



# AMMPARO

Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities

Spring 2022

## AMMPARO UPDATE

### Highlights

- **International engagement expanding** to protect migrant children, youth and families in countries of origin, transit, return, contention and destination in North, Central and South America. This includes Nicaraguan refugees in Costa Rica and the large population of Venezuelans seeking refuge in Colombia, Peru, Chile and Argentina and the diaspora of Haitian migrants which extends from Chile to Mexico.
- With the **continentalization of AMMPARO in the Americas**, the AMMPARO network now includes 12 companions in 9 countries including the migrant ministries of ILCO in Costa Rica, IELCO in Colombia, IL-P in Peru, IELCH and EPES in Chile, and IELU in Argentina.
- **ELCA Sanctuary Discernment Guide preparation and posting** elaborating on the guidance issued by the ELCA Church Council in April 2021.
- **209 welcoming and sanctuary congregations** in 54 synods in all 9 regions in the ELCA
- **37 synods** with AMMPARO/Immigration task forces, advocacy teams or committees working on immigration issues.
- **11 Guardian Angel programs** – in Los Angeles, Chicago, Omaha, Denver, Boston, Atlanta, Detroit and Minneapolis/St Paul, San Francisco, Hartford and Baltimore -Houston and Miami will be new in 2022 once the courts reopen to in person accompaniment.
- **National advocacy coordination** with the Interfaith Immigration Coalition and other networks as well as regular consultation with Congress on conditions in Central America
- **Accompaniment of the continued exodus** of Central Americans and people from all over the world both in transit and in countries of origin.
- **Legal engagement** in pro bono cases
- **ELCA webinar on Afghan resettlement sponsorship and engagement**
- **Coordination with national and international organizations and networks** including LIRS, CWS, Episcopal Migration Ministries, and the Global Forum on Migration for increased effectiveness.

### ACCOMPANIMENT (2021 statistics)

#### HONDURAS – Mennonite Social Action Commission (CASM)

CASM assisted nearly 2,400 returned migrants (adolescents & youth) over the course of 2021, principally in the greater San Pedro Sula area:

- 1,975 persons received humanitarian assistance after completing the repatriation process at the San Pedro Sula airport

- Of this total, nearly 400 adolescents & youth entered CASM's program of integrated services for returned migrants & their families (psychological screening and counseling for the treatment of trauma, vocational training for employment; scholarships to return to school, seed capital to start family-run microenterprises, etc.)

*NOTE: A total of 3,930 persons were served, directly and indirectly.*

#### HONDURAS – LWF / World Service:

Through LWF's "Return with Hope and Dignity" project, 108 returned migrant youth and their families were served by LWF's program of integrated services (psychological screening & therapy, workshops on self-esteem &



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motivation, training in small business administration, seed capital for microenterprises, vocational training for employment, training on human rights & advocacy techniques).

*NOTE: A total of 696 persons were served, directly and indirectly.*

## **GUATEMALA – Pop No’j:**

During 2021, 124 returned migrant children were accompanied by Pop No’j, far surpassing their annual goal of 30. The total number of persons served in these 124 families was 977. Pop No’j accompanies the return & reintegration process for migrant children and their families from indigenous communities in the Huehuetenango region of Guatemala.

## **EL SALVADOR – Migrant Ministry of the Salvadoran Lutheran Church (SLS):**

During 2021, the SLS Migrant Ministry provided reintegration assistance to returned migrants (humanitarian assistance, psychological treatment for trauma, and start-up help for family microenterprises) with a special focus on female-headed families. Total of 305 persons were assisted in 82 families.

## **MEXICO – Iglesia Luterana Mexicana (ILM)**

In 2021, ILM’s Migrant Ministry provided food and other forms of humanitarian assistance to a cluster of Mexico City migrant shelters which benefited a total of 1,280 in-transit migrants. During the first half of 2021, most were Central American migrants; during the second half of the year, most were Haitian. Additionally, ILM provided material and spiritual support for 8 migrant cases (15 individuals) referred from AMMPARO companions elsewhere in the region.

## **MEXICO – Migrant Policy Working Group (GTPM in Spanish)**

In addition to its ongoing advocacy work with in-transit migrants, during the final months of 2021, a key GTPM member organization channeled humanitarian assistance to an estimated 3,000 Haitian migrants who were languishing in Tapachula (southern Mexico) while awaiting the review of their asylum claims by local immigration authorities – a lengthy process which takes months.

**Domestic work with LSS NY includes representation of 42 plus unaccompanied children** in immigration and state courts.

**Congregational and Synodical Engagement grants** extended to synods and congregations in the AMMPARO network

## **ADVOCACY (2021)**

- **A new AMMPARO Advocacy Priorities** document created with partners
- **Participation in the UN NGO Committee on Migration Dialogue** on the Impact of COVID-19 on women in society
- **60+ engagements with the Congress, the White House, and agency staff**
- **568 signatures on a letter in support of the U.S. Citizenship Act** from the Presiding Bishop, the Conference of Bishop Chair, bishops and rostered leaders of the ELCA delivered to Congress in March
- **4 Statements by Presiding Bishop** on the Conference of Bishops Letter on the US Citizenship Act with LIRS (March), for World Refugee Day with LIRS (June), on Judge Hanen’s Ruling on DACA (July), and in response to Inhumane and degrading treatment of Haitian and other migrants (October)



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- **1857 messages to Congress** in support of a pathway to citizenship, and **6** on family detention during the Christmas season
- **3279 messages to Congress and the White House** in support of safety for at-risk Afghans after the war
- **30+ additional sign-ons** on migrants or asylum seekers ranging in issues from inclusive immigration recommendations for the administration, to COVID-19 recovery priorities, unaccompanied children in Texas, family detention, pathway to citizenship, and TPS designations.
- **A letter in support of the Build Back Better Act** from 29 bishops and the Presiding Bishop delivered to Congress and the White House in November
- **Numerous presentations on migration policy issues** with Lutheran congregations, ministries, and ecumenical and interreligious partners (internationally and domestically) including work with Witnessing in Society, Peace Not Walls, World Hunger, Young Adults, Organizing for Mission, ELCA Latinx Association, ELCA African Descent Ministries, ELCA Coaching Ministry, LIRS, among others.
- **Pro Bono legal engagement** on cases involving asylum, detention parole and VAWA

## AWARENESS - RAISING

- **Two AMMPARO network learning/ sharing opportunities** on xenophobia and psycho-social trauma accompaniment, and the border
- **New AMMPARO videos** posted
- **Sponsoring and participation in numerous webinars** internationally and domestically on AMMPARO
- **4 blogs** on unaccompanied children and migration, citizenship, and Afghan arrivals
- **1 publication on Black migrants in Living Lutheran** (ELCA Advocacy)

## Resources on AMMPARO

- Full strategy and summaries, videos, printed resources for congregations and synods in both English and Spanish at [ELCA.org/ammparo](http://ELCA.org/ammparo)
- Sign up for the ELCA Advocacy Network: [www.elca.org/advocacy](http://www.elca.org/advocacy)
- Follow on Facebook: [Facebook.com/ELCAammparo](https://Facebook.com/ELCAammparo) and on the ELCA AMMPARO blog: <http://blogs.elca.org/ammparo/concord/>

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