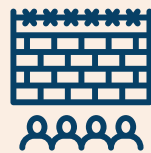




Supporting Migrants at Borders and in Detention



Assistance in Transit and at Borders



Many migrants lose their lives when they board unseaworthy boats, moving trains or sweltering trucks, when smugglers leave them to die at sea or in the desert, or when border guards are given orders to deter irregular migration. At land, sea and air borders around the world, migrants can experience discrimination, violence, and prolonged or arbitrary detention. People around the Mercy World encounter migrants throughout every aspect of their journey and many support migrants who have recently crossed borders. For some, that means providing companionship and immediate assistance, including medical care, adequate food and water, blankets, clothing, sanitary items and an opportunity to rest.



Criminalization of Solidarity



There is a worrying and growing trend of 'criminalization of solidarity' in recent years, as individuals and organizations who have helped refugees and migrants by providing food and water, temporary shelter, or rescue at sea, have been threatened, smeared, intimidated, harassed, and prosecuted in courts simply for helping migrants in need. These tactics have been used by some governments to dissuade others from showing solidarity with people on the move and in order to deter refugees and migrants from attempting to enter their territories.



Assistance to Migrants in Detention



For migrants and asylum seekers, the experience of immigration detention has many damaging and enduring effects, including physical and mental health impacts, separation from family members, and instilling fear in communities. Detention and strict immigration laws are presented as means of safeguarding countries from threat, but they harm migrants and countries as a whole by furthering and legitimizing systematic intolerance, xenophobia, and racism. Through their advocacy and friendship with migrants, people around the Mercy World have been able to create a 'ministry of presence' that provides migrants comfort, companionship, and access to housing, employment, and legal assistance in times of uncertainty.



Alternatives to Detention



Non-custodial, community-based alternatives to detention (ATD) better respect the human rights of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, not only by preventing unlawful or arbitrary detention practices, but also by protecting civil, political, economic, cultural and social rights. ATD programs prove that detention is not necessary during the immigration process, and cases can be resolved while people are free in communities. An end to immigration detention is not only possible, it is beneficial to states, and necessary to ensure the dignity and rights of people on the move.



Take Action!



- Examine the relationship between racism and migration policies
- Raise your voice to make sure policies and practices are human-rights based and non-discriminatory. Call on governments to:
 - Decriminalize irregular migration
 - Demilitarize border enforcement against migrants & asylum seekers
 - Stop and reverse border externalization
 - Decriminalize humanitarian assistance to migrants & asylum seekers
 - Prioritize alternatives to detention, end child immigration detention, and use detention of adults only as a measure of last resort