

Submission to the United Nations
Universal Periodic Review of

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The Angry Tias and Abuelas is a civil coalition of concerned citizens based in the Texas-Mexico border area of the lower Rio Grande Valley. We formed in 2018 to respond to the extraordinary human rights crisis created by President Donald Trump's new policies and practices regarding asylum seekers arriving in northern Mexico. We are dedicated to providing food, water and other vital necessities to migrant communities and shelters on both sides of the border, as well as information about legal rights and resources. We also seek to monitor and record the human rights violations we observe, and to share such information with the public.

I. SUMMARY:

1. Since January 2017, the United States government has engaged in a combination of new and unlawful practices aimed at denying the victims of repression from other nations their right to seek asylum in the United States. These practices have resulted in immense human suffering and even death, and include the arbitrary and long term detention of such persons in harsh and prison like conditions; the separation of families and endangerment of children; cruel and degrading treatment of such migrants; violations of their due process rights; and the forced return of asylum seekers to and long term wait periods in, the most dangerous areas of Mexico. Such actions violate the *Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment*, 10 December 1984, ("CAT") and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, 16 December 1966, ("ICCPR"), the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights 10 December 1948*, ("Universal Declaration") as well as other binding treaties and protocols.

2. We recommend that the following practices be prohibited: 1. Any requirement that asylum seekers wait for months in Mexico as a prerequisite to requesting asylum in the United States, 2. Any forcible return to Mexico of an asylum seeker pending adjudication of his/her asylum petition, 3. Any detention, in the absence of serious security concerns, of an asylum seeker, and 4. Any separation of families.

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

3. The key United Nations treaties relevant to this report are the CAT, the ICCPR, and the Universal Declaration, supra.

4. CAT:

Article 1, 1. For the purposes of this Convention, the term "torture" means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person....

Article 3, 1. No State Party shall expel, return ("refouler") or extradite a person to another State where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture.

Article 16, 1. Each State Party shall undertake to prevent in any territory under its jurisdiction other acts of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment which do not amount to torture as defined in article I, when such acts are committed by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity.

5. ICCPR:

Article 6, 1. Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life .

Article 7. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 9 1. Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. No one shall be deprived of his liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedure as are established by law.

Article 10 1. All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person.

Article 17, 1. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence....

Article 23 1. The family is the natural and fundamental group/ unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

6. Universal Declaration

Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and the security of person.

Article 5. No one shall be subject to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 14 Everyone has the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

Article 16, 3. The family is the natural and fundamental unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the state.

III. BACKGROUND:

Scope and Source of Information

7. The official policies and treaty violations described in this report are uniformly in effect across the entire United States/Mexico border area. Our work involves daily assistance efforts on both sides of the Rio Grande. However, the Angry Tias and Abuelas work only in the southernmost part of the border, adjacent to the Mexican state of Tamaulipas. Our direct information comes from this specific region. All reports of the incidents and conditions set forth herein were received either through in- person communications with the migrant families themselves, or with the local and credible human rights defenders assisting them.

Abuse and Refoulement: Chronology of Official Policies

U.S. Legal Framework:

8. Since January 2017, the Executive branch of the United States government has consistently worked to impose an array of harsh punishments upon endangered migrants, in order to deter them from seeking asylum, and/or to force them to relinquish their claims thereto. Deterrence in this context is of course unlawful, given that the right to seek asylum and to be free of refoulement, are established by both U.S. and international law. These new

practices have resulted in the kidnappings, rapes, trafficking, suffering, illnesses, and deaths of countless migrants at the U.S. southern border.

9. Pursuant to 8 U.S.C. §1225, victims of persecution from other nations may present themselves at a United States Port of Entry (“POE”) and request asylum. The U.S. official receiving such request is *required* to send the person for proper asylum processing. In order to enter the POE in the southern United States, the migrant must cross either an international bridge or roadway, both of which are open to the public. Asylum cannot be requested from outside the United States. Thus closing the bridges or roadways de facto denies the migrants their lawful right to seek asylum. This leaves the migrants with the sole option of unlawfully entering the country without inspection by crossing the dangerous Rio Grande. Drownings are constant, as are deaths from exposure to the heat and cold. If the migrant family survives, they may then turn themselves in to U.S. Border Patrol offices, and request asylum. Unlawful entry is a misdemeanor and does not bar the asylum request.

10. In the past, most asylum seekers were released from detention on either parole or bond, and permitted to reside with family sponsors while their cases were processed in the immigration courts. Most asylum seekers have never committed a crime.

Security Conditions in Tamaulipas

11. The state of Tamaulipas, Mexico covers a large region in northern Mexico, stretching from the Gulf of Mexico to Nuevo Laredo, and including a key portion of the lower Rio Grande border area. The notoriously violent drug cartels have controlled this region for well over fifteen years. It abuts the river, and is thus a highly strategic area for crossing contraband into the U.S..

12. Most Texas residents, by 2005, were staying out of Tamaulipas, despite their many friends and relatives there, and despite its popular cultural and camping attractions. It had become far too dangerous. Even U.S. immigration officers are told by their supervisors to stay out of the area.

13. There are constant gun battles between rival cartels and gangs. In 2018, for example, a bullet traversed a dormitory for women and children at the Senda de Vida shelter in Reynosa. The use of terror and violence has helped the cartel efforts to control the local civilian populations.
14. The government of Mexico has responded by sending its military, federal police, and marines. This increased the frequency and intensity of the shootouts, especially in Reynosa and Nuevo Laredo. However, the government has not been able to regain control of Tamaulipas.
15. The U.S. Department of State travel advisory has assigned Tamaulipas a Level 4 security rating, indicating extreme danger. "Do not travel due to crime and kidnapping. Violent crime, such as murder, armed robbery, carjacking, extortion and sexual assault is common. Gang activity, including gun battles and blockades, is widespread. Federal and state security forces have limited capacity to respond." Level 4 assessments are rare, and are also assigned to Iraq and Afghanistan.
16. This assessment certainly squares with our own observations. It is clear that asylum seekers and their children are in grave danger at all times. They have become a favorite target for kidnapping and human trafficking. This is in part because they form a vulnerable population with little if any protection from local authorities. Even though they have no funds of their own, they have friends and family in the United States. Those people will move heaven and earth to raise the \$5,000 to \$10,000 ransom to rescue their loved ones. The cartels know this.
17. The cartels throughout Mexico and Central America make it clear that reporting on any of their unlawful conduct will be immediately punished, usually by the murder of the migrant or his/her loved ones. Thus most migrants are afraid to speak of their experiences. As discussed below, because many Mexican officials are also participating in the kidnappings and violence, migrants are even more fearful of reporting. For this reason our report does not identify any of the victims referenced.

18. While it is difficult to estimate the true number of such kidnappings, Jennifer Harbury, one of our members, personally estimates that half of the current migrants in this area have suffered an armed assault or kidnapping at least once while in Mexican territory.

19. The Mexican now army posts soldiers in the Reynosa bus terminal, for example, but migrants are seized or attacked just outside the doors. Many are dragged off buses and kidnapped when they attempt to travel to any other town or city. Jennifer Harbury has seen a number of battered and bloody people arrive at the shelters begging for help. Many migrants report being attacked when they even try to buy food or find odd jobs. They are at risk everywhere except inside the shelters, which cannot hold them all.

20. In Nuevo Laredo, there has been a recent and frightening escalation of gun battles throughout the city, and the Cartel del Noreste now sends army- style trucks with mounted guns to patrol the streets. On their sides are emblazoned the name “Tropas del Infierno” (Troops from Hell). Kidnappings are constant.

21. This level of risk and violence permeates all of Tamaulipas.

22. Given the combination of cartel brutality and the high level of funding the cartels can leverage, many members of the government and security forces succumb to gang control. We have long heard about state police and the federales actually participating in kidnapping and armed robberies themselves. Throughout the last year in Reynosa, I have heard a number of accounts of the federal police seizing asylum seekers and selling them to the local gangs. One such group of Central Americans found themselves locked into a house with a particularly frightening gang leader. That night they set the house on fire, using the gas stove, and fled into the night through the bullets and flames. They chose not to report this, since the police were the people who sold them, and fled back to their dangerous homelands. In 2019 Telemundo broadcast revealed conclusive evidence that the director of Mexican Immigration (“INM”) in Reynosa was kidnapping asylum seekers and holding them in the basement of the government building. Ransom was set at \$3,500. Even more recently we have heard of kidnappings by men in INM uniforms wearing black hoods. They demanded money, threatening immediate deportation if they were not paid.

Chronology of U.S. Actions

Denial of Entry to POE

23. In January 2017 we began to hear that U.S. officials at the Ports of Entry across the southern United States were unlawfully refusing to process asylum seekers, instead sending them back into Mexico point blank. Ms. Harbury visited Reynosa, Nuevo Laredo and Matamoros during this period and confirmed that this was indeed happening on a systemic basis. One family had been sent back six times, despite the bullet hole in the father's torso. Another family, fleeing central America after the gang murders of two brothers, was told that CBP was not doing these requests any more, and that things were different due to the new President. The family was sent back repeatedly despite the danger of kidnapping in Tamaulipas.

24. Meanwhile, the gangs were gathering at the foot of the bridges to kidnap migrants as they were sent back by U.S. officials. A young mother had survived a tragic accident that occurred when gangs chased her vehicle into Reynosa. The accident killed her 8 year old child and left her with a smashed pelvis. After her release from the Reynosa hospital she crossed on a walker, only to be sent back to Mexico by U.S. officers. She was promptly kidnapped at the foot of the bridge. After a relative paid her ransom, she returned to a shelter. Human rights defenders then accompanied her to the bridge, only to face loud and angry resistance from the CBP officers. The young woman was finally able to cross but then endured tremendous abuse in U.S. detention, where she nearly died.

25. This practice of point blank denial of entry resulted in ongoing federal litigation, and for a while was suspended.

Long Term and Unjustified Detention

26. Meanwhile, the United States government engaged in yet another measure of deterrence/abuse of asylum seekers. A drastic cut in the numbers of persons released on

parole or bond, despite the person's full eligibility for release under the government's own guidelines, was implemented. Even persons who had never committed a crime, had serious medical problems, and had legal family sponsors to receive them, were held in long term detention that often lasted for years. This of course, caused serious over-crowding, which was later used to justify forcing asylum seekers wait in Mexico.

27. Many U.S. detention centers are operated by the same private corporations running our prisons pursuant to government contracts. Not surprisingly, they operate the civil immigration detention centers the same way. Visitors and lawyers must pass through double locking doors, and in most cases are separated from the migrant by a heavy glass window. No one can call directly to a detainee, and the detainee can only place calls through the costly prison system, which is monitored. The medical care provided is dangerously inadequate.¹ The shielded toilets stand in full view of all. Laundry and library privileges are limited. Unlike refugee facilities in other countries, the detainees may not freely leave their dormitory, walk the hallways, or visit with friends in other rooms. They are frisked frequently. When taken to medical visits, they are placed in chains. Some women report that male guards entered their examination room during gynecological procedures. There is constant and gratuitous cruelty by guards, who are forbidden to give their first names to a detainee, or enter into any personal discussions, even about books or children. All detainees are presumed dangerous. A detainee may never touch another, even to comfort a distraught friend.² The food is inedible and unhealthy yet friends and relatives may not send fresh or canned fruits and vegetables. After a year or more, many asylum seekers fall into a deep depression and return to their homelands, to the very dangers they had fled. Mental Health experts have long decried this practice of detention as extremely harmful to survivors of trauma, such as most refugees.

Separating Children from Parents

¹ In 2018 a young woman nearly died after her surgical site became infected. She was given cheap but inadequate antibiotic pills instead of the standard full strength iv treatment. After six months she was at risk of imminent amputation and death. Only then was she released on parole, and saved by a team of private physicians.

² When one woman learned that her child had been killed, the others in the dormitory sought to embrace and comfort her and join hands in prayer. The guards shouted at them and threatened to put them in the hole if they did not desist.

28. By the spring of 2018 a far more cruel deterrence policy was implemented: the separation of children from their parents. We promptly received descriptions of the impact from friendly officers. One stated that on the first day of the separations, the mothers and their children screamed from the morning well into the night. Finally, a credible source brought us the “crying baby tape”, a recording of many small children weeping and begging for their parents. We released it to the press. It was self-authenticating. A little girl is heard giving her aunt’s phone number and begging someone to call her. The aunt responded, knew exactly where her frantic sister was detained, and confirmed that the child had been taken away to an undisclosed place. The practice was officially halted in the ensuing uproar. De facto family separation continues at this time.

Hieleras

29. People who arrive and request asylum are first sent to the notorious processing centers known as “hieleras”, or ice boxes. Although people are held there for days or even weeks, conditions are unlawful by any standards. Medical care is not provided, and six minors died in the first months of 2019 alone. Conditions are worse than those in the long term detention centers. The air conditioners are cranked to extremely cold temperatures and the people’s coats and sweaters are taken. The mylar blankets give no warmth. There are no beds, so the migrants must sleep on the floor, sometimes sitting up back to back due to overcrowding. In many places lights are kept on all night. There is no access to showers, soap, toothbrush or toothpaste. Guards revile them and tell them this is what they deserve for trying to come to the United States. The migrants cannot use a telephone to call for help, and they can receive no visitors, even attorneys. When we meet with recently released families, most display symptoms of serious illnesses such as prolonged diarrhea, flu, fevers and hacking coughs. There is no such widespread health problem in the Mexican shelters, where the migrants stay just before crossing. When asked about the hieleras, many burst into tears.

“Wait In Mexico” Policy

30. In 2018 we witnessed the virtual shut down of the international bridges to asylum seekers. The cartels own the river and those who seek to cross without paying the heavy “fee”, risk drowning or being shot. The new practices left the migrant families trapped.

31. In the spring of 2018, we heard that asylum seekers were no longer allowed into the U.S. Port of Entry offices. Instead they were being ordered to “wait their turn” on the cement sidewalks on the bridges. We repeatedly witnessed this practice, and spoke with many families on the bridges in Reynosa, Nuevo Laredo, Matamoros, Roma and other crossings. The heat at that time was usually well over 100 degrees Fahrenheit, and frequently reached 108 degrees. The U.S. officers were not providing food, water, soap, medical care or protection of any kind to the waiting migrants. They were not even permitted to use the toilets in the empty, air conditioned waiting rooms. The Reynosa bridge waiting room can seat more than 70 people, but it was empty for many months. Yet the U.S. officers continued to claim there was “no room”.

32. The number of people on the bridges at the larger cities averaged 40 to 70 people, and many had small children with them. There were also pregnant women. The wait period was about 2 weeks. The migrants dared not go back into Mexico for supplies due to the extreme risk of kidnapping, so they waited and slept on the bridge. They also feared losing their place in line, since the U.S. officers refused to keep a list. U.S. officials clearly assumed the migrants would leave, but as one young mother explained, “It is worse back home. We have to keep going for our kids.”

33. Civilian groups from both sides of the border quickly organized to bring food, water and other necessities to the bridges. This practice temporarily ended under public outcry, press and congressional scrutiny. But not for long.

34. By the summer this tactic changed again. Three or more U.S. officers began to stand at the exact midpoint of the bridges, checking everyone’s papers as they tried to reach the POE. This was swiftly followed by a permanent office at mid -bridge, plus roadblocks and barbed wire. When asylum seekers arrived they were told to sit and wait on the *Mexican* side of the line. When public outcry revived, the U.S. officers simply blamed Mexico for not caring for

people in its territory. To make matters worse, if an asylum seeker arrived without valid Mexican paperwork, U.S. officers would call down to the Mexican immigration office and tell the officers to come and take the people away.

35. Ms. Harbury repeatedly spoke with the Mexican officers sent to apprehend the people at mid-bridge. The officers confirmed that this was a joint operation between Mexican INM and U.S. immigration authorities. They also expressed discontent with this new task, which was pressed by the United States.

36. By the fall of 2018 even people with valid immigration status in Mexico were turned away at the entry to the bridge by Mexican officials. President Trump had mentioned a plan to provide millions of dollars to Mexico to keep migrants out of the border area. The dangerous situation in Tamaulipas worsened substantially. Ms. Harbury accompanied one woman with permanent residency in Mexico, and her two Mexican citizen children, to the bridge in Reynosa. The INM officer at the bridge entry angrily yanked her papers out of her hands and screamed that he was going to tear them up. He said her residency allowed her to live in Mexico, not cross the bridge to seek asylum elsewhere. This strange logic became the prevalent justification for blocking all migrants' right to exit Mexico and seek asylum. Many were unlawfully apprehended, detained and deported.³ If they managed to reach the half way point on the bridge and ask for asylum, the U.S. officials still barred their entry, and called the Mexican officers to come for them.

37. We still tried to accompany people to the half -way point at the bridge, but it became too dangerous for all concerned. The migrants were in danger from both gangs and INM officers there. Ms. Harbury was being threatened for “practicing law without a license” or even trafficking. (U.S. officials also hinted broadly that she was trafficking by accompanying families to the bridge and presenting them to U.S. immigration officers.)

³ One mother was detained for days with her four small children by Mexican officials who told her to never return to the bridge or she would be deported. Having witnessed a gang killing, she could never return home. She had little money and feared crossing the river. A toddler had recently drowned when he fell into the water. The boatman refused to stop. The mother knew that she had little hope of obtaining asylum in the United States. She planned to give her children up for adoption through a friend, to prevent their deportation with her.

38. Throughout the border area, INM officials began to keep the “lists” for people seeking to cross. (U.S. officials still refused to take any such responsibility.) The cartel- infiltrated Mexican officials required substantial bribes for even entering a name on the list.

39. By early 2019 the migrants were “waiting their turn” for months at a time in Tamaulipas. Inevitably this created a pile- up of the most vulnerable people in the most dangerous areas, which in turn attracted more gang attacks. Kidnappings and extortion were, and are, constant.

40. Corruption worsened as well. This culminated in February 2019 when Telemundo broadcast presented solid proof that the Reynosa chief of INM was kidnapping people from the bridge and holding them in a basement in the federal building, charging a \$3500 ransom.

41. After the Telemundo scandal broke, the U.S. officers at the Reynosa bridge ordered all arriving asylum seekers to go to the Senda de Vida migrant shelter run by Brother Hector Silva. The Pastor was required to keep the list. The wait period averaged several months. The population at the shelter soared from an average of 100 to 200 residents, to 500 or more, forcing the church workers to scramble for additional food, blankets, medicines, mats and tents. As Senda’s capacity stretched to its limits, hundreds more migrants were forced to find cheap shelter elsewhere.

42. The migrants are in danger at all times from gangs and/or corrupt officials who would kidnap, beat, rape, rob and traffick them. Tias speak with dozens of migrants at the Senda and other shelters. All are terrified. Ms. Harbury estimates that half of the Reynosa migrants have suffered at least one armed assault or kidnapping in Mexican territory.

43. For example, two young migrants arrived recently at Senda and were appalled to learn of the long wait period, given the great dangers in Reynosa. They could not afford to pay the cartels, but tried to swim the river anyway. They were caught in its caught up in its strong currents. They nearly drowned, but returned to shore and tried to enter the shelter. They were caught by the gang sentries. People heard them screaming shortly afterwards. One young Cuban was attacked three times in five days. Another was kidnapped and told he would be sold for his organs.

44. Once President Trump threatened tariffs against Mexico, the dangers of abuse by Mexican officials worsened. One woman recently begged me for help. She had been surrounded by men in black hoods wearing INM uniforms. They refused to honor her court papers, and took her away by force, holding her for hours and demanding money. Security forces recently opened fire on a van filled with migrant families, who leaped from the vehicle and fled on foot. They spent days hiding in the scrub with their children while the agents hunted them. There has also been a great increase in INM sweeps as well, resulting in the unlawful deportation or refoulement, of asylum seekers who have been “waiting their turn” for many months.

Migrant Protection Protocols or “MPP”

45. When the MPP program was implemented in Tamaulipas in July 2019, migrants who finally were permitted to cross the border were simply held in the hieleras for a few days, given a court date, and sent back to Mexico to “wait for their court”. The concentrations of vulnerable migrants in Tamaulipas surged overnight. This situation certainly stripped them of any access to attorneys to assist with their often life- or- death asylum cases. Moreover, there was virtually no public support, housing or medical care provided. More than 600 migrants are now crammed into a tent city at the entry to the Matamoros bridge, with no government assistance at all.

46. There was, of course, a frightening spike in the violence. Discussions with migrants in Reynosa certainly confirm this. MPP has also been especially harmful in Nuevo Laredo. Emboldened gangs tried to invade a migrant shelter there on August 3, 2019. When the Pastor denied them entry, he was kidnapped and is now presumed dead. Another shelter was recently attacked. These are grim precedents. Prior to the MPP, the shelters in this region were safe. The situation is not much better in nearby Saltillo and Monterrey, where many MPP migrants were sent. During the same time period, a Salvadoran man was gunned down in front of his little girl when he and others tried to board a train. In Monterrey many migrants were kidnapped shortly after they were sent back under MPP.

47. As discussed above, all migrants are a source of profit for cartel members or others engaged in kidnapping, robbery, trafficking and extortion. By greatly increasing the number of migrants in specific areas near the international crossings, the United States has made control over these areas even more profitable and important. Hence the spike not only in attacks on migrants but also in turf wars between gangs and between cartels and the security forces. Thus also the numerous gun battles recently in Nuevo Laredo, and the cartel's military style trucks labeled "Tropa del Infierno".

48. The brutal effects of the MPP are best illustrated by the experiences of "A" "B" and "C". All were attacked in Reynosa when they first arrived, by both gangs and local officials. "A" was attacked three times in five days. They all tried to cross the bridge and present themselves at the U.S. Port of Entry, as provided by 8 U.S.C. §1225. However, U.S. officers turned them away, instructing them to go to the Senda de Vida Shelter in Reynosa and sign onto the wait list there. They promptly did so, but were told there was a three month wait. There was no space for them in the shelter. "A" realized he would not make it through the wait period, so he crossed the river and turned himself into U.S. Border Patrol agents. He spent several days in the notorious ICE processing centers described above. The room was so overcrowded that people had to sleep sitting up on the floor or leaning against the walls. The lights were on all night. When he was finally returned to Nuevo Laredo, he and the others sat and waited approximately 24 hours for the promised transportation to Monterrey. A woman went out for food and never returned. Three Venezuelan women and a child approached to ask for instructions to the shelter, only to be dragged away in full view of those in the office. A man raced in that night pursued by a large group of tattooed men, who dragged him away as well. The INM officers did nothing to help any of these people. At last the returnees were placed on an unprotected bus and transported to Monterrey. There they were dumped in the streets in a dangerous neighborhood. Many were promptly kidnapped or assaulted. There was no shelter space. They managed to find small rooms but immediately came under threats.

49. Now, under President Trump's most recent policy change, a migrant will not be eligible for asylum if he/she transited through other countries without seeking asylum there first. This

change assumes that Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras are truly safe havens for asylum seekers. In reality is these are among the world's most deadly areas for migrants.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

50. Conditions in the "hieleras" constitute cruel and inhuman treatment, and in combination constitute torture. We recommend that all immigration processing centers be placed under immediate United Nations supervision for a period of two years; and that conditions be brought to international standards forthwith.

51. Conditions at the long term detentions centers are also cruel and unusual. The detention centers are clearly prisons, and the detention of non- criminal civilians there constitutes arbitrary imprisonment. There is a clear intent to break the will of the asylum seekers, forcing them relinquish their rights and return to their dangerous homelands. This is refoulement. We recommend that no person be detained in the absence of a federal court finding of a serious security threat.

52. We recommend that any requirement that asylum seekers "wait" in Mexico be prohibited forthwith. Such requirements constitute refoulement, as the person is turned away at the bridge and sent back to perilous regions of Mexico. This also violates the person's right to life and bodily safety. Further such requirements violate the migrants' right to apply for asylum by forcing them to first risk kidnapping and death for long periods of time.

53. The U.S. practice of forcing Mexico, under threat of economic ruin, to unlawfully refoule the migrants, subject them to cruelty, refuse them protection, or deny them their right to leave Mexico, must also be prohibited.

54. The U.S. practice of separating family members must be prohibited.

55. We recommend that the Migrant Policy Protocols, requiring asylum seekers to return to Mexico pending the decision of their asylum claim, also be prohibited for the same reasons

set forth in number 51 above. Returning them to Mexico constitutes broad scale refoulement. By burdening their right to request asylum by requiring them to first risk their lives and their children's lives for prolonged periods of time, that right to seek asylum is eviscerated.

Respectfully Submitted,

October 1, 2019

The Angry Tias and Abuelas

by Jennifer Harbury, Member