



# COMMUNIQUÉ RJM-CANA

## ANNUAL ASSEMBLY - November 2021

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### **Faced with forced migration into a dead end, let's organize hope!**

The organizations and members of the **Central American and North American Jesuit Migrant Network** gathered at the 2021 assembly, which commemorates the 20 years of the RJM-CANA, expressed our concern and ratified our commitment to forced migrants and the conditions they face in Central America, Mexico, the United States and Canada, and we call on governments to respond to this challenging reality by respecting their dignity and human rights.

**Forced migration into a dead end.** From the RJM CANA we continue to claim the existing contradiction between the discourses, practices and policies of the governments in the region, mainly in the countries of transit and destination. The continuity of restrictive policies, of containment, outsourcing and militarization of the borders do not solve the underlying problem of the migration and asylum systems, on the contrary, they exacerbate the humanitarian crisis in the region. On the other hand, important announcements aimed at addressing the causes of migration are insufficient, even detrimental, when the programs to which the resources are directed repeat inefficient formulas and do not reach the communities. Meanwhile, threats to democracy, corruption and violence continue to force people to migrate. All this exacerbated by the socio-economic crisis as a result of COVID-19.

After a year of border closures and uncertainty due to the pandemic, 2021 has been marked by four growing and challenging migratory dynamics: i) the historical flow from the countries of northern Central America to the United States; ii) the flow of Nicaraguans fleeing due to political violence to Panama, Costa Rica and the United States; iii) the flow of more than 125 thousand Haitian people, also Cuban, Venezuelan and extra-continental, many of them minors, who have crossed the Darién, today the most dangerous border in the continent, heading to Mexico, the United States and Canada; and iv) internal forced displacement in Mexico and Central America. In these mixed flows, migrants end up trapped in prison cities, especially on the border, where they are detained and deprived of their liberty not only between concrete walls but through procedures that seek to contain their flight, criminalized and deprived of dignity; this, when they are not expelled without guarantees of due process and exposed again to the risks from which they flee. These measures that attempt to deter migrants have been implemented before with little effect for that purpose. In the chronic and invisible crisis of migration and borders, while States in their diplomatic rhetoric speak of "returns" and "seizures", we see people "expelled by Title 42", "trapped" and "thrown" into the danger from which they flee or from organized crime groups that traffic with them, exposing them to greater risks, a reflection of the impact of inhumane migration policies that increase the edges of vulnerability, especially for women, children, adolescents and LGBTIQ+ people. We insist that crises are not caused by migrants, but by political decisions that do not respond to the common good.

**Organize hope.** Faced with the discouraging scenario, the RJM-CANA continues to propose actions that allow us to walk towards hope. These 20 years of travel have allowed us to understand the importance of working together with migrants. We see signs of hope in the Position of the Society of Jesus in Mexico and Central America and of the entire apostolic body in the face of forced migrations; in efforts to monitor and make human rights violations against migrants visible; in the daily pastoral accompaniment provided by so many committed women and men at the risk of being criminalized, and the opening of articulated projects between the different organizations on the borders where a greater presence is required. We recognize the challenges and that is why we call on States, society in general and Church organizations to:



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**1. Promote policies in the region that are appropriate to the reality of mixed flows, the profiles and needs of people forced to migrate**, which recognize the fundamental right to migrate and seek asylum; that guarantee access to rights; that facilitate immigration regularization. And reject those policies with a xenophobic background that seek to restrict or contain migratory flows, denying such fundamental rights as life or integrity.

**2. Address multiple migration crises from a human rights framework and address the causes of migration.** We see multiple crises associated with the increase in violence (community, institutional, organized crime, even state violence), the environmental deterioration caused by extractivism, forced internal displacement, which cause an increase and diversity of migratory flows and their increasingly vulnerable faces, in which a plurality of causes converge. We advocate addressing the causes claiming the right not to migrate.

**3. Implement policies and mechanisms for the integration of returnees and migrants in countries of destination, increasingly forced**, that avoid their concentration in cities where there are not enough sources of work, that address barriers and obstacles such as discrimination, value the cultural, social and economic contributions of migrants and allow them to access rights on an equal basis with the population reception, ensuring their participation in the design and implementation of public policies.

**4. We insist on looking and giving an apostolic response** in those places of greatest vulnerability and that have been made invisible, such as the Darien border.

Knowing that we are challenged by the message of Pope Francis on the World Day of Migrants and Refugees and his call to go out to the existential peripheries to welcome everyone *"Towards an ever greater us"*, we affirm the commitment to take **Another step together** with people forced to migrate in search of a safe place to live with dignity and fulfill their life purpose. **#WeKeepWalking** to reduce indifference, discrimination and xenophobia and learn that love and life have no limits or borders. Together we can give **#OneMoreStep**.

**#WEKEEPWALKING**  
**#ONEMORESTEP**

