

## **ASSEMBLY OF AFRICAN MIGRANTS IN TAPACHULA**

# **WE, THE AFRICAN PEOPLE IN TAPACHULA DEMAND RESPECT FOR OUR DIGNITY AND OUR RIGHTS**

- **We, the people of African origin, forced to remain in Tapachula, suffer an unbearable humanitarian situation related to nurture, housing, health and hygiene; as well as systematic discrimination by immigration authorities.**
- **We are forced displaced people who have been fleeing from our countries to safeguard our lives and ask for international protection in the United States, Canada or, in a minority, in Mexico, but so far, we have not received a clear response from the Mexican government.**
- **We demand that the State security forces cease their violence against us and stop repressing our legitimate protest, as well as the immigration authorities to resolve our situation as soon as possible and stop their hostility.**

### **About us**

The Assembly of African Migrants in Tapachula represents a group of around 3,000 people, girls, boys, men, women and families from various countries in Africa: Angola, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea Conakry, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. Most of us have technical, professional and some also, postgraduate studies.

We have all had to flee and leave our countries of origin as the only possible way to survive. We are therefore people forcibly displaced and in need of international protection. We have been in Mexican territory for months, and in our community there are pregnant women, babies, girls and boys, people with disabilities and various diseases.

Since we left our countries, for us life has been a permanent escape. We feel despair, hopelessness, fear, demoralization, loneliness and abandonment.

### **Why did we have to leave our countries?**

We suffer political persecution because of our diverse political ideas, sociocultural identities and religious belongings. This situation threatens our life and our integrity. For that reason we have left everything.

Our countries of origin, impoverished and subdued from the Western powers, despite or perhaps because of our natural resources, are traversed by social inequality, violence and authoritarianism. We can give many tragic examples. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo there are no civil liberties and people opposed to the regime are persecuted and killed.

In Cameroon, decolonization was followed by a scenario of division and submission, where the Anglophone activist community is persecuted and subjected to arbitrary detention, torture and murder. The southern part of the country is *de facto* suffering a civil war in which thousands of people have died.

Congo Brazzaville suffers a military dictatorship of almost 40 years, poverty and ethnic conflicts. The civil war has meant the imprisonment and torture of thousands of opponents.

The Central African Republic is going through a religious war between Muslims and Christians since 1998, in which extremist groups are killed with machetes. This war has been promoted and sustained by the dictatorship, which benefits from the conflict. As a direct consequence of socio-political instability, poverty is extreme.

In short, each ex-colony had its dictator sponsored by the colonizing countries, as a way of maintaining power and continuing the looting of wealth. Some presidents who opposed this process, such as Thomas Sankara, were killed to return to the dictatorial regime again.

### **What have we suffered to reach Mexico?**

In order to reach Mexico we have crossed at least eight countries with their borders and two months on the road. We have taken many risks, the first was the trip itself. We have crossed the ocean to reach this continent. We have walked thousands of kilometers.

The hardest part was for whole weeks to walk through the Darién jungle, between Colombia and Panama. We have climbed mountains and valleys. We have crossed rivers with strong current. We have slept in the middle of the mud, we have gone hungry and drank rainwater to survive. We have seen bodies of migrant brothers on the road, dead of exhaustion, or drowned in the rivers. The jungle is populated by wild animals, snakes and poisonous insects. In that territory there are also criminals who assault people, who rape girls and women, killing those who try to resist. Many of us have lost all our belongings, including our official documents.

We have gone through extremely dangerous cities and towns. We had to hide. We have suffered extortion and threats by authorities in Panama, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala and Mexico.

### **What is the situation we suffer in Tapachula?**

Most of us have been detained at the immigration detention centre Siglo XXI. At no time did we have translation into our languages. They made us sign documents that we did not understand. They gave us a document talking about our alleged statelessness, and tricked us by telling us that with that document we could travel without being arrested. Those of us who tried, were detained again and returned to Tapachula. We were told that we could access to a Visa for Humanitarian Reasons , but we were finally denied.

Many of us deliver the documents to the Immigration Regularization Office, and after weeks of waiting they have given us a negative response to the statelessness figure, due to alleged errors in the writing of our names in the departure document. Errors that were made by the immigration officials of the National Institute of Migration themselves, and for which we paid the consequences.

They have tricked us. They deny us the possibility of leaving Tapachula, where we feel blocked and desperate, as well as suffering constant acts of racism and hostility by the immigration authorities.

The current consequences on us are of suffering and misery. Our situation is deplorable and violates our human rights. Over the weeks we have run out of any resources or means of subsistence. Hundreds of families are in a street situation, spending the nights outdoors and under the rain. We have nothing to eat, many people are getting sick, especially girls, boys and pregnant women. If we continue in this situation, many and many of us will die here.

When we go out to the streets to demand solutions and rights, we suffer more repression by agents of the National Guard and Municipal Police, we are treated with violence while the competent authorities neither listen to us nor receive us. They only treat us with contempt, indifference and hostility. On Tuesday, August 27, the situation

became much more violent not only against those who were protesting outside the Immigration Detention Centre, demanding a response from the immigration authorities, they even hit journalists covering the demonstration.

Faced with this, the actions of the State authorities were repression and direct physical aggressions, including through tear gas against people and blows with stones. A Cameroonian brother who was hit by a federal policeman with a stone in the head, lost consciousness and had to be rushed to the hospital with heavy head bleeding.

## **What rights do we claim?**

Under these circumstances, the Assembly of African and African Migrants in Tapachula, **demand:**

- For those of us who need to continue our way north, in search of protection in the United States or Canada, that the Mexican government allows us to access the Visa for Humanitarian Reasons without delay, so that we can move as soon as possible from Tapachula.
- For those of us who need to benefit from international protection in Mexico, that we can access without delay to the procedure for requesting the recognition of refuge.
- For all of the affected population, we require urgent humanitarian assistance in matters of food, housing, health and hygiene, to prevent the deterioration of our physical and mental health, and the loss of lives.
- We finally demand that the security forces ensure that no more reprisals will be committed and no more violence will be used against us because of claiming our rights and expressing our collective demands.

## **SIGNED BY:**

### **Asamblea de Migrantes Africanos y Africanas en Tapachula/ Assembly of African Migrants in Tapachula**

Formado por mujeres, hombres, niñas, niños y familias originarias de Angola, Burkina Faso, Camerún, Eritrea, Etiopía, Ghana, Guinea Conakry, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, República Centroafricana, República Democrática de Congo, República de Congo, Senegal, Sierra Leona y Togo.

### **Alianza Americas**

### **Black Alliance for Just Immigration**

### **Colectivo de Observación y Monitoreo de Derechos Humanos en el Sureste Mexicano**

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) - Oficina Latinoamérica y el Caribe, Centro de Derechos Humanos Digna Ochoa, Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Matías de Córdoba, Centro de Derechos Humanos Tepeyac, Centro de Derechos de las Víctimas de la Violencia Minerva Bello, Formación y Capacitación (FOCA), Iniciativas para el Desarrollo Humano, Kaltsilaltik, Red Jesuita con Migrantes – Centroamérica y Norteamérica, Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados (SJR), Una Mano Amiga en la Lucha contra el SIDA, Voces Mesoamericanas Acción con Pueblos Migrantes.

### **Colectivo de Monitoreo y Observación Migratoria en Tijuana**

Aldeas Infantiles S.O.S. México, American Friends Service Committee, Oficina Regional para América Latina y el Caribe (AFSC), Asylum Acces, México (AAMX) A.C., Espacio Migrante A.C., Families Belong Together, México, Programa de Asuntos Migratorios de Universidad Iberoamericana, Ciudad de México – Tijuana.

## **Grupo de Trabajo sobre Política Migratoria – GTPM**

Aldeas Infantiles SOS México, I.A.P.; American Friends Services Committee; Asylum Access México (AAMX) A.C.; Casa del Migrante Saltillo (Frontera con Justicia A.C.); Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Matías de Córdova, A.C.; Coalición Pro Defensa del Migrante de Baja California; Fundación Appleaseed México, A.C.; DHIA. Derechos Humanos Integrales en Acción, A.C.; FUNDAR Centro de Análisis e Investigación, A.C.; IMUMI Instituto para las Mujeres en la Migración; Iniciativa Ciudadana para la Promoción de la Cultura del Diálogo, A.C.; INSYDE Instituto para la Seguridad y la Democracia; M3 Movimiento Migrante Mesoamericano; REDIM Red por los Derechos de la Infancia en México; Save The Children México, Sin Fronteras, IAP; Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes México; SMR Scalabrinianas: Misión para Migrantes y Refugiados; Leticia Calderón, Analista en temas migratorios; Brenda Valdés; Elba Coria; Manuel Ángel Castillo, Investigador; IDC International Detention Coalition (Observadoras). Melissa Vértiz Hernández. Secretaria Técnica.

## **Grupo Impulsor contra la Detención Migratoria y la Tortura**

American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) – Oficina Latinoamérica y el Caribe, Casa del Migrante de Saltillo, Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Matías de Córdova, Colectivo Contra la Tortura y la Impunidad (CCTI), FM4 Paso Libre, Grupo de Acción Comunitaria (GAC), Inclusión y Equidad Consultora Latinoamericana, Instituto para la Seguridad y la Democracia (INSYDE), Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes (SJM), Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados México (SJR) y Voces Mesoamericanas – Acción con Pueblos Migrantes.

## **Mesa de Coordinación Transfronteriza Migraciones y Género – MTMG**

**Capítulo Guatemala:** American Friends Service Committee, Oficina Regional para América Latina y El Caribe (AFSC); Asociación Comunitaria Multisectorial de Monitoreo Comunitario en Salud y Apoyo a Migrantes (ACOMUMSAM); Asociación Consejería Oxlajuj Ix para Centroamérica y México (CAMEX); Asociación Coordinadora Comunitaria de Servicios para la Salud-Guatemala ACCSS; Asociación de Desarrollo Social de Ixcán (ADESI); Asociación de Familiares de Migrantes Desaparecidos de Guatemala (AFAMIDEG); Asociación Lambda, Consejo de Juventud para el Desarrollo Ixcoyense (COJDI); Comisión de Asuntos Migratorios de Ixcán -CAMI; Comité Municipal de Migración; Equipo de Estudios Comunitarios y Acción Psicosocial (ECAP); Federación Guatemalteca de Escuelas Radiofónicas (FGER); Gobierno Ancestral Plurinacional Q'anjob'al; Jóvenes por el Cambio; Mamá Maquin; Mesa Nacional para las Migraciones en Guatemala (MENAMIG); Molanil K'in'al B'e; Pastoral Social La Libertad Cristo de Esquipulas; Pop Noj'; Red Juvenil Ak'Molam; Sociedad Civil.

**Capítulo México:** American Friends Service Committee, Oficina Regional para América Latina y El Caribe (AFSC); Centro de Derechos Humanos Oralía Morales; Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Matías de Córdova; Coalición Indígena de Migrantes de Chiapas (CIMICH); Comité de Derechos Humanos Fray Pedro Lorenzo de la Nada A.C.; Formación y Capacitación A.C. (FOCA); Iniciativas para el Desarrollo Humano A.C.; Instituto Mexicano para el Desarrollo Comunitario (IMDEC); Instituto para las Mujeres en la Migración AC (IMUMI); La 72, Hogar - Refugio para Personas Migrantes; Pastoral de Migrantes; Parroquia de Frontera Comalapa; Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes (SJM); Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados (SJR), Servicio Pastoral a Migrantes San Martín de Porres (SEPAMI - SMP); Una Ayuda para ti Mujer Migrante A.C.; Voces Mesoamericanas, Acción con Pueblos Migrantes, A.C.

## **Red de Documentación de las Organizaciones Defensoras de Migrantes – REDODEM**

Abba A.C. CCIAPM; Albergue Decanal Guadalupano; Albergue Hermanos en el Camino; Albergue Monseñor Guillermo Ranzahuer González; Albergue y Dormitorio San José, Casa de la Caridad Hogar del Migrante; Casa de la Esperanza San José; Casa del Caminante Jtatic Samuel Ruiz García; Casa del Migrante Casa-Nicolás; Casa del Migrante de San Juan de Dios; Casa del Migrante El Samaritano; Casa del Migrante Hogar de la Misericordia; Casa del Migrante San Carlos Borromeo; Casa del Peregrino Migrante; Casa Tochan; Casa de Acogida, Formación y Empoderamiento de la Mujer Migrante y Refugiada, CAFEMIN; Centro de Apoyo Marista al Migrante, CAMMI; Centro de Derechos Humanos Juan Gerardi A.C. / Centro de Día para Migrantes Jesús Torres; Centro de Orientación del Migrante de Oaxaca, COMI; Dignidad y Justicia en el Camino A.C. FM4 Paso Libre; Programa Casa Refugiados A.C.; Servicio Jesuita a Migrantes México; Uno de Siete Migrando, A.C.

## **Red Nacional de Organismos Civiles de Derechos Humanos “Todos los Derechos para Todas y Todos”**

Conformada por 87 organizaciones en 23 estados de la República mexicana:

Academia Hidalguense de Educación y Derechos Humanos A.C. (ACADERH) (Hidalgo); Agenda LGBT (Estado de México); Alianza Sierra Madre, A.C. (Chihuahua); Aluna Acompañamiento Psicosocial, A.C.(Ciudad de México); Asistencia Legal por los Derechos Humanos, A.C. (AsiLegal) (Ciudad de México); Asociación Jalisciense de Apoyo a los Grupos Indígenas, A.C. (AJAGI) (Guadalajara, Jal.); Asociación para la Defensa de los Derechos Ciudadanos “Miguel Hidalgo” (Jacala Hgo.); Bowerasa, A.C. “Haciendo Camino” (Chihuahua, Chih.); Casa del Migrante Saltillo (Saltillo, Coah.); Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir, A.C. (Ciudad de México); Centro de Capacitación y Defensa de los Derechos Humanos e Indígenas, Asociación Civil (CECADDHI) (Chihuahua); Centro “Fray Julián Garcés” Derechos Humanos y Desarrollo Local, A. C. (Tlaxcala, Tlax.); Centro de Apoyo al Trabajador, A.C. (CAT) (Ciudad de México); Centro de Derechos de la Mujeres de Chiapas (San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chis.); Centro de Derechos Humanos “Don Sergio” (Jiutepec, Mor.); Centro de Derechos Humanos “Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas”, A. C. (San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chis); Centro de Derechos Humanos “Fray Francisco de Vitoria O.P.”, A. C. (Ciudad de México); Centro de Derechos Humanos “Fray Matías

de Córdoba”, A.C. (Tapachula, Chis.); Centro de Derechos Humanos “Juan Gerardi”, A. C. (Torreón, Coah.); Centro de Derechos Humanos “Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez”, A. C. (Ciudad de México); Centro de Derechos Humanos de la Montaña, Tlachinollan, A. C. (Tlapa, Gro.); Centro de Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres (Chihuahua); Centro de Derechos Humanos de los Pueblos del Sur de Veracruz “Bety Cariño”, A.C. (Tatahuicapan de Juárez, Ver.); Centro de Derechos Humanos Digna Ochoa, A.C (Tonalá, Chis.); Centro de Derechos Humanos Paso del Norte (Cd. Juárez, Chih.); Centro de Derechos Humanos Toaltepeyolo (Orizaba, Veracruz); Centro de Derechos Humanos Victoria Diez, A.C. (León, Gto.); Centro de Derechos Humanos Zeferino Ladrillero (CDHZL) (Estado de México); Centro de Derechos Indígenas “Flor y Canto”, A. C. (Oaxaca, Oax.); Centro de Derechos Indígenas A. C. (Bachajón, Chis.); Centro de Investigación y Capacitación Propuesta Cívica A. C. (Propuesta Cívica) (Ciudad de México); Centro de Justicia para la Paz y el Desarrollo, A. C. (CEPAD) (Guadalajara, Jal.); Centro de los Derechos del Migrante (Ciudad de México); Centro de Reflexión y Acción Laboral (CEREAL-Guadalajara) (Guadalajara, Jal.); Centro Diocesano para los Derechos Humanos “Fray Juan de Larios”, A.C. (Saltillo, Coah.); Centro Juvenil Generando Dignidad (Comalcalco, Tabasco); Centro Kalli Luz Marina (Orizaba, Ver.); Centro Mexicano de Derecho Ambiental (CEMDA) (Ciudad de México); Centro Mujeres (La Paz, BCS.); Centro Regional de Defensa de DDHH José María Morelos y Pavón, A.C. (Chilapa, Gro.); Centro Regional de Derechos Humanos “Bartolomé Carrasco”, A.C. (BARCA) (Oaxaca, Oax.); Ciencia Social Alternativa, A.C. KOOKAY (Mérida, Yuc.); Ciudadanía Lagunera por los Derechos Humanos, A.C. (CILADHAC) (Torreón, Coah.); Colectivo contra la Tortura y la Impunidad (CCTI) (Ciudad de México); Colectivo Educación para la Paz y los Derechos Humanos, A.C. (CEPAZDH) (San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chis.); Comisión Ciudadana de Derechos Humanos del Noroeste (Mexicali, Baja California); Comisión de Derechos Humanos y Laborales del Valle de Tehuacán, A.C. (Tehuacán, Pue.); Comisión de Solidaridad y Defensa de los Derechos Humanos, A.C. (COSYDDHAC) (Chihuahua, Chih.); Comisión Independiente de Derechos Humanos de Morelos, A. C. (CIDHMOR) (Cuernavaca, Mor.); Comisión Regional de Derechos Humanos “Mahatma Gandhi”, A. C. (Tuxtepec, Oax.); Comité Cerezo (Ciudad de México); Comité Cristiano de Solidaridad Monseñor Romero (Ciudad de México); Comité de Defensa de las Libertades Indígenas (Palenque, Chis.); Comité de Defensa Integral de Derechos Humanos Gobixha A.C. (CODIGODH) (Oaxaca, Oax.); Comité de Derechos Humanos “Fr. Pedro Lorenzo de la Nada”, A. C. (Ocosingo, Chis.); Comité de Derechos Humanos “Sierra Norte de Veracruz”, A. C. (Huayacocotla, Ver.); Comité de Derechos Humanos Ajusco (Ciudad de México); Comité de Derechos Humanos de Colima No Gubernamental A. C. (Colima, Col.); Comité de Derechos Humanos de Comalcalco, A. C. (CODEHUCO) (Comalcalco, Tab); Comité de Derechos Humanos de Tabasco, A. C. (CODEHUTAB) (Villahermosa, Tab); Comité de Derechos Humanos y Orientación Miguel Hidalgo, A. C. (Dolores Hidalgo, Gto.); Comité de Familiares de Detenidos Desaparecidos “Hasta Encontrarlos”(Ciudad de México); Comité Sergio Méndez Arceo Pro Derechos Humanos de Tulancingo, Hgo A.C. (Tulancingo, Hgo.); Consultoría Técnica Comunitaria AC (CONTEC) (Chihuahua); El Caracol, A.C (Ciudad de México); Estancia del Migrante González y Martínez, A.C. (Querétaro, Qro.); Frente Cívico Sinaloense. Secretaría de Derechos Humanos (Culiacán, Sin.); Fundación para la Justicia y el Estado Democrático de Derecho (Ciudad de México); Indignación, A. C. Promoción y Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (Mérida, Yuc.); Instituto de Derechos Humanos Ignacio Ellacuría, S.J. Universidad Iberoamericana- Puebla (Puebla, Pue.); Instituto Mexicano de Derechos Humanos y Democracia (Ciudad de México); Instituto Mexicano para el Desarrollo Comunitario, A. C. (IMDEC) (Guadalajara, Jal.); Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente. Programa Institucional de Derechos Humanos y Paz (Guadalajara, Jal.); Justicia, Derechos Humanos y Género, A.C. (Ciudad de México); La 72, Hogar-Refugio para Personas Migrantes (La 72) (Tenosique, Tabasco); Mujeres Indígenas por la Conservación, Investigación y Aprovechamiento de los Recursos Naturales, A. C. (CIARENA) (Oaxaca); Oficina de Defensoría de los Derechos de la Infancia A.C. (ODI) (Ciudad de México); Promoción de los Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales (PRODESCAC) (Estado de México); Proyecto de Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales (ProDESC) (Ciudad de México); Proyecto sobre Organización, Desarrollo, Educación e Investigación (PODER) (Ciudad de México); Red Solidaria de Derechos Humanos, A.C. (Morelia, Michoacán); Respuesta Alternativa, A. C. Servicio de Derechos Humanos y Desarrollo Comunitario (San Luis Potosí); Servicio, Paz y Justicia de Tabasco, A.C. (SERPATAB) (Villahermosa, Tab.); Servicios de Inclusión Integral, A.C. (SEIINAC) (Pachuca, Hgo.); Tequío Jurídico A.C. (Oaxaca, Oax.); VIHas de Vida (Guadalajara, Jal.); Voces Mesoamericanas, Acción con Pueblos Migrantes AC (San Cristóbal de las Casas, Chiapas).

## Refuge for Families