

# STATEMENT

## **Mexico's National Institute of Migration (INM) and National Guard evict migrant families from the camp in Giordano Bruno Plaza in Mexico City**

**June 11, 2024**

- At least 11 buses were used in the eviction of migrants from the Giordano Bruno camp. According to INM on the night of the eviction, the buses were headed to Morelos, Puebla, Tlaxcala, and the State of Mexico.
- Most residents of the camp reported use or intended use of CBP One, while others were also pursuing protection through the Mexican refugee agency (COMAR).
- This is at least the sixth eviction of a migrant camp carried out under intimidation and threats by INM agents and the Mexico City government.
- The Mexico City government continues to obstruct the right to asylum and violate the rights of migrants and asylum seekers.

*[Note: This statement is being issued in English in the interest of human rights documentation. Statement is based on physical observation of the raid, or testimonies with affected individuals. It was first published in Spanish by the Grupo de Monitoreo Frontera Centro (GMFC) on the afternoon of June 6. It has been translated to English with adaptations for timing, interpretation, and style to better document what occurred the night of June 5-6 in central Mexico City. The GMFC is a coalition of shelters, civil society organizations, universities, and independent human rights advocates who carry out human rights monitoring on a day-to-day basis in the asylum seeker camps of Mexico City.]*

### **A Nighttime Raid Sent Some Families Into Panic**

Around 8:00 PM on June 5th, until 2:00 AM on June 6th, personnel from Mexico's National Institute of Migration (INM) and the National Guard evicted migrant families who were living in the camp at Giordano Bruno Plaza and on the nearby streets of Roma and Vienna in the Juárez neighborhood of Mexico City.

To evict and dismantle the camp, more than 100 INM agents coerced hundreds of migrants to board buses, telling them they would be taken to other cities in central Mexico and would be given documents to stay in the country legally. At least 11 private buses, without INM logos, in addition to various vans from the Mexico City government, were documented in the vicinity and boarded by migrants. According to an INM agent, these buses were headed to Morelos, Puebla, Tlaxcala, and the State of Mexico [*note: later contradicted by*

*INM's own press release*]. Displaced people transported on the buses were not permitted to take their belongings with them. Many, particularly Haitian residents of the camp, did not receive clear information in their native language about the destination of the buses and the procedure once they got there.

Those who refused to board the buses were not allowed to stay in the plaza. Mexico City state workers were immediately deployed and began indiscriminately removing and destroying tents full of personal items. At the same time, some people were still trying to retrieve their belongings, including food, clothing, toys, and personal documents. As a result of the tent demolishment and removal, groups of adults and families with children were left to sleep on the street in other parts of the city.

### **Lack of Watchdogs, Arbitrary Migration Policy by INM**

The National System for Integral Family Development (DIF) or the National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) were not present to monitor the events and oversee the actions of the government agents. The late arrival of the Mexico City Human Rights Commission (CDHCDHMX) was documented once the buses had already departed. On the other hand, we did document the presence of armed National Guard members accompanying the operation, as well as Mexico City riot police waiting on streets near the plaza.

Some of the evicted migrants have informed us that they were issued documents that provide them migratory status in Mexico. In some cases, migrants were not properly informed of the type of documentation they received, nor the protections the documentation provides, and its expiration date. This practice by INM of issuing migratory status while simultaneously conducting raids to displace homeless asylum seekers is, at the very least, coercive, arbitrary and discretionary policy, and at its worst, a ploy designed to disperse vulnerable people who had become too visible for relevant political actors. There is ample evidence of similar tactics in central and southern Mexico since at least 2019.

We denounce that among those coerced to board the buses were applicants for refugee status, CBP One users, and people who already had Humanitarian Visitor Cards (TVRH). There were even people with positive resolutions from COMAR who were issued permanent residence cards by the INM and then without being provided shelter, slept elsewhere on the streets.

### **A Pattern of Raids in Mexico City**

The raid of Giordano Bruno Plaza was at least the sixth raid and eviction of a migrant camp carried out under intimidation, threats, and often late at night by INM agents and/or the

Mexico City government since May 2023. We emphasize that these operations are not only arbitrary but are conducted in an opaque, violent manner with the aim of physically, mentally, and emotionally exhausting groups of migrants and refugee families who have found survival and collective care in the camps.

In the face of the restrictive migration policies of Mexico and the United States, asylum seekers are more vulnerable than ever, and the failure of Mexico City authorities to fulfill their obligation to guarantee access to rights for people considered guests in Mexico City exacerbates this serious issue.

Furthermore, migrants seeking asylum in Mexico currently cannot initiate any protection processes in Mexico City, as COMAR has suspended all activities in the capital, indefinitely. This has created significant additional vulnerability for the people who were living in the Giordano Bruno camp, which sits only feet away from COMAR's shuttered main office.

### **United States Executive Action**

The timing of these violent actions against migrants in Mexico, a day after President Biden's proclamation to suspend the right to seek asylum for people arriving outside official entry ports (i.e. not using CBP One), is of note. For its part, the Mexican government has agreed to cooperate by receiving deported persons from the United States, whether or not they are Mexican.

These binational policies and agreements precisely force asylum-seekers to stay in Mexican territory for increasingly longer, indefinite, and even permanent periods. Despite collaborating with these externalization policies, the Mexican Federal Government does not guarantee access to refugee processes, or any kind of migratory status in Mexico, and, therefore, largely denies fundamental rights such as work, health, and security. As a result, migrants and asylum-seekers are living on the streets and in camps in Mexico City, where they face xenophobia and racial discrimination. Further, migrants are criminalized as they are held responsible for the actions and omissions of the federal, state, and local authorities while doing what they can to survive the increasingly dire situation.

### **Civil Society Response, Mexico City Litigation**

In these circumstances, civil society organizations (CSOs) and their allies have in large part been the only ones to address the needs of the people living in the camps, including humanitarian aid, housing, legal services and accompaniment, and medical and

emergency care. Additionally, CSOs play an important role in documenting the myriad violence and human rights violations that migrants and asylum seekers suffer.

The Federal Institute of Public Defense (IFDP) has also undertaken various legal actions to safeguard the rights of migrants in informal camps in Mexico City, achieving judicial decisions to require authorities to provide adequate housing and to refrain from carrying out forced evictions that violate the rights of migrants and their families. Litigation continues despite actions by various actors who have taken steps aimed at obstructing the integrity of these judicial decisions.

## **Recommendations**

It is alarming that the authorities have failed to address underlying circumstances that have forced people to set up camps on the streets. At all levels, proactive government response is non-existent, which exhausts any possibility for local harmony and creates discomfort with nearby residents where these camps are located. Neighborhood protests are then often used as justification for raids and evictions. Given Mexico's collaboration with the United States on asylum restrictions, it's clear that more people will continue to want to make our city home, at least temporarily, meaning that such violent actions will not solve anything, but will rather worsen the already critical situation for thousands trapped in Mexico.

We make an urgent call to the neighbors of the camps to join our recommendation for the authorities to address the problem at its root while guaranteeing human rights for all. Only through public policy based in hospitality and solidarity can we achieve a harmonious and safe living environment for everyone who lives in Mexico City.

Based on local and national law, as well as international obligations, we have the following recommendations for the government of Mexico City and the National Institute of Migration:

- Immediately stop all arbitrary raids, evictions, and transfers of people living in the informal migrant camps of Mexico City
- Provide adequate housing with respect for the human rights of migrants and asylum seekers, especially for vulnerable populations such as families with children
- Immediately reopen the Mexico City COMAR office and offer expedited processing of asylum applications in Mexico
- Guarantee access to migration status in Mexico as established in the national Migration Law

**Migration is a right! No person is illegal!**  
**#ProtectionNotContainment | #CDMXfronteracentro**

**Grupo de Monitoreo Frontera Centro**

- Casa de Acogida, Formación y Empoderamiento para Mujeres y Familias Migrantes y Refugiadas (CAFEMIN)
- Clínica Jurídica para Refugiados Alaíde Foppa (CJR) - Universidad Iberoamericana Ciudad de México
- Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)
- Colectivo Ustedes Somos Nosotros
- Fundación Humano y Libre AC
- Programa de Asuntos Migratorios (PRAMI) - Universidad Iberoamericana Ciudad de México
- Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados México (JRS México)
- Independent Human Rights Defenders

[Original [statement in Spanish](#), published June 6, 2024, with list of coalition supporters]

[For more info regarding the GMFC's work in the camps of Mexico City, please [see our first statement](#) from March 2024)