This has been an intense year as we press the Biden Administration to adopt more just policies towards Latin America and the Caribbean.

Together with you, we have persuaded the new administration to take a stronger stance against efforts by the Guatemalan and Salvadoran governments to undermine their judicial systems, limit freedoms for press and civil society, and expand opportunities for corruption. We have succeeded with partners in pushing the White House to extend Temporary Protective Status for 300,000 people from El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Haiti, and convinced the President to try to end the cruel Remain in Mexico policy that forces asylum seekers to wait in dangerous parts of Mexico.

But we are not content. We will keep denouncing the cruel deportations to countries still reeling from the pandemic. We will work hard, with you, to push the White House to reopen dialogue with Cuba, stand up for human rights defenders across the hemisphere, truly support peace in Colombia, and deliver a more generous COVID-19 response.

Lisa Haugard
Daniella Burgos-Vargas
Monument erected by protesters in Cali, Colombia, with faces of young people killed and figure of courageous journalist who continues to support the right to protest.

Photo by Lisa Haugaard

Graphic promoting our petition to support engagement with Cuba (now delivered to the White House).

Graphic by Antonio Saadipour.
WHO WE ARE

The Latin America Working Group (LAWG), a 501 (c) 4 nonprofit, carries out advocacy and grassroots education. The Latin America Working Group Education Fund (LAWGEF), a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit, sponsors educational events and publishes reports and updates. In this year’s activities, lobbying tasks were carried out by LAWG, and educational tasks by LAWGEF.
2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Defending the Rights of Migrants and Refugees

- Amplified the call to end the Title 42 border policy with policymakers, the public, press, and the grassroots with petitions, explainers, and rallies. Spurred a congressional letter to Department of Homeland Security Secretary Mayorkas calling for ending Title 42 signed by over 60 representatives.

- Organized a series of press calls; NGO and congressional letters, webinars and briefs to make the case for the extension of TPS due to the impacts of the twin Hurricanes on Central America.

- Documented the harmful impacts of Title 42 expulsions and Mexican enforcement on migrants’ rights, including Haitians, in a memo to U.S. policymakers and a virtual congressional briefing. Raised the need for regional refugee protections with the State Department and White House.

- Built the capacity of civil society organizations in Mexico and Central America on policy changes during the Biden Administration’s first 100 days via factsheets and webinars.
Daniella attends a conference with migrant rights advocates from Mexico City, Mexico.
Mural outside of Casa Tochan migrant shelter in Mexico City.
Promoting Peace

- Participated in an international verification mission to Cali, Colombia to defend the right to protest and denounce police brutality. Produced report for policymakers, participated in the mission’s press conference. Convinced the Secretary of State to call for accountability. Working with partners to convince Congress to prohibit aid and arms sales to Colombia’s brutal anti-riot squad and condition aid to police.

- Organized letters to and meetings with high-level Biden Administration officials to call for reorientation of policy and aid to Colombia to support peace, human rights, and the rights of Afro-Colombian and indigenous people.

- Brought together with partners broad range of activists, scholars, Cuban Americans, grassroots and humanitarian groups to demand President Biden live up to promises to open up dialogue with and allow humanitarian aid and travel to Cuba and organized congressional letter. Delivered petition calling for change in Cuba policy to the White House.
Upholding Justice, Defending the Defenders

- Succeeding in convincing Biden Administration to adopt tougher diplomacy against corruption and violations of judicial independence in El Salvador and Guatemala, including by suspending and reorienting aid and issuing visa sanctions on corrupt officials.
- Met numerous times with high-level State Department, White House, and USAID officials and organized letters and press releases to call for major reorientation of diplomacy and aid to northern countries of Central America to address corruption and human rights abuses and avoid mistakes of the past.
- Met with Vice President Harris at the invitation of the White House to call on her to adopt a stronger position against corruption and impunity in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras as part of the U.S. strategy to address root causes of migration.

- Organized memos, meetings to urge the Biden Administration to transform U.S. policy to Honduras which to date it has failed to change. Urged State Department to demand Honduran government respect electoral laws and the right to protest. Organized support for Senator Merkley and Representative Schakowsky’s Honduras Accountability Act which would suspend security assistance until major advances are made on protecting human rights and ending corruption.
Supporting Communities’ Land, Environmental, and Economic Rights

- Worked with Earthrights International to secure in the House safeguards on the Development Finance Corporation (DFC) so that they will have to ensure there are not reprisals against environmental defenders challenging projects it funds. Organized activists to urge members of Congress to sign a congressional letter on a destructive dam project in Honduras that resulted in the DFC denying financing for the project.

- Called on the State Department and USAID to include defense of environmental defenders as part of climate change strategy.

- Provided support to the Washington, DC visit of Honduran Garifuna organization OFRANEH after it received the Institute for Policy Studies Letelier-Moffit award.

- Urged the State Department to speak out against criminalization of and extensive pretrial detention of environmental activists in Honduras.
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Lauri participating in the #WelcomeBackCongress March for Care, Citizenship, and Climate

PHOTO BY FELLOW ACTIVIST
Finances

LAWGEF’s income of $406,956 in 2020 came from foundations as well as from individual donors and nongovernmental organizations. Expenditures for 2020 were $352,117. Contributions to LAWGEF are tax-deductible.

LAWG’s income of $81,794 in 2020 came from contributions by funders and coalition partners, including humanitarian agencies, nongovernmental and faith-based organizations, and individual donors. Expenditures for 2020 were $119,169 (a grant received in 2019 was carried over to 2020 and supplemented income). Contributions to LAWG are not tax-deductible.
Acknowledgments

Many thanks to the following for their contributions to LAWGEF’s public education work: Ford Foundation, Foundation to Promote Open Society, HIP-CAMMINA, Stewart Mott Charitable Trust, Eirenrikos Foundation, Holthues Trust, Church World Service, Evelyn E. and Richard J. Gunst Foundation, Oxfam America, United Church of Christ, Chicago Community Foundation, Pierce Family Charitable Foundation, Daughters of Charity Province of St. Louise, Lutheran World Relief, AFL-CIO, Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States, Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, and Washington Office on Latin America.

Many thanks to the following for their contributions to LAWG: Open Society Policy Center, ELCA Global Mission, Mennonite Central Committee, Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Alliance of Baptists, and Presbyterian Church USA, as well as to the other partner organizations and many generous individuals contributing to both organizations.
See our website to:

- Join our e-alert lists to learn ways to take action for just U.S. policies;
- See our reports, blogs, memos, and infographics;
- Power our work by making a contribution.