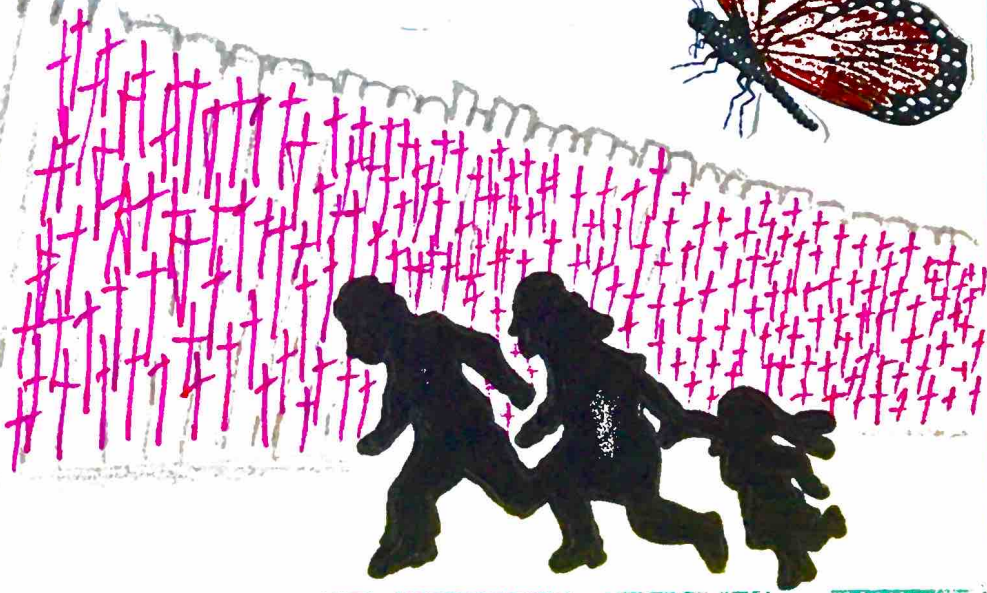
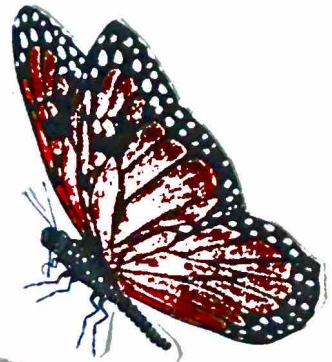


What's Happening at the Border?

NI UNA
MUERTE
MAS!
REFORMA YA!



On August 7th, 2019, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) targeted seven different poultry processing factories across Mississippi. By the end of the raids, around 680 people were arrested, the vast majority of whom were undocumented Latinxs. Half of the total arrests came from a town called Morton, where these poultry factories (the largest of which is owned by Koch Foods Inc.) is the main source of employment. As a result, people were separated from their families, from their children, and were left without work. Many people are now forced to stay inside their homes for fear of being arrested and deported. ICE raids like these are designed to destroy the social fabric of migrant communities. The US uses this strategy to dissuade people from entering the US and, if they do arrive, to silence and invisibilize them as a way to keep them at the margins of society, where they can be more easily exploited. These raids are just part of a larger immigration and border policy that perpetuates violence against poor communities, communities of color, Indigenous communities, etc.

In this booklet, I will unpack the Trump administration's immigration policies (not to say by any means that these issues didn't exist before Trump), highlight what their impacts are, and show you how they affect and interconnect with the communities I have had the chance to work with in Guatemala.

At the end, you will find a list of **ACTION STEPS** that you can take after having processed this information. I hope that you find the time to read until the end, and remember: reading this is just the first step!

What is **asylum**?

According to the US Citizenship and Immigration Services, "asylum status is a form of protection available to people who: meet the definition of **refugee**, are already in the United States, [and] are seeking admission at a port of entry."

What is the criteria to be considered a refugee?

The 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees states that a "refugee" is "any person who is outside [their] country of nationality ... and is unable or unwilling to return to that country because of persecution or well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group."

Things you should know about the asylum process

The "Remain in Mexico" Policy, also known as Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), began in January of 2019. People seeking asylum in the US are being returned to Mexico as they wait for their cases to be processed in US immigration courts. This policy is being used in San Diego and Calexico, CA and in El Paso, TX. This policy makes it hard for asylum seekers to access the legal support they need. In addition, most of these asylum seekers do not have legal immigration status in Mexico, which affects people's ability to get jobs or have any sort of permanent life while they wait for their asylum claim to be heard.

After immense **political pressure** and threats of economic **sanctions**, the Guatemalan government signed the **"Safe Third Country Agreement"** with the US in July of 2019.

This policy states that if migrants came through Guatemala on their journey and did not seek asylum there, then **they cannot ask for asylum in the US**. Similar agreements have also been signed in Honduras and El Salvador, and the Department of Homeland Security says it is hoping to expand this to other countries, such as Mexico, Panama, and Brazil. Currently, this policy affects migrants from Honduras and El Salvador the most.

Why not request asylum in another country before arriving to the US?

As of August 2019, Guatemala's asylum agency has **fewer than 10 employees** and won't be able to handle the influx of any sizeable number of migrants (to give you an idea, in 2018 the US received around **2.2 million** new migrants). Requesting asylum in another country such as Guatemala first would add even more time to the already current years that people are waiting to be processed for asylum. In addition, many critics have highlighted the fact that many migrants are coming from the **Northern Triangle** (Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador) itself, and that if this is not a safe enough territory for these Central Americans, it is not going to be safe to other migrants, either. ©

As of July 2019, there were almost **900,000 asylum cases** waiting for immigration hearings, which means that the current wait time for an individual asylum case to be decided is around **3 years**. Even after such a long wait, **asylum is very difficult to obtain**. In the fiscal year of 2018, only 22,491 people were granted asylum in the US.

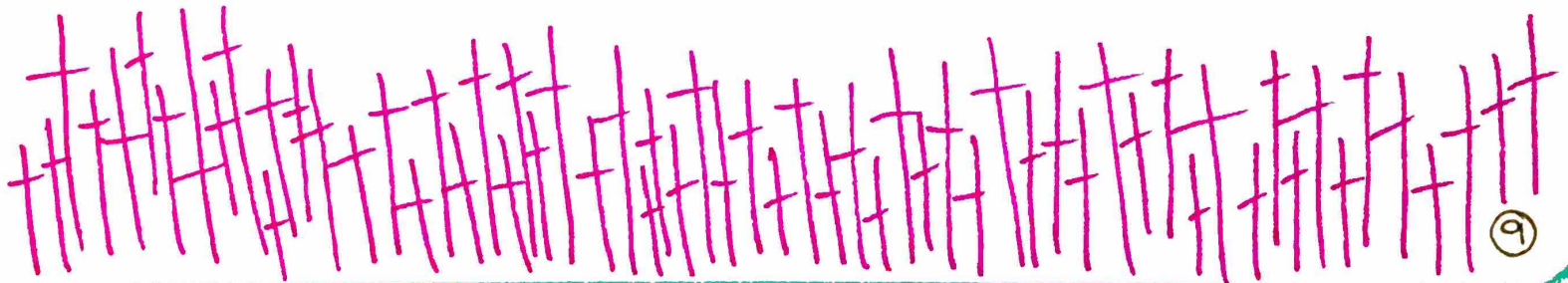
"Metering" is the term that the United States Customs and Border Protection (CBP) uses for a process by which it limits the number of people who can request asylum at a port of entry at a US-Mexico border crossing each day. For example, at the San Ysidro port of entry, there are reports that US government officials will only accept **20 asylum applications per day**.

What are the numbers?

In August of 2019, a New York Times article reported that there were nearly **58,000** asylum seekers waiting on the Mexican side of the border for their chance to request asylum in the US. This is a compounded result of the "Remain in Mexico" and "metering" policies. Shelters and legal service organizations in cities on both sides of the border have **struggled to keep up with the influx of migrants**. Some migrant shelters have begun to **turn away** new people due to overcrowding. Those who cannot afford to stay in apartments or hotels are forced to **sleep in the streets** as a result. In addition, people waiting in Mexico face the threat of **targeted kidnappings** and **violence**.

Death on the border

Many people are deciding to forgoe the unending waitlists and risk an unauthorized border crossing, which brings with it a whole host of other risks such as kidnapping, extortion, rape and other sexual violence, disappearances, human trafficking, gang violence, deportation, and death. According to Migration Data Portal, between January 2014 - October 2019, **2,243 deaths** have been recorded at the US-Mexico border. However, this number "represent[s] only a minimum estimate because the majority of migrant deaths... go unrecorded."



In the same month of December, 2018, two Guatemalan children died while in the custody of CBP.

Javelin Amel Rosemary Coal Maquin (age 7) was Maya Q'eqchi' from Alta Verapaz, and died of dehydration and shock.



Felipe Gómez Alonzo (age 8) was Chuj, from Huehuetenango, and died from influenza.

In May 2019, Carlos Gregorio Hernández Vasquez (age 16), from the Maya Achi community of San Jose El Bodeo, died from influenza after spending hours - unattended - collapsed on the floor of his detention cell.



CBP's account of his death differed greatly from the cell footage that has recently been published all over the media where CBP's incompetence and inadequate response to his condition were made clear.

He is the fifth Guatemalan child to die under US custody since last December due to the deplorable conditions in which people are detained.

Asylum is interconnected with state and historical violence

During my time in Guatemala, I came to hear about an organization called the **Asociación para el Desarrollo Integral de las Víctimas de la Violencia en las Verapaces, Maya Achi** (ADIVIMA; Association for the Comprehensive Development of the Victims of Violence in the Verapaces, Maya Achi).

ADIVIMA is a non-governmental organization (NGO) that focuses on **transitional justice** work in the Maya Achi communities through the recuperation of **historical memory** and access to justice in the aftermath of the **Internal Armed Conflict (1960-1996)** and **genocide** that took place in Guatemala.



In May of 2013, the president of ADIVIMA was given the opportunity to speak at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, where he criticized the role that the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank had in financing the Chixoy Hydroelectric Project in Guatemala. The construction of this hydroelectric dam began in the 1980s. When people began protesting its implementation, their resistance led to the Rio Negro massacres. This series of 5 massacres took place between 1980 and 1982 and took more than 5,000 lives, directly targeting the Maya Achi communities of Alta Verapaz. The Guatemalan state employed this strategy all across the country during the Internal Armed Conflict: committing genocide and displacing Indigenous communities from their ancestral lands to claim space for megaprojects to be implemented.

Before the Forum, the president of ADIVIMA had already undergone arrest, defamation, and threats to his and his family's lives due to his work as a human and environmental rights defender. Unfortunately, this is a similar narrative amongst activists in Guatemala — in 2018, over 30 human rights defenders were assassinated and Guatemala was the country with the highest per capita rate of land defenders murdered. After his participation in the Forum, the situation worsened when he found explosives hidden in his car. In November of 2014, he and his family were forced to leave Guatemala for their safety and arrived in the US, where they started the process to claim asylum. It took them more than three years before they were able to claim asylum. Fortunately, they had a network in the US that was able to support them during the waiting process — this is not the case for the majority of migrants hoping to make an asylum claim.

A vicious system.

Many people criticize the border, the asylum process, and immigration law as being part of a "broken system," when in reality, everything is functioning the way that the State and those in power intended. The system is not broken, it is a fine-tuned machine created to perpetuate violence against People of Color, Indigenous people, poor people, and to send them a very clear message: they are not wanted. It is not a matter of "fixing" this system — it is a matter of ABOLISHING it.

What can I do? // Action Steps

① EDUCATE yourself & others

* Nisqua.org/readings *

* No Wall They Can Build:

A Guide to Borders & Migration
Across North America *

* The Patriot Act with Hasan

Minhaj; Volume 5: "Trump's
Worst Policy: Killing Asylum" *



* Know your rights!
Spread the knowledge! *

② **DONATE** your resources (\$\$) and time

* **Contra Viento y Marea Comedor Tijuana** *
(facebook.com/contravientoymareacomedor)

* **Tapachula Migrant Solidarity** *
(Instagram: xxtap_sol)

* **Resistencia Relativa** *
(resistencia-relativa.com)

* **Hecate Society** *
(Instagram: hecatesociety)

* **No More Deaths** *
(nomoredeaths.org/en)

* **Border Angels** *
(borderangels.org)

* **San Diego Rapid Response Network** *
(rapidresponsesd.org)

* **Border Resistance** (Instagram: border_resistance) *

* **Abolish ICE** *
(facebook.com/abolishice)

* **NISGUA** *
(nisgua.org/donate)

③ - ORGANIZE -

- * Start a donation drive - collect clothes, food, and other resources (\$\$) to support migrant shelters*
- * Get involved in the Sanctuary City movement - check if where you live is already a Sanctuary City and if not how you can start that petition*
- * Check and see what kinds of protests/marches/rallies are happening near you and get involved! *
- * Volunteer *