

GLOBAL COALITION ON MIGRATION

Creating Change through Building Unity

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United Nations Summit on Refugees and Migrants: As Governments Converge in Historic Moment, the Global Coalition on Migration Urges Stronger Commitments to Protect the Human Rights of Migrants

NEW YORK — As world leaders gather to address the mass movements of migrants and refugees, migrant and civil society organizations from around the world will address their concerns that the Summit may fall short on concrete commitments to protect migrant and refugee rights in practice, as revealed in preliminary summit documents.

Yesterday, over 150 heads of state signed the “New York Declaration” to make commitments on refugees and migrants. **Tomorrow at 10 a.m., global trade unions and migrant organizations will hold a speak out and media briefing across from the United Nations (UN) at 1 Dag Hammarskjold Plaza.**

Speakers across civil society will bring attention to the conditions that make migrants vulnerable to abuse and what exactly is needed to secure their human rights. There are many millions of irregular migrants living and working around the world, most working in low-wage jobs in the informal economy- in agriculture, domestic work, construction, and various service sector jobs.

Jille Belisario, a migrant organizer with the Transnational Migrant Platform in the Netherlands and a civil society speaker at the UN High Level Summit explains, “We need to allow people to move across borders for purposes including: to work, to look for work, to have paths to residency and citizenship, to return home, to return to a job, to get education or training, to reunite with family.”

The narrative must shift away from that of ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ people and to one that upholds the human rights of all people, including all refugees and all migrants. The large movements of today are ‘mixed flows’ of people who are displaced due to economic, political, or environmental upheaval, many of whom will not qualify as refugees as defined under the 1951 Refugee Convention or how it is being applied. Civil society groups will look more closely at what governments are proposing with respect to migrants and the *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants’* commitment to a two-year process to develop a

Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (Annex II).

What the Declaration thus far reveals is the reluctance of governments to make concrete commitments to protect migrants' and refugees' rights in practice. Worse, some governments actually insisted on language that backtracks from existing international human rights obligations including those on ending the practice of detaining children.

“Child rights authorities worldwide underline that the detention of migrant and refugee children is never in their best interests and always a child rights violation. Children should never be detained, even as a measure of last resort. Even the shortest amount of detention can have detrimental effects on children’s health and well-being” explains **Michele LeVoy** of the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants. Migration needs to be much more than simply “safe, orderly and regular,” but it cannot be that until migrants’ rights are truly protected, regardless of their status.

Oscar Chacon of Alianza Americas will also be a featured speaker at a civil society event at the summit.

GCM spokespersons available for interviews:

Members of the Global Coalition on Migration (GCM) will participate in the two upcoming press briefings of migrant organizations from around the globe in conjunction with the September 19 UN High Level Summit to address large movements of refugees and migrants:

Jille Belisario, Transnational Migrant Platform (Netherlands/Europe) and speaker at the UN High Level Summit

Milka Isinta, Pan Africa Network in Defense of Migrant Rights (Kenya/Africa)

Oscar A. Chacón, Alianza Americas (U.S./Americas region)

Michele LeVoy, Platform for the International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (Belgium/Europe)

Catherine Tactaquin, National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (U.S.)

Roshan Dadoo, Women in Migration Network and Consortium for Refugees and Migrants in South Africa

The Global Coalition on Migration (www.gcmigration.org) includes regional and international networks of migrant associations, migrant’s rights organizations and advocates, trade unions, faith groups and academia, covering every region around the world.

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