



## THE MIGRANT CRISIS

A Special Update Bulletin from Cristosal's  
Human Rights Office

### Background

Interview show **the majority of child migrants deported from Mexico were already internally displaced 1-2 times** before choosing to leave their country. The cause is most often violence, where the majority affected, according to a UNHCR report, are minors and mothers with young children. Despite the critical role forced displacement plays in migration, the Salvadoran State is incapable of providing security and protection, and the international community is unwilling.

After seven years with the UN Program for Attention to Refugees in El Salvador, Cristosal made a commitment to build a specialized program for those displaced by violence in El Salvador. Every individual or family received at the Office was referred to Cristosal by the U.S. Embassy, the Police, and the Ombudsman for Human Rights. That is to say, **these institutions, representing both the Salvadoran State and the US government, currently provide no concrete option for Salvadoran victims of forced displacement.**

### Actions

Cristosal is in the process of building three programs that will provide immediate options to families as a **concrete alternative to human trafficking** while building long-term capacity for political change:

#### 1. Recognize the Problem

This year, Cristosal plans to begin a study that will be the first of its kind to recognize and qualify the phenomenon of forced displacement in El Salvador. Forced displacement caused by violence is not officially recognized by the Salvadoran state or by the international community, and so officially it does not exist. Yet the UNHCR believes that there are now as many Salvadoran refugees as during the Civil War, a number comparable with Colombia. This study is the critical first step to concrete advocacy on the behalf of victims to receive international protections and inform public policy.

#### 2. Advocate for Change

Cristosal is working with the Salvadoran, Central and North American governments to gain recognition of the civil conflict and generalized violence as the root cause for internal and external displacement. This effort is twofold: (1) to gain a temporary protection status for those immediately threatened by violence and (2) design concrete and effective national and regional public policy that directly addresses the root causes of migration.

#### 3. Create a Regional Support Network

In partnership with the Anglican Alliance and others from Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama, Cristosal is working to create a regional network that would protect, relocate, and reintegrate forcibly displaced Salvadoran families fleeing violence. This network would assist in getting people out of El Salvador and insert them into communities abroad as part of the resettlement process. The estimated cost to safely relocate one individual is less than what families currently pay coyotes or human traffickers to travel to the United States. This program would be the only one of its kind in the country, providing direct relocation services that currently do not exist and are not provided by any other State or international institution.

Though this network on its own cannot solve the crisis, it will serve as a key testimony that *something can be done*. Cristosal's hope is that if we can implement this policy quickly and effectively, it will serve as a **viable policy option to be adopted by regional governments.**

#### Additional Resources

Cristosal's Executive Director **Noah Bullock** recently wrote a piece for the **Huffington Post** on the root causes of the migrant crisis and what actions can hurt or help those most affected.

Click [here](#) to read and share the article online!

#### Help Us Make It Happen!

Cristosal is taking the lead in El Salvador to defend victims of forced displacement. But we cannot do it alone.

We are asking you to please share our work broadly with your friends and family, and to consider making a gift to directly support the work of the Human Rights Office by going online to:

[www.cristosal.org/donate](http://www.cristosal.org/donate).