



The Franciscan Voice at the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF)

The global migration landscape is currently experiencing profound tensions between diplomatic commitments and the reality of borders. In this context, the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) stands out as a key platform for assessing the direction of human mobility worldwide.

What is the IMRF and why is it globally significant?

The IMRF is the United Nations' main platform dedicated to monitoring the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM). Held every four years at the UN General Assembly headquarters in New York, the forum functions as a “global mirror,” revealing the gap between what states promise in treaties and what they actually implement within their territories.

More than a technical meeting, the IMRF is a vital institutional space where civil society, migrants, and religious organizations can denounce systemic violations, such as arbitrary detentions, family separation, and the dangerous externalization of borders. Its importance lies in reaffirming that migration is not a security problem to be contained, but a human reality that must be managed responsibly and ethically.

The Franciscan Presence: Political Engagement and Faith in Action

The Franciscan family played an active role in this forum, coordinated by Franciscan International and the Franciscan Action Network, with the participation of friars from the three orders and members of the OFS, namely: Br. Ángel Ríos, OFMCap (El Paso, Texas), Br. William Kraus, OFMCap (El Paso - Texas), Br. Jim Doregan, OFMCap (New York), Br. Paul Lininger, OFMConv (Washington), Marya Farah (Franciscan International), Cecilia Herrera, OFS (El Paso - Texas), Michele Dunne, OFS (Franciscan Action Network), and Br. João Paulo Gabriel Mendes de Moraes, OFM (Brazil), speaking with one voice. This participation is not merely institutional but is deeply rooted in the concrete experience of the territories where Franciscans accompany migrants and refugees on a daily basis.

Franciscan International's engagement in UN decision-making forums serves to bring the stories from the peripheries and borders to the international negotiating tables. In an environment often dominated by state-centric logic of control, the Franciscan presence introduces a perspective centered on human dignity and the ethics of care, balancing the political debate with the reality of lives on the move.





The Prophetic and Social Role of the Friars

The friars' participation in the IMRF is a living expression of a "Church that goes forth,"

one that does not stand idly by in the face of structures that lead to exclusion. The friars' presence has three fundamental meanings:

1. Direct witness: They do not speak from theories, but from their lived experience with migrants, giving faces and stories to official reports.
2. The Church's social doctrine: Their presence translates concepts such as the common good and solidarity into practical criteria for evaluating public policies, shifting the debate from the logic of control to the logic of dignity.
3. Prophetic voice: By denouncing the criminalization of migration and the militarization of borders, the friars perform an essential critical function, reminding us that not every policy considered "effective" by states is just or ethical.

Urgent Challenges and Denunciation of Setbacks

The sources warn of a structural gap between the commitments of the Global Compact and the reality in the Americas. The following is noted with concern:

- Containment policies: The construction of walls and increased budgets for militarization, at the expense of humanitarian aid and integration.
- Violence and dehumanization: Discourses of aporophobia and hate that legitimize the excessive use of force and the criminalization of people in situations of forced displacement.
- Structural causes: The need to address inequality, climate change, and violence that force displacement.

For the Franciscans and all those present, human dignity is non-negotiable. The work of faith-based organizations, inspired by Pope Francis's verbs—welcome, protect, promote, and integrate—does not replace the legal and ethical obligation of states to guarantee rights.

The final message is clear: migration governance will only be legitimate if it places human life at the center. It is necessary to tear down walls and build bridges, transforming principles into practices that ensure no one is left behind on the path toward a more fraternal world.

Attached is the Statement prepared by faith-based organizations and pastoral actors in Latin America and the Caribbean.





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