



December 2019

## National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights

NNIRR'S YEAR-END MESSAGE:

# Building Solidarity & Grassroots Resistance!

Dear Friend:

We've weathered another year of chaos from the Trump Administration and its relentless attacks on our immigrant communities. Despite impeachment inquiry proceedings, there has been no end to the announcements of new restrictions and rules affecting immigrants and refugees. Seemingly every day, we learn of more human rights abuses at the border and in detention centers – violations of international law and preventable migrant deaths at our borders.

Now, more than ever, we need to push back on such injustices and heighten the resistance within our communities and strengthen ties with allies who have multiplied in support of immigrant and refugee communities. NNIRR reaffirms our commitment to this cause – to the fight and defense of the human rights of ALL immigrants and refugees.

During 2019 we have kept our members and supporters abreast of the rapid-fire developments with regular updates and calls to action. We organized a successful investigative member delegation to Washington, DC, to discuss immigration policy with Congressional leaders and their staffers. And we have been buoyed by our efforts to build awareness and link the common agendas of Climate Justice and Migrant Rights – two of the most pressing issues impacting our communities and countries around the world.

**We are deeply thankful for your partnership, and ask you for your continued support and engagement. This is an uphill battle – but we will not be deterred!**

**Please help us end 2019 with a generous contribution to NNIRR! Your support is key to leaping into 2020 in readiness and strength – positioned to tackle the issues ahead: a big election year in which immigration will again be a hot button issue, and Census 2020 where we must combat efforts to suppress immigrant participation.**

Your support will also help to usher in a new shared leadership model and welcome our Interim Co-Directors, Jennifer Ferrigno & Alma Maquítico. Jennifer and Alma take the helm with the departure of longtime Director, Cathi Tactaquin. We are grateful for Cathi's tireless commitment and the legacy she has built for NNIRR as a center for human rights advocacy and education for immigrant and refugee rights, and very excited to work with Jennifer and Alma as we close out a tumultuous 2019 and prepare for what is bound to be a challenging and busy year – and beyond – for NNIRR and our movement as a whole.

**Please join us in the struggle for justice!**

Our best wishes to you and yours for the holiday season.

With deep respect and gratitude,

*All of us at NNIRR*



photo by Eino Sierpe

# Lifting up Human Rights in the U.S.

During a challenging year for human rights, NNIRR provided a continuing stream of updates and analysis, action alerts, and spaces for discussion and collaboration. During the spring, a delegation of members from Alabama, Arizona, California, New York, and Texas converged in Washington, DC, to engage with Congressional leaders and spotlight key immigration policy issues (among over a dozen concerns!)



NNIRR in Washington, DC, with Congresswoman Karen Bass.

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A major highlight for us this year, was collaborating as part of the National Network for Immigrant & Refugee Rights national convening in Washington, DC, to speak with Congressional representatives regarding immigration related policies and its impact on our immigrant communities. At these meetings, folks from across the country shared powerful testimonies regarding the struggle for immigrant justice.

— Lupita Escobar, *Movement for Justice in El Barrio (East Harlem, NY)*

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Over the summer our interns diligently tracked presidential candidate positions on immigration and refugee policy. Our immigration position chart (available on our website) will continue to update evolving immigration policy positions as we progress towards the November 2020 elections.

In an early crowded field of presidential candidates, campaigns have been compelled to address a range of immigration issues, including the crisis at the border, family separations, DACA, criminalization of migrants, Temporary Protected Status, asylum seekers, detentions, deportations and more.

**Elections 2020:** While the presidential campaign – and potential continuing impeachment proceedings – may dominate the national political arena, NNIRR will support members in directly connecting with legislators in home districts and in Washington, DC, to bring their voices and concerns on critical immigration issues. Legislative advocacy can be a dynamic organizing tool and vehicle to focus rights-based policies and to push back on the wave of repressive proposals and practices.

During 2020, NNIRR will also support community/voter education and **Get-out-the-Vote** initiatives, promoting educational resources and voter engagement tools, and strengthening community capacities to push office-seekers to commit to protecting immigrant human rights.

**We All Count, We All Belong:** Once again, NNIRR is promoting community participation in the Census, joining local outreach in our home base of Alameda County and enlisting as a National Partner with the U.S. Census. We spoke out against Trump's proposal to include a "citizenship" question (it will not be included) in next year's Census, we will be sharing resources and tools for members' local "complete count" efforts in immigrant communities – a key "hard-to-count" population.

As in past Census years, NNIRR is calling for a halt to immigration enforcement actions prior to and during Census 2020. An inclusive Census count – that must incorporate immigrant-based populations – is paramount for funding community services, for political representation, and for providing needed data. An all-out effort must be made to shore up immigrant community participation in the face of the Trump Administration's hostile and intimidating posture.

Photos by Cathi Tactaquin



NNIRR interns at Alameda County 2020 census event.



NNIRR Board members in Washington, DC, May 2019.

## Organizing for Just Borders

NNIRR lifted up the work of our partners and multiple initiatives at the border through social media, resource sharing, and referrals to support humanitarian and organizing efforts in Texas and Arizona. Most recently, we joined in challenging the deployment of U.S. military troops to the border. NNIRR's border resources were expanded and accessed by members, the media and countless individuals seeking to get involved.

In 2020, NNIRR will bring together members, partners and allies from multiple sectors (community groups, humanitarian workers, environmental justice organizers, indigenous groups, legal service, academics and others) to strengthen connections and develop a shared rights-oriented advocacy agenda. Regardless of the outcome of the 2020 elections, the human rights crisis experienced at the border is very real and needs sustained, multi-year strategies.



**The Network's long-term international advocacy has specifically brought attention to the brutality of our U.S.-Mexico border. Along with its steadfast domestic solidarity with the border regions, the Network has always been the most reliable partner and national organization.**

**– Raquel Rubio Goldsmith, *Coalición de Derechos Humanos* (Tucson, AZ)**

## Promoting International Migrant Rights

Following two years of organizing and advocacy towards the **UN Global Compact for Migration**, approved in late 2018, NNIRR continued to monitor and participate in plans and initiatives to promote its implementation and push for even further protections for migrants and refugees.

As founding members of the **Global Coalition on Migration** and the **Women in Migration Network (WIMN)**, and as active partners in international migrant rights civil society, we will continue to play a role in international forums and initiatives to push for strong commitments to human rights-based policies and programs, and to strengthen movement-building. **Upcoming: Global Forum on Migration and Development** and migrant civil society activities in Quito, Ecuador in late January 2020.

We will continue to promote U.S. respect and support of the **Global Compact for Migration** and will work with members, allies, members of Congress, and local and state governments to promote adherence to rights-based principles and policies.

In March 2020, we'll organize a delegation to **Beijing+25** at the UN on New York – 25 years after the landmark UN Women's Conference and 20 years after our first immigrant women's delegation to Beijing+5. We will join with WIMN and other allies to spotlight the situation of women migrants and in particular, raise awareness about the intersection of gender, climate change and migration.

## Global Migration, Climate Change & Human Rights

In September, NNIRR participated in Climate Week in New York, joining partners to spotlight the intersection of climate and migration in various events. This year, we joined with climate change/justice allies and other immigrant rights advocates to further explore the issues and collaboration – a mirror of similar efforts at the global level. Climate change and global migration was a frequently requested topic for presentations and information-sharing this past year, and we mass-distributed our “primer”, *Global Migration, Climate Change and Human Rights*.

NNIRR is prioritizing the work to align the movements for climate and migration justice, to build towards shared values, vision and strategies – this at a time of dire warnings of the consequences of climate change and impending, massive population displacements around the world. In 2020 we will create a “strategic space” for critical analysis and action on climate change and migration, with an emphasis on human rights and justice. This initiative builds solidarity, raises awareness about common “root causes” of climate change and migration, and builds unity among diverse constituencies.



## Transitions within NNIRR

Last spring, NNIRR hosted a public farewell for our beloved co-founder and long-time Executive Director, Cathi Tactaquin. Members and friends from all over the country supported this celebration, a beautiful way to say thank you to Cathi for her decades-long work building the immigrant and migrant rights movement.

Interim Co-Directors, Jennifer Ferrigno & Alma Maquitico, will work together to create the building blocks for a shared leadership model and will focus on expanding and supporting our grassroots members, as well as enhancing our grassroots education, training and documentation of rights abuses.

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I've been honored and privileged to work at NNIRR these past few decades – I have truly worked with those whom I consider to be among “the best” of humanity. I am so excited to see the Network embrace and support shared leadership with its new “Interim Co-Directors”, Jen and Alma. I've known and worked with them both for many years and have the greatest respect for their values, skills and commitment. I'm calling on everyone to help support NNIRR – and Jen and Alma in their new roles – by giving generously this year. We have a BIG year ahead, with so much at stake for this country, our communities, and the organization! Thanks so much for your love and support!

– Cathi Tactaquin, *outgoing Executive Director*

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## Local Spotlight: Mississippi Immigrants Rights Alliance (MIRA)

On August 7th, 2019, 680 immigrant workers were taken by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) from 7 central Mississippi food processing plants, including Koch Foods and Pecos Foods poultry plants. MIRA immediately took action, working with local partners to provide legal services and ensure access to basic needs for families with loved ones in detention. MIRA quickly got word out through regular and social media as the raids became nationally known, and worked to build a collaborative fund to help the workers and their families. “Hundreds of immigrant workers were bound at the wrist with zip ties, loaded onto buses, and deposited at a central location for processing,” according to Bill Chandler, Executive Director of MIRA. “The community was terrorized, and the fallout will have a long-lasting and devastating impact on the immigrant community and the region.” The need for legal and humanitarian support continues today.

The only organization of its kind in Mississippi, MIRA advocates, educates and organizes immigrant and allied communities, and has helped over 1,000 immigrants from 70 countries navigate the complicated legal processes for DACA residency and naturalization. To support MIRA's ongoing advocacy and organizing, go to [yourmira.org](http://yourmira.org) and click on Donate.



Photo by Ashton Pittman for Jackson Free Press

## GIVE TO NNIRR!

We welcome your participation and expressions of solidarity, and thank you for your unwavering support for NNIRR. Please give generously to this year-end appeal. You can give in all kinds of ways:

- ✳️ **Donate online** at [www.nnirr.org](http://www.nnirr.org) or mail us a check.
- ✳️ **Become a monthly or quarterly sustainer!** Regular donations help our monthly budget and help you spread your total donation across multiple payments. To become a sustainer, select “recurring contribution” in the online Donate form.
- ✳️ **Host a birthday fundraiser on Facebook** - this has been a great way to spread our message and promote support among your friends and family.

- ✳️ **Sign up for workplace giving!** Many employers match contributions.
- ✳️ **Give the gift of solidarity this holiday season** by going to our online shop at [www.nnirr.org](http://www.nnirr.org) (click on SHOP) where we offer our popular Just Borders T-shirts, Recipes on the Move cookbooks and the bilingual children's book *I'm Not A Bear | Yo no soy oso*. Author/illustrator Kathy Keenan is generously donating all book sales to NNIRR.

**Consider any or all of these options today!** Your donation in any form makes a big difference! Thank you!



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