



International Monterrey Model United Nations Simulation

American School Foundation of Monterrey



Organization of American States

Topic: Protecting the human rights of Central American migrants fleeing violence and unfavorable economic conditions.

Director: Gabriela Rousseau

Moderator: Leocadio Villarreal

I. Committee Background

Established on April 30th, 1948, the Organization of American States works to establish peace and justice in the nations of the Western Hemisphere; it also aims to promote solidarity and collaboration among members to defend their sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence, as stipulated in the first chapter of its Charter. The OAS grew out of an international organization previously established by the United States for the Western Hemisphere, the Pan-American Union. Starting in 1889, the Pan-American Union engaged in a series of meetings known as the Pan-American Conferences, which concluded with the foundation of the OAS and the signing of its Charter at the conclusion of the Ninth Conference, held in the city of Bogotá, Colombia. The new organization was originally meant to function as a forum for international cooperation and security among Latin American countries and the United States after the beginning of the Cold War. By the 1990s, the newly independent Caribbean nations and Canada became members, and the organization's focus shifted towards the encouragement of democracy in member states.

Like the United Nations, the Organization of American States is administered by a General Secretariat, headed by a Secretary-General who is elected every five years. Its main policy-making body is the General Assembly, which hosts the foreign ministers and chiefs of state of each of the 35 independent nations of the Western Hemisphere on an annual basis. The General Assembly also controls the organization's budget and oversees additional specialized organs. When the General Assembly is not convening, the regular work of the organization is carried out by the Permanent Council, which, as the name suggests, is composed of elected permanent representatives from each nation in the OAS. Even though the OAS is committed to fulfilling the United Nations' regional goals from the 1940s, the organization's resolutions are not subject to approval by the United Nations or any other international body. Any resolution that passes by a simple majority is considered to be final and non-binding.

II. Introduction

Description and Definition of the Topic

Migration is defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization as the relocation of individuals to a new area or country around the globe

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(UNESCO, 2017). This term simply refers to the people who move from one place to another for more than a year. According to the International Organization of Migration, “232 million people a year become international migrants” (UNDESA, 2013). Although the motivations that drive the move of immigrants may vary from studying abroad to seeking a better life, it is important to note that immigrants make the conscious choice to leave their country. On the other hand, refugees are persons who are forced to leave their nation to escape armed conflict or persecution and “who are recognised as needing of international protection because it is too dangerous for them to return home” (Travis, 2015). The 1951 Refugee Convention defines the term “refugee” and their rights, as well as the legal obligations of countries to protect them (UNHCR). A key statement in this document is that refugees cannot be returned to a country or situation where their life and freedom could be in danger. However, obtaining a refugee status is not easy.

The 232 million migrants move for a variety of different reasons. “While for some migration is a positive and empowering experience, it is increasingly clear that a lack of human rights-based systems of migration governance at the global, regional and national level is creating a human rights crisis for migrants at borders and in the territory of countries of transit and destination” (OHCHR, 2017). In other words, migrants are constantly being denied their fundamental rights and freedoms.

The Problem

In Central America, migration has been a trending topic, especially in recent decades. Numerous Central Americans are migrating north, mostly from an area called the Northern Triangle, formed by El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. This is mainly driven by the ever-present violence, lack of security, poverty, inequality, and discrimination in their countries. It was reported in 2015 that, from the 4.1 million international migrants from Central America, most resided in the United States; however, some transferred to Mexico, Canada, and Europe (Migration Policy Institute, 2017). Because the final destination of so many migrants is the United States, a great percentage of them are forced to embark on an extremely dangerous journey through Mexico to get there. According to a report published by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) in 2014, the situation of the movement of people in Mexico “includes homicides, kidnappings, disappearances, acts of sexual violence, human trafficking, migrant smuggling, discrimination, and the detention of migrants without due process guarantees and judicial protection” (IACHR, 2014).

One of the main reasons migrants in Central America flee their country is because of the major threats posed by gangs. The two main gangs operating in Central America are the *Mara Salvatrucha* (MS-13) and its main rival, Barrio 18 (M-18). Although estimates of gang membership in Central America differ, the U.S. State Department officials estimated in 2012 that there were “roughly 85,000 MS-13 and 18th Street (Barrio 18) gang members in Northern Triangle countries” (U.S. Department of State, 2012).

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Most members of the gang MS-13 come from El Salvador, but others come from Honduras, Guatemala, and Mexico (BBC, 2017). Gangs like this one are responsible for violence and drug activity across the United States and Central America, living with a motto of “kill, rape, and control” (Chan, 2017). Barrio 18, which originated in Los Angeles, spread into other nations, specifically Central America, after recruiting members. Barrio 18 is mainly known for kidnapping, petty drug trafficking, contract killings, laundering money, and for controlling small communities and local non-governmental organizations (In Sight Crime, 2017). Because of the violent gang activity in Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador, these countries have among the highest homicide rates in the world. Homicides related to these groups occur when gangs “discipline their members, punish those who attempt to leave, dispute territory, confront law enforcement and their families, punish those who fail to comply with their orders,” and when external people witness any of these crimes (Congressional Research Service, 2014).

Families are often unable to afford to pay money to these organized groups of criminals, so they embark on dangerous journeys for survival to protect themselves and their loved ones. One of the perilous paths taken in order to flee to the United States through Mexico consists of walking for days at first, even through mountains, in order to board a cargo train in Mexico known as *La Bestia* or “the Beast”. The train, which usually carries cement, iron, quartz, wheat, corn, diesel, vegetable oil, fertilizer, or wood, is used as a transportation system for these migrants. Because their use of it is illegal, they are forced to risk their lives by jumping off the moving train. Not only is the danger of the train a factor, but violent gangs, sexual assault, kidnapping, and even blackmail throughout their journey are frequently encountered. These crimes are usually committed by the very gangs that Central Americans escape from: by Mexican drug traffickers such as the Zetas, Mexican police, and smugglers. It was reported by the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) that 11,000 abductions of migrants happened in southern Mexico between April and September 2010 (Dominguez, 2014).

Other relatively safer methods that migrants undertake include overcrowded airless truck and bus rides, conscious of the risk of being deported at checkpoint detections, where payoffs might allow them to continue. Smugglers, colloquially called “coyotes” and “polleros”, are also hired for around \$5,000 dollars per migrant to be guided to the U.S. border (Aridjis); however, these smugglers are not reliable because they are known to lie about immigrant-friendly changes in U.S. policies in order to increase business for themselves. Despite these risks, around half a million Central American immigrants take this journey yearly (Dominguez, 2014). “The extreme vulnerability to which migrants and other persons fall victim in the context of human mobility in Mexico is one of the worst human tragedies in the region today” (IAHCR, 2014).

To find a solution to this issue and give migrants the human rights they are entitled to, all parties must collaborate. The violation of the human rights of migrants has become about more than just the underlying root causes of their departure, but also about the abuse that

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immigrants face by both criminals and authorities outside of their country when escaping their already violent circumstances.

III. Historical of the Topic

Chronological History of the Topic

In the 1960s, several nations in the Central American region attempted to become more industrialized. Even so, the divided class structures led to revolutions and counter-insurgency movements which prevented any technological advancements from taking place. During the 1970s through the early 1990s, civil warfare dominated many nations. In the 1980s, many Central Americans had reasons to migrate to the United States, amongst them was political instability and economic hardship. This led the population in North America to almost triple in numbers (OHCHR, 2017). In fact, approximately 20% of El Salvador's population fled the country (Departures, 2011), and it was in these times that MS-13 was created by Salvadorans in Los Angeles. Although the number of migrants from Central America decreased with the end of conflicts in the 1990s, the immigrant population from this region has not stopped growing. Today, "many migrant social networks previously developed to assist those seeking political refuge now facilitate economic migration, with many individuals entering the United States illegally" (Zong & Batalova, 2015).

Furthermore, tens of thousands of women and unaccompanied children migrated to the United States in search of asylum in late 2014 (American Immigration Council, 2017). Most of these individuals came from the Northern Triangle region. Because plenty of migrants were arriving into the U.S. at once, President Obama classified this as a "humanitarian crisis" (American Immigration Council, 2017). Since then, the number of migrants has only continued to escalate, leading to an increasing amount of concern not only from government officials but also from the American citizens.

According to a report from the Migration Policy Institute, the Central American immigrant population grew from 354,000 to 3.2 million from 1980 to 2013 (Zong & Batalova, 2015). Recent police statistics confirm that prominent levels of violence still exist. In fact, the average number of homicides in El Salvador increased to approximately 103 homicides per 1000 people, the highest since the finalization of this country's civil war in the late 1980s (WOLA Advocacy for Human Rights in America, 2017). A report made in 2015 by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) found that women in particular face community-level violence, for 64% of women who attempted to leave their country were threatened or attacked.

Historical Case Studies

Guatemala's Civil War, American Baptist Church (ABC) v. Thornburgh

For 36 years, Guatemala endured the most protracted and violent civil war in Central American history. From 1960 to 1996, the government of Guatemala fought endlessly against

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the Mayan population, who accused them of genocide and other human rights violations. These gruesome 36 years “inflicted significant harm, particularly on the indigenous Mayans. The conflict prompted 200,000 Guatemalans to flee to Mexico, where up to 43,000 refugees established settlement camps” (Gil, 2017). In the early 1970s, the violence, injustice, political instability, and economic inequality led to the first large-scale migration to Mexico and other proximate countries. Many ended up in UNHCR-run refugee camps and others continued to the United States to seek asylum. Despite the fact that they were fleeing political and ethnic persecution, these refugees were not granted refugee status in neither Mexico nor the U.S. (Jonas, 2013). The arrival of the numerous refugees from both Guatemala and El Salvador (the latter of which was also undergoing a state-created civil war) in 1980s United States sparked the “U.S. sanctuary movement” (Jonas, 2013). In this time, the Reagan administration denied the asylum petitions of 97% of Salvadorans and 98% of Guatemalan petitioners. In response to this, the two groups and supporters initiated a class-action lawsuit against the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in 1985. The legal proceedings ended in the requirement of the INS to review the cases of all Salvadoran and Guatemalan migrants who arrived by 1990 and whose petitions had been denied. Whether or not the United States government reheard these cases in *bona fide* refugee standards or if they were “driven by foreign policy considerations” is disputed.

Cuban Migrant Crisis

Cuba has always been a country with a population that has been dispersed through many Central American countries, especially the United States. This tendency of Cuban citizen migration increased exponentially following Fidel Castro’s rule in 1959, when a large part of the population left the country in hopes of avoiding violence and unfavorable economic circumstances. Many immigrants settled in the United States, and consequently, the Cuban population grew exponentially from 79,000 in 1960 to 439,000 in 1970 (Batalova & Zong, 2017). The fact that many Cubans who arrived at the U.S. were admitted “through special humanitarian provisions—citing communist oppression on the island—rather than via traditional immigration pathways required for other immigrant groups” was also a factor of this surge of Cubans in the U.S. (Batalova & Zong, 2017). Furthermore, Congress passed the Cuban Adjustment Act in 1966, which allowed Cubans to legally become permanent citizens after being in the U.S. for one year.

Belize

Many Belizean men were sent to the United States between the 1940s and 1950s to work in agricultural fields; they would work in harsh conditions for hours to only receive a small pay. Many other Belizeans arrived at the United States during the Second World War because many Americans left to serve in the armed conflict, resulting in a lack of human workforce. Additionally, emigration began to become a trend in Belize shortly after its independence in 1981. This happened as a response to the new job opportunities and better wages offered by

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other countries. Many men were sent to Panama to speed up the building of the Panama Canal (Miller, 1993), and many women also left the to countries like the United States and Mexico in the search for a better life.

2014 American Immigration Crisis

In 2014, there was a dramatic surge in the number of unaccompanied minors traveling from Central America seeking entrance to the United States. Of these, many had a pressing need for asylum, whilst others were simply seeking more desirable economic conditions and to reunite with family members. Because of the mixed motivations behind the migration, the United States struggled to “carry out its core immigrant functions while also providing protection to those who cannot be safely returned to their home countries” (Rosenblum, 2015). According to a report by the Transatlantic Council on Migration, the United States was unable to handle the situation because of policy failures, not because of deficiency of border security. The assessment also states that these unaccompanied children often had to wait as long as two years to get a hearing before an immigration judge (Rosenblum, 2015). These young migrants, some as young as five, also faced abuse while in the custody of U.S. Customs and Border Protection. “Children detained by CBP across the country have reported scores of examples of verbal, sexual and physical abuse; prolonged detention in squalid conditions; and a severe lack of essential necessities such as beds, food and water” (ACLU, 2014). A complaint filed by several human rights organizations on behalf of over 100 children also details that Border Patrol agents denied essential medical care to children, refused to provide diapers for infants, confiscated and did not return legal documents and personal belongings, and made racially-charged insults and death threats (ACLU, 2014). Agents are almost never held to account and reforms are rarely implemented after reports of abuses similar to this one. In fact, “97% of the 809 abuse complaints – 60% of which involved abuse of migrant children – filed against Border Patrol agents between January 2009 and January 2012 resulted in the classification “no action taken”” (McVeigh, 2014). Even after the 2014 immigration crisis, immigrants from Central America continue to seek shelter in America in hopes of improving their lives.

Past UN Actions

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) considers the situation in Central America to be a protection crisis, and is particularly concerned with the growing numbers of women and children who are forced into gangs, sexual violence, and murder (Sturm, 2016). The UNHCR, aware of the perilous routes people take to flee their country and of the fact that many people encounter extreme violence and risk, took action by providing shelter and protection to those Central Americans who intend to escape. Not only did they provide physical aid, but they have also given financial assistance, education, and legal services to those who need it (UNHCR, 2016).

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Early in 2017, the U.N.'s New York Declaration on Migrants and Refugees issued an agreement to help migrants and refugees around the globe. The agreement consists of providing programs that concede migrants protection, provisions, education for children, and the equitable distribution of the migrant population among countries (Falk, 2016). The San Jose Action Statement was created by Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama and the United States in order to work to find solutions and provide proper protection for Central American migrants fleeing their violent situations (UNHCR, 2016). The statement included the importance of identification and documentation for all migrants in search of protection, which is an efficient way to provide security, provide legal aid, and find alternatives for asylum seekers (UNHCR, 2016). The UN also began working with the United States to allocate processing centers in near and neighbouring countries in order to give migrants a temporary safe haven. Starting in 2016, the UN helped determine if migrants were eligible for refugee status (Preston, Herszenhorn & Shear, 2016). Even though migration in Central America is still a prominent issue, the United Nations urges collaboration between OAS members and is working to help those refugees in vulnerable situations.

IV. Key Players and Points of View

Guatemala

Even though Guatemala's civil war ended in 1996, the violence in this country remains as dangerous as before; statistics indicate that in 2015, there were 29.5 violent deaths per 100,000 people, adding up to a total of 4,778 homicides in 2015. "This means that Guatemala saw an estimated 13 murders per day, according to the country's national police" (Washington Office in Latin America, 2016). There are several causes of this issue, including gangs, socio-economic problems, and a weak government. In fact, a New York Times article states how gang violence in the Northern Triangle has caused great economic desperation, consequently driving "an unrelenting exodus of migrants, including entire families, seeking safety in other countries, mainly the United States" (Semple 2016). In response to these issues, Guatemalan officials have taken action to mitigate this problem such as working with organizations and cooperation agencies in order to accelerate economic growth, increasing crime prevention projects to support initiatives like *Alertos* in hopes of deteriorating the exploitation of their citizens in the most violent areas of the city, and collaborating with the *Mejoremos Guate* organization (loosely translated to "Let's Make Guatemala Better"). This is "an initiative set into motion by a group of entrepreneurs who joined forces and resources to develop a national strategy in order to influence public policies in favor of the country's development" (Mejoremos Guate 2017). Furthermore, Guatemala's private sector has also implemented a variety of projects, such as English programs to increase economic opportunities for citizens. Additionally, Guatemala has sponsored crime prevention projects in rough areas to reduce the violent culture and environment that causes many of its citizens to leave the country.

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El Salvador

El Salvador, which is part of the Northern Triangle, is the country where the most Central American migrants come from. In 2015, 1,352,000 of the immigrants from Central America were from El Salvador, which amounts to 40% of all Central American immigrants in the United States (Migration Policy Institute 2017). Between the 1970s and 1980s, US-funded death squads and warlords were ruling El Salvador, inducing fear in all of its citizens, which triggered the migration of many Salvadorans into the United States to avoid the violence caused by Americans in their homeland. In September 22 of 2016, Salvador Sanchez Ceren, President of El Salvador, gave a speech addressing the United Nations General Assembly in which he stated that all country officials should focus on strengthening “the activities of regional and global organizations dealing with the issue, especially to ensure the protection of the human rights of all people on the move” (United Nations News Centre 2016). He also added that El Salvador is aware of the conditions that force people to migrate out of its region, which is why the government has joined Guatemala and Honduras, with the support from the Organization of American States, to improve living conditions to the best possible extent within their communities. The President acknowledged the fact that the number of homicides decreased by 50% in 2016 after the government began making efforts to stop violence in 2015. After taking office in 2014, President Sanchez Cerén has implemented “repression-oriented anti-gang policies... including relying on the military to support anti-gang efforts” (Ribando, 2016). While this might seem effective to some, the involvement of the military in domestic security often leads to human rights violations. From 2014 to 2015, the Office of the Ombudsman for Human Rights in El Salvador reported that of the 2,202 complaints of human rights violations it received, 92% were allegedly committed by the police and/or the military (Ribando, 2016).

Mexico

“Mexico is a country of immigration, refuge, transit, and return migration” (González-Murphy & Koslowski, 2011). Because Mexico shares a border with the United States, meaning that all of the migrants coming from Central America will eventually cross through Mexico to arrive at their destination, many Central American immigrants are staying in Mexico for now due to recent changes in U.S. immigration policies. However, Mexico does not have the necessary resources or policies to successfully handle and give asylum to the thousands of migrants that are arriving to their country. In 2014, Mexico launched the Southern Border Program, which was implemented to reinforce security in its southern border and give better protection to migrants travelling through Mexican territory. At the time, the United States planned to provide \$86 million to the country, which did not do much to prevent the abuse of human rights in the detention centers across the country. “The program has led to undocumented immigrants –legally allowed to be in Mexico since 2008– being treated like criminals in overcrowded, jail-like government-run detention centers across the country. There, agents have at times tried to discourage migrants from seeking asylum even when their lives

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would be at risk were they to return home. At least 2,500 employees of the National Migration Institute (INM) have been fired in the past three years following investigations into corruption and other irregularities” (Zabludovsky, 2016). Mexican authorities are also known to deport migrants regardless of the situation they face back home and detentions are used as a method to punish those who request asylum and “as a threat to pressure people who express fear of return from applying” (Human Rights First, 2017). According to a report from Human Rights First, migrants face kidnappings, disappearances, and executions; these are often carried out by criminal groups or gangs working with smugglers, sometimes even with the help of Mexican authorities. Women and children are the most vulnerable when arriving in Mexico, as these migrants are forced through isolated routes where they face assault, robbery and even sexual violence. Due to this, Mexico’s National Migration Institute (NMI) has been making an effort to inform migrants about the rights they have, such as the right to apply for asylum or of being granted refugee status (Weiss, 2016). In short, Mexico is a country where the human rights of migrants are profoundly abused. In order to ensure the safety of these immigrants fleeing violence at home, this country must tremendously improve their treatment of migrants in government facilities and fight to eradicate the violence that they face by other parties as well.

United States

The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), has been working to protect national security and provide a safe home for their citizens by enhancing protection in U.S. borders and eradicating illegal aliens seen as criminals and fugitives, or recent arrivals (ICE, 2017). The U.S. is also working to provide better security to the border they share with Mexico by implementing an \$88 million dollar program to obtain information on those crossing the border and working alongside Mexico to fund a \$75 million project to improve communications through their shared border (WOLA, 2017). In 2015, approximately 3.4 million Central Americans migrated into the United States. 530,250 of these were illegal immigrants who were arrested (Lesser, Batalova, 2017), and 450,954 were sent back to their country by Homeland security (Hauslohner, 2016). Around 40% of Mexican migrants deported from the US stated that their human rights were abused while they were held for illegally crossing the U.S. border with Mexico (Morrison, 2015). The tactics to send back as many migrants as possible sometimes strips them of the right to have a fair hearing in court. The ICE also poses a threat to the Fourth Amendment’s “protection against unreasonable searches and seizures, the constitutional guarantee of due process, and the constitutional guarantee of equal protection and freedom from discrimination based on race, ethnicity, and national origin” (ACLU, 2015). Despite the fact that all migrants applying for asylums categorize themselves as having reasonable fear of persecution in their home countries a great majority of them are being sent back, and the few who are accepted often struggle with the consequences of the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment in their new home country (Hauslohner, 2016).

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Belize

Belize has recently become the destination of many migrants coming from Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador. During 2016, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reopened an office in Belize after not being present for over 20 years, and currently, over 4,000 people are looking for asylum (Lakhani, 2017). Even though they are known as the most peaceful country in Central America, Belize has abused human rights of migrants through “the use of excessive force by security officers, lengthy pretrial detention, and harassment and threats based on sexual orientation or gender identity” (United States Department of State, 2016). According to a U.S. Human Rights Report of this country from 2016, other human rights issues included corruption by government authorities and the lack of protection of refugees. The report also mentioned that migrants were also at risk for forced labour in different sectors.

V. Possible Solutions

As members of the Organization of the American States, all countries have an obligation to secure the human rights of every person under their jurisdiction, regardless of their nationality, migratory situation, or other social condition. “This obligation extends to the rights to: personal liberty; due process and access to justice; the right to seek and receive asylum; humane treatment during detention; equality before the law; protection of family life and the family unit; the principle of non-refoulement and the right to be free from persecution or torture” (IACHR, 2015). As of today, various solutions are being implemented in individual Central American countries as they attempt to put a halt to this pertinent issue. For instance, Guatemala’s private sector is working with the government and other organizations to improve economic conditions. However, it is critical to recognize that the solution to this problem will not be reached by each country working individually; instead, it should be constructed to help every nation for more significant results. Because there has been a long history of migration from Central American countries due to a violent history and the neglect of human rights, finding a solution to this global issue requires “applying a human development lens to the longstanding reality of violence in the region” (Understanding Central American Migration, 2013). One of the solutions implemented by the United Nations attempting to decrease the violation of rights of Central American migrants was unanimously adopting a declaration document, which was affirmed by 193 Member States, that stressed the desperate need to promote and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, especially women and children (United Nations News Centre, 2016). Recently, the Northern Triangle presidents have been “calling for a comparably ambitious joint effort that would combine foreign aid and local resources to attack the causes of the immigration crisis” (LA Times, 2014). In other words, they are desperately looking to find a way in which the lifestyle of Central American citizens can improve, eventually stopping them from feeling the urge to migrate to the United States or other foreign countries. Nations could take an approach that creates

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opportunities for wealth, which would improve the situation in the long term, while simultaneously offering protection from the harm that they are already facing. These established solutions would be targeted towards helping the labor force, especially the young population of nations. In 1999, the United States aided *Plan Colombia* (8 billion USD) to rebuild institutions, eradicate drug production and expand social protection. This proved to be very successful now that Colombia has managed to escape the downward spiral that it was caught in during the 1990s and now, “investment is pouring in, economic growth is strong and, most important, young people no longer see migration as the only route to a better life” (LA Times, 2014). Be it through expanding the protection of refugees in the region, increasing funding to support the humanitarian response to the crisis, or sanctioning and punishing those who mistreat migrants, action must also be taken to put an end to the continuous abuse of human rights on transit and destination countries such as the United States and Mexico.

VI. Current Status

The rate at which Central Americans migrate has increased remarkably these past few years. The situations that cause individuals even to consider leaving their nation vary from country to country; however, the most recurrent ones include failed economies, threats posed by gangs and the violence induced by these.

It is evident that Central American migrants’ human rights continue to be violated despite the efforts made by the United States and the Mexican government to protect them. Many migrants fleeing violence and persecution are also currently unaware of their right to seek protection. In 2013, “the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) noted that 68 percent of individuals in the Siglo XXI Migration Station in Tapachula (a migrant detention center) were unaware of their right to seek protection” (WOLA, 2017). This is very significant because it shows that more than half of the migrants’ rights are being undermined, and individuals in migration centers do not have easy access to legal representatives. Migrants are also highly vulnerable to diseases such as HIV and access to health care is out of reach for many (Human Rights Watch, 2017). Moreover, migrants that travel through Mexico suffer extremely as their rights are abused. The deputy director of research for the Americas at Amnesty International, Carolina Jiménez, stated: “We have documented a truly disturbing pattern of very serious human rights violations against migrants travelling through Mexico” (The Guardian, 2017).

Although President Trump made significant changes in migration policy in 2017, he supposedly plans to grant temporary legal residence in the U.S. to Central American children who held any means that could prove they were under threat of violence. Mexico and the United States are collaborating to improve trade practices in El Salvador, “to train local law enforcement officials in more effective and transparent techniques” in Honduras (Linthicum, 2017), to help young people who are likely to migrate in search of jobs, and improve tax

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collection to minimize opportunity for corruption in Guatemala. This plan does not guarantee the deterioration of migration rates, but based on prior efforts, there is a high chance that it will.

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