

Border Faith Leaders | Framework for Action & Reform at the Border

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'No one should be obliged to flee their country. But the wrong is doubled when the migrant is forced into the hands of people traffickers in order to cross borders; and tripled when they reach the land they thought would give them a better future, only to find themselves despised, exploited, abandoned, or enslaved. We need to welcome, promote, protect, and integrate those who come in search of better lives for themselves and their families.'

- Pope Francis, Let Us Dream

I. Restore Asylum at the Border

Recent policies, regulations and judicial decisions have ended access to asylum at the border. We commit to working with you to ensure the safety and the humane reception of migrants at the border and to restore asylum as quickly as possible during this time of pandemic.

- Ensure the protection and humanitarian needs of asylum-seekers forced to remain in Mexico in urgent conditions of insecurity
- End the Migrant Protection Protocols and repeal Title 42 to allow migrants and asylum-seekers into the United States in accordance with robust health protocols
- Partner with faith-based and community organizations to receive migrants and refugees safely. Ensure that families and individuals are able to access critical services, including food, shelter, psychosocial assistance, legal representation and relocation support
- End safe third country agreements with countries in the region
- Repeal regulations and reverse court decisions which have compromised US commitments to asylum and re-establish asylum law in accordance with international norms
- Ensure the humane treatment of persons returned to their home countries
- Support reintegration programs in countries of origin to provide social services, employment, relocation and protection to returnees

II. Protection over Deterrence

The border is home to thriving binational communities and is a place of encounter and solidarity. Policies, resources and investments should promote the wellbeing and safety of communities as well as the protection and humane treatment of people on the move. Working with other governments and civil society in the region, we should externalize protection rather than deterrence.

- Pivot away from policies grounded in deterrence and military-style strategies and move towards a system grounded in the recognition of the rights and dignity of migrants and asylum seekers
- End cooperative strategies with governments in the region meant to deter migration and which violate the rights of migrants and asylum seekers
- Effectively address the scourge of human trafficking and make stopping the flow of guns from the US into the region and related illicit financial transactions a key focus of cooperation between the US and Mexico
- End detention for asylum seekers and migrant families and individuals who represent no danger to our communities through community-based alternatives
- Address the culture of abuse in border enforcement
- Redirect resources away from wall construction, the deployment of military personnel, detention and increased enforcement and invest in capacity for the humane reception of migrants and processing of asylum claims
- Ensure that families are kept together and reunited through tracing efforts, where possible
- Reunite unaccompanied migrant children with family members or appropriate sponsors in the US or otherwise place them in the least restrictive setting
- Reinstate and improve the Central American Minors Program (CAM) so that legal guardians or parents in the US can petition for their children
- Expand in-country processing to asylum-seekers in Central American countries
- Provide universal representation for minors and take steps to promote universal representation for all migrants

III. Reform and Re-imagine Immigration Policy

Courageous leadership is needed in reforming our immigration system. We will work with you to identify ways to flexibly respond to the needs of those fleeing to our borders today, to provide pathways to citizenship for those forced to live in the shadows, and to respond to contemporary drivers of forced migration.

- Enact immigration reform legislation which increases legal avenues for migration and provides a pathway to citizenship for the undocumented
- Take executive action to protect those who fled to the border during this time of Exodus from Central America for whom current asylum law is outdated and inadequate
- Reimagine asylum and take bold leadership to respond to the global protection gap with regard to people displaced by the climate crisis

- Address the root causes of flight by promoting safe communities, genuine democracy and sustainable development efforts in Central America, through [close consultation with human rights and civic organizations in the region](#)¹, and a full review of US security policies and support for Central American governments with records of human rights abuses

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¹ See the **Root Causes Initiative's 'Framework for Action'**: www.hopeborder.org/root-causes-framework, organized by the Hope Border Institute, Faith in Action and faith and grassroots leaders in the United States, the US-Mexico border, Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras