

# ★ ZAPATISTA Communique:

## Part One: A Declaration...For Life

**A LOS PUEBLOS DEL MUNDO:  
PARA LAS PERSONAS QUE LUCHA EN EUROPA:  
HERMANOS, HERMANAS Y COMPAÑER@S:**

*During these previous months, we have established contact between us by various means. We are women, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender, transvestites, transsexuals, intersex, queer and more, men, groups, collectives, associations, organizations, social movements, indigenous peoples, neighborhood associations, communities and a long etcetera that gives us identity.*

*We are differentiated and separated by lands, skies, mountains, valleys, steppes, jungles, deserts, oceans, lakes, rivers, streams, lagoons, races, cultures, languages, histories, ages, geographies, sexual and non-sexual identities, roots, borders, forms of organization, social classes, purchasing power, social prestige, fame, popularity, followers, likes, coins, educational level, ways of being, tasks, virtues, defects, pros, cons, buts, however, rivalries, enmities, conceptions, arguments, counterarguments, debates, disputes, complaints, accusations, contempts, phobias, phillias, praises, repudiations, boos, applauses, divinities, demons, dogmas, heresies, likes, dislikes, ways, and a long etcetera that makes us different and, not infrequently, opposites.*

**Only very few things unite us:**

*That we make the pains of the earth our own: violence against women; persecution and contempt of those who are different in their affective, emotional, and sexual identity; annihilation of childhood; genocide against the native peoples; racism; militarism; exploitation; dispossession; the destruction of nature.*

*The understanding that a system is responsible for these pains. The executioner is an exploitative, patriarchal, pyramidal, racist, thievish and criminal system: capitalism.*

*The knowledge that it is not possible to reform this system, to educate it, to attenuate it, to soften it, to domesticate it, to humanize it.*

*The commitment to fight, everywhere and at all times – each and everyone on their own terrain – against this system until we destroy it completely. The survival of humanity depends on the destruction of capitalism. We do not surrender, we do not sell out, and we do not give up.*

*The certainty that the fight for humanity is global. Just as the ongoing destruction does not recognize borders, nationalities, flags, languages, cultures, races; so the fight for humanity is everywhere, all the time.*

*The conviction that there are many worlds that live and fight within the world. And that any pretense of homogeneity and hegemony threatens the essence of the human being: freedom. The equality of humanity lies in the respect for difference. In its diversity resides its likeness.*



*The understanding that what allows us to move forward is not the intention to impose our gaze, our steps, companies, paths and destinations. What allows us to move forward is the listening to and the observation of the Other that, distinct and different, has the same vocation of freedom and justice.*

*Due to these commonalities, and without abandoning our convictions or ceasing to be who we are, we have agreed:*

**First.** - *To carry out meetings, dialogues, exchanges of ideas, experiences, analyses and evaluations among those of us who are committed, from different conceptions and from different areas, to the struggle for life. Afterwards, each one will go their own way, or not. Looking and listening to the Other may or may not help us in our steps. But knowing what is different is also part of our struggle and our endeavor, of our humanity.*

**Second.** - *That these meetings and activities take place on the five continents. That, regarding the European continent, they take place in the months of July, August, September and October of the year 2021, with the direct participation of a Mexican delegation integrated by the CNI-CIG, the Frente de Pueblos en Defensa del Agua y de la Tierra de Morelos, Puebla y Tlaxcala, and the EZLN. And, at later dates to be specified, we will support according to our possibilities the encounters to be carried out in Asia, Africa, Oceania and America.*

**Third.** - *To invite those who share the same concerns and similar struggles, all honest people and all those below that rebel and resist in the many corners of the world, to join, contribute, support and participate in these meetings and activities; and to sign and make this statement FOR LIFE their own.*

**From the Bridge of Dignity that Connects the Europe from Below  
and on the Left with the Mountains  
of the Mexican Southeast.  
We. Planet Earth.**

January 1, 2021.

[enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx](http://enlacezapatista.ezln.org.mx)



**T**exas governor Greg Abbott says that if coronavirus spreads further in his state, it will not be because of his order to get rid of masks and business restrictions, but because President Biden is admitting undocumented immigrants who carry the virus. Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX) is also talking up the immigration issue, suggesting (falsely) that the **American Rescue Plan** would send \$1400 of taxpayer money "to every illegal alien in America."

**'Right-wing media is also running with stories of a wave of immigrants at the border, but what is really happening needs some untangling.'**

When Trump launched his run for the presidency with attacks on **Mexican immigrants**, and later tweeted that Democrats "don't care about crime and want illegal immigrants, no matter how bad they may be, to pour into and infest our Country," he was tangling up our long history of Mexican immigration with a recent, startling trend of refugees from **El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras** (and blaming Democrats for both). That tendency to mash all immigrants and refugees together and put them on our southern border badly misrepresents what's really going on.

Mexican immigration is nothing new; our western agribusinesses were built on migrant labor from the time the current border was set in 1848 until the 1930s, people moved back and forth across it without restrictions. In 1965, Congress passed the **Hart-Celler Act**, putting a cap on Latin American immigration for the first time. The cap was low: just 20,000, although 50,000 workers were coming annually.

**After 1965, workers continued to come as they always had, and to be employed, as always. But now their presence was illegal.** In 1986, Congress tried to fix the problem by offering amnesty to 2.3 million Mexicans who were living in the U.S. and by cracking down on employers who hired undocumented workers. But rather than ending the problem of undocumented workers, the new law exacerbated it by beginning the process of guarding and militarizing the border. Until then, migrants into the United States had been offset by an equal number leaving at the end of the season. Once the border became heavily guarded, Mexican migrants refused to take the chance of leaving.

## MISUNDERSTANDING IMMIGRATION ~ AGAIN

Since 1986, politicians have refused to deal with this disconnect, which grew in the 1990s when the **North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)** flooded **Mexico** with U.S. corn and drove Mexican farmers to find work, largely in the American Southeast. But this "**problem**" is neither new nor catastrophic. While about 6 million undocumented Mexicans currently live in the United States, most of them--78%-- are long-term residents, here more than ten years. Only 7% have lived here less than five years. This ratio is much more stable than that for undocumented immigrants from any other country, and indeed, about twice as many undocumented immigrants come legally and overstay their visas than come illegally across the southern border.

Since 2007, the number of undocumented Mexicans living in the United States has declined by more than a million. **Lately, more Mexicans are leaving America than are coming.**

**What is happening right now at America's Southern border is not really about Mexican migrant workers.**

Beginning around 2014, people began to flee "**warlike levels of violence**" in **El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras**, coming to the U.S. for asylum. This is legal, although most come illegally, taking their chances with smugglers who collect fees to protect migrants on the Mexican side of the border and to get them into the U.S.

The **Obama** administration tried to deter migrants by expanding the detention of families, and made significant investments in Central America in an attempt to stabilize the region by expanding economic development and promoting security. The Trump administration emphasized deterrence. It cut off support to Central American countries, worked with authoritarians to try to stop regional gangs, drastically limited the number of refugees the U.S. would admit, and—infamously—deliberately separated children from their parents to deter would-be asylum seekers.

**The number of migrants to the U.S. began to drop in 2000** and continued to drop throughout Trump's years in office, his administration gutted immigration staff and facilities, while the pandemic has further cut available beds.

Most of those trying to cross the border are single adults, and the Biden administration is turning all of

them back under a pandemic public health order. At the same time, border officials are temporarily holding families to evaluate their claims to asylum, and are also evaluating the cases of about **65,000 asylum seekers** forced by the Trump administration to stay in dangerous conditions in Mexico—this backlog is swelling the new numbers. Once the migrants are tested for coronavirus and then processed, they are either deported or released until their asylum hearing.

This has apparently led to a number of families being released in communities in **Arizona and Texas** without adequate clothing or money. **In normal times, churches and shelters would step in to help**, but the pandemic has shut that aid down to a trickle. Residents are afraid the numbers of migrants will climb, and that they will bring Covid-19. Biden offered federal help to Texas Governor Abbott to test migrants for the coronavirus, but **Abbott has refused to take responsibility for testing.** (*Migrants in Brownsville tested positive at a lower rate than Texas residents.*)

**There is yet another issue:** the administration is having a hard time handling the numbers of unaccompanied minors arriving. Their numbers have tripled recently, overwhelming the system, especially in Texas where the state is still digging out from the deep freeze. The children are supposed to spend no more than 72 hours in processing with Border Patrol before they are transferred to facilities overseen by the Department of Health and Human Services while agents search for family members to take the children. But at least in some cases, the kids have been with Border Patrol for as much as 77 hours. At this writing, there were more than 3,700 unaccompanied children in Border Patrol facilities and about 8,800 unaccompanied children in HHS custody.

The Biden administration is considering addressing this surge by looking for emergency shelters for minors crossing the border, activating the **Federal Emergency Management Agency**, or placing more **Health and Human Services (HHS)** staff at the border. It has asked for \$4 billion over four years to try to restore stability to the Central American countries hardest hit by violence. The administration has announced that **HHS** would not use immigration status against those coming forward to claim children, out of concern that the previous Trump-era policy made people unwilling to come forward.

- **Heather Cox Richardson**

*Historian & Professor of History at Boston College*