 people a day are crossing the border between the United States and Mexico and many thousands are detained due to policies that both main U.S. presidential candidates, Donald Trump and Joe Biden, have followed, policies that are anti-people to the extreme. Headed into the 2024 elections, both politicians are competing to show who is more anti-people.

On December 27, 2023, Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador to discuss the issue. The President of Mexico has stated that the United States and its policies south of the border, including sanctions imposed on various countries which make life there very difficult, and the so-called war on drugs, are actually causing migration. The temporary closure of two border rail crossings in Texas on December 25 is a clear message that the United States wants to force Mexico to do more to prevent migrants from boarding freight trains, buses and trucks to reach the border. At the same time, Mexican authorities in Matamoros began to use heavy machinery December 27 to remove a camp that included families with children and that the government described as abandoned tents. This was to demonstrate to the United States government that the Mexican government is taking action to stop the growing number of migrants arriving at the southern border of the U.S. Meanwhile, a caravan of about 6,000 migrants from Venezuela, Honduras, El Salvador, Cuba and Haiti left Chiapas in southern Mexico on December 25, heading for the United States border.

Today there are Congressional negotiations in the U.S. to finance the war in Ukraine and the genocide in Palestine as well as the militarization of the border with Mexico. The House and Senate bills also include plans and funds for more deportations, reducing humanitarian visas and denying asylum and due process to many more people.

The United States wants Mexico's cooperation to receive the people who it is rejecting. For his part, López Obrador points out the root problem and claims to respect human rights. However, events such as the death in Mexico of 40 migrants on March 27, 2023 in an immigration centre in Ciudad Juárez on the border with Texas and the maltreatment of migrants from Central America continue.

President López Obrador is requesting another in-person meeting with Joe Biden. This indicates that the Mexican government did not concede everything the Blinken delegation from the United States demanded and Mexico wants to negotiate some issues, such as having its ban on genetically modified yellow corn respected. Given U.S. threats and blackmail are likely, Mexico may be forced to do the dirty work of the United States under this containment model.

The five main countries of origin of migrants to the U.S.-Mexico border are Mexico, Guatemala, Honduras, Cuba and Venezuela, which together represent 71 per cent of official migration figures at that border in 2022. [...]

On June 2, 2024, there will be elections in Mexico for the presidency and congress. The labour organization Mexteki is putting a people's agenda at the forefront and concentrating on developing autonomous social political movements, emphasizing the need for the people's empowerment.

The year 2023 was very important for Mexteki, which took the initiative through the Congress of Sovereignty, to call on organizations and individuals to take into our hands the solution to the

problems of the people and nations of Mexico and set their own agenda for the solutions to the problems all Mexicans face in common.

On September 13, 2023, 52 organizations and groups participated in the People's Agenda Meeting in Mexico City. Ninety-two videos were proposed for dissemination were presented and many people participated by contributing texts, songs and poems in the spirit of the seizure of political power by the people. Problems of Indigenous Peoples, work, education and health, water, food sovereignty and in particular the need for a new constitution and the need for the people to take decision-making power into their own hands and affirm their sovereignty by implementing a new political system were discussed. It was of great importance. The question of breaking with the U.S. efforts to integrate Mexico into the United States not only economically, socially, culturally, but also militarily, was a crucial point that was presented.

In 2024 we continue to strengthen the work of organization to promote the people's agenda.

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