



CRLN

Chicago Religious Leadership Network on Latin America

2020 Highlights

Colombia

McGovern-Pocan “Dear Colleague” letter to Sec. of State Pompeo: As part of our participation in the national Colombia Steering Committee, CRLN staff and members convinced 9 U.S. Representatives from Illinois to sign onto this letter, 1/10 of the national total of 94 Congressional signatures! The letter called on Pompeo to



urge the Duque Administration to recommit to implementing the historic 2016 peace accords; to protect Colombia’s endangered human rights defenders; to dismantle the paramilitary successor networks; and to hold accountable Colombian Army intelligence units who planned and carried out surveillance on 130 jour-

nalists, political leaders, judges, human rights defenders, and military whistleblowers with U.S.-provided equipment.

Building Bridges - Connecting Communities

So much of what we have been through this past year and the things we have accomplished were captured in the words of our guest speaker at this year's Annual Gathering, Sister María Magdalena Silva Rentería. The founder and Director of CAFEMIN, a shelter for immigrants located in Mexico City, she joined our event from Mexico. We turned the challenge of COVID, which limited our face-to-face interactions, into the advantage of a virtual gathering, making it easier to have our friends from abroad join us. Sr. María Magdalena shared with us her stories of providing shelter and support for immigrants, as well as her analysis of the issues underlying the crisis of migration and action suggestions for how we can respond in this critical moment. Her experiences were very relevant to our sanctuary efforts, our work with migrants’ rights and our solidarity work with communities in Central America and beyond.



If you missed our Annual Gathering, you can watch it on YouTube in English at <https://bit.ly/2020CRLNEnglish> or in Spanish at <https://bit.ly/CRLN2020Spanish>

Cuba

All-in to Call Your Alderman & Pass the Resolution to Normalize Relations with Cuba NOW!

Chicago City Council Resolution to end the embargo against Cuba:

CRLN is part of a city wide campaign to pass a resolution in the Chicago City Council in favor of normalizing relations with Cuba. Sixteen aldermen are in support of Resolution **R2020-612** as of 12/9/20. Seventeen US cities have passed similar resolutions. Contact Marilyn Mckenna at mmckenna@crln.org for more information to help mobilize your community to join the campaign.

Cuba Webinars: Healing Our Land, Healing Ourselves

Daisy Hernandez, CRLN’s summer intern from Marquette University Center for Peacemaking, put together with support from Marilyn McKenna a 3-part webinar to report on her Witness for Peace Solidarity Collective travel experience in Cuba. All CRLN staff participated in rehearsals and technical support as we all learned how to do a webinar. She received a Heidkamp scholarship to participate. We have recorded each webinar and they are available on our website along with background reading for each.

Urban Economics and Agriculture <https://crln.org/urbaneconomicsandagriculture/>

U.S.-Cuba Relations, Cooperatives and Community <https://crln.org/uscubarelationscooperativescommunity/>

Healthcare System: Clients or Patients? <https://crln.org/healthcaresystemclientsorpatients/>



Stopping the ICE Academy

This past summer, CRLN, The St. Louis Interfaith Committee on Latin America (IFCLA), and Organized Communities Against Deportations (OCAD) circulated a national organizational sign-on letter directed to local, state and federal authorities. More than 80 organizations signed it, and we're happy to report that it stopped ICE from running a Citizens Academy in Chicago. ICE said they were delaying it until the coming spring. We will remain vigilant.



The program
must be
stopped now
before it
begins.

CRLN Sanctuary Working Group

Despite the many challenges the pandemic has caused, it has not stopped us from working for justice. Representatives to CRLN's Organizing Committee from University Church, Wellington Avenue UCC, Su Casa Catholic Worker, Viatorian House of Hospitality, Bethany House of Hospitality, Congregation Tzedek, and the Interfaith Community for Detained Immigrants have been working on supporting a few individuals and finding housing for them. CRLN began this work a few weeks after the president declared a national emergency. The group is anticipating a greater need, as the Biden administration may ease some restrictions, bringing more people north.

El Pueblo Canta

After much planning and work over the course of nearly a year, CRLN, Centro Romero and Wellington Avenue UCC, held this annual concert on October 3. Given the technical challenges, it took a lot more planning and work than anticipated. The event was successful. We raised nearly \$12,000 and had about 800 people from across the country log in to watch. The festive event called on participants to reflect on our work for immigration justice and to keep hope alive, especially in this challenging time.



Welcoming City Ordinance

In early November, the Chicago Immigration Working Group came together once again. The pandemic had forced most of the groups to focus on supporting issues related to health and support of immigrant groups who would not receive direct support from the federal government. A new opportunity to amend the Welcoming City Ordinance came about. CRLN as a part of the CIWG is now calling on the Mayor and City Council to remove the carve-outs in a January 2021 vote. CRLN has been part of this work for the past five years, but it seems that we will finally have a victory on this issue. Amendments will: remove existing exceptions to the ordinance's broader protections against immigration warrants and detainers; further disengage city police and other agencies from federal immigration enforcement; provide further assurance for immigrant families to seek help from city agencies.



Honduras sign-on letter and action alert: In response to an appeal by Garifuna leader Miriam Miranda, CRLN signed

an International Statement of Concern and Solidarity with the Garifuna People of Honduras after five Garifuna men were



“disappeared” from the community of Triunfo de la Cruz by men who appeared to be police. We linked our members to a Honduras Solidarity Network (HSN) action alert and were part of a national response in which 4,800 people sent 9,500 emails to Honduran officials and 370 people sent 936 emails to members of Congress. CRLN is an active member of HSN.

Campaign to End the Asylum Cooperative Agreements (ACAs) with Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras:

CRLN participated in this coalition of Latin American and U.S. solidarity organizations led by NIS-GUA. We promoted 2 webinars to inform you about the consequences of turning away asylum seekers at the U.S.-Mexico border and deporting them to Guatemala, El Salvador or Honduras to apply for asylum there. We collected signatures on a petition to members of Congress and sent you a sample email to send to your Representative requesting an end to the policy. This campaign is ongoing.



Campaign for a Robust International Response to the Pandemic:

As part of a national coalition led by Action Corps and the Center for Economic Policy Research (CEPR), CRLN worked through many channels to gain U.S. support for releasing Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), an international currency reserve intended for emergency distribution during economic hard times. Release of SDRs would cost the U.S. nothing and could save many lives. So far, nothing has passed. The campaign is ongoing.



Pedal for Peace: Bike in Your Barrio:

Faced with pandemic gathering restrictions, this year's planning team gave participants a month to ride or walk in the place of their choice and raise money for health, education, and community organizing projects in Colombia, Central America and Illinois. Incredibly, we still raised around \$23,000! We gathered on line to celebrate.

