Cover: Four representatives of the Movimiento por Nuestros Desaparecidos en México, a movement searching for their loved ones who have been forcibly disappeared, accepting the Letelier-Moffitt international human rights award from the Institute for Policy Studies. LAWG worked with partner Serapaz to arrange their visits with policymakers.

Protest attended by LAWG staff against the harmful asylum policy “Remain in Mexico” at the Supreme Court asking for asylum seekers to be #SafenotStranded.

PHOTO BY INSTITUTE FOR POLICY STUDIES

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Who do you want our U.S. government to stand up for in Latin America?

For autocrats? Corrupt elites? Brutal security forces? Companies seeking gain without respecting labor or environmental rights?

How about for citizens organizing for justice? For students teargassed and beaten for protesting a government that doesn’t care about their wellbeing? For Afro-Colombian organizations demanding that their government implement the peace accords’ Ethnic Chapter? For an Indigenous woman defending her rights against a mining company polluting her local river? For people in Matanzas, Cuba, suffering the impact of devastating oil fires—and a hurricane? For families of the disappeared in Mexico seeking to find what happened to their loved ones? For a judge being driven into exile for standing up for the rule of law? For a family making the dangerous trek to seek asylum at the U.S. border after fleeing death threats at home?

Yes, it’s hard. Yes, it’s a bit quixotic. But I know whose side I want my government to be on. And so do you.

Lisa Hawesord
LAWG staff protesting the unlawful detention by Mexican authorities of Guatemalan Indigenous woman.

PHOTO BY ANTONIO SAADIPOUR
WHO WE ARE

The Latin America Working Group aims to ensure that U.S. policies advance human rights, peace, and social, environmental, and economic justice in Latin America and the Caribbean. To achieve this, we work with coalition partners in the United States and Latin America to educate policymakers and the public and to mobilize a diverse, and powerful grassroots base that can influence U.S. policymakers to achieve change.

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.
2022 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Defending the Rights of Migrants and Refugees

- Advanced collective efforts resulting in the Biden Administration’s lifting of the Title 42 border order after two years of the harsh policy, including one year under President Biden. A victory, though the courts have since blocked its ending.

- Guaranteed that the protection of migrants and refugees was addressed at the IX Summit of the Americas. We organized a civil society event in Los Angeles and influenced the final text of the Los Angeles Declaration on Migration and Protection signed by governments of the Americas.

- Demanded that the Biden Administration fully end the Remain in Mexico policy and coordinate with border groups to process asylum seekers left stranded in danger in Mexico.

- Pushed for Temporary Protected Status for Central American countries to help members of our communities across the United States—through congressional and organizations’ letters, webinars, and rallies.
LAWG program assistants at a rally in front of the Capitol to show support for Temporary Protected Status for Central Americans.

PHOTO BY ANDREA SÁNCHEZ
Lisa with Father Francisco de Roux and members of the Truth Commission at the United States Institute of Peace.

PHOTO BY ANA PEREYRA BARON
Promoting Peace

Encouraged the Biden Administration to support positive initiatives by Colombia’s new government, including advancing peace accord implementation, paying attention to the accords’ Ethnic Chapter, supporting negotiations with the ELN, and collaborating with civil society and the new government to advance social inclusion and address climate change.

Helped publicize the work of the Colombian Truth Commission, participating in an event highlighting its work and creating an infographic on the enormous human costs of the Colombian conflict in which 450,000 people were killed.

Brought together a broad range of activists, scholars, Cuban Americans, and grassroots and humanitarian groups to demand President Biden live up to promises to open up dialogue and allow humanitarian aid and travel to Cuba. Urged lifting restrictions in the wake of the Matanzas oil fires.
Upholding Justice, Defending the Defenders

- Galvanized support for families of the disappeared in Mexico. Organized meetings for them in Washington, urged members of Congress to call for U.S. support to strengthen protections for human rights defenders and journalists and justice in cases of the disappeared in Mexico, which resulted in congressional letters and statements.

- Launched three reports with partners exposing the takeover of Guatemala’s institutions by corrupt elites and its impact on human rights and Indigenous activists, journalists, and honest judges and prosecutors—Guatemala’s Downward Spiral, Under Assault in Guatemala, and When the Dominoes Fall.
- Kept up pressure on Biden Administration to adopt *stronger diplomacy against corruption*, rights abuses, and the takeover of judicial institutions in Guatemala and El Salvador, including by reorienting aid and issuing visa sanctions on corrupt officials. Encouraged support for the new Honduran government to advance on human rights and creation of a UN-sponsored anti-corruption mechanism.

- Exposed the deadly violations of human rights committed in El Salvador during the state of exception to policymakers and in a *statement* for the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission.

- Contributed to organizing a *Latin America-wide conference*, RegionaR, on the human rights challenges facing the region.

*This list includes some of the groups participating. Participation does not imply endorsement of all LAWG/LAWGEF efforts. Decisions to endorse statements and campaigns are made on a case-by-case basis by each participating organization.*
Supporting Communities’ Land, Environmental, and Economic Rights

- Urged U.S. policymakers to ensure any U.S.-government promoted investment in Central America respects the rights of Indigenous, Afro-descendant, Garifuna, and small farmer communities.

- Joined emergency human rights delegation to Guatemala organized by the Guatemala Human Rights commission and published blog on our visit to an Indigenous community affected by extractive projects.

- Trained Colombian environmental and human rights groups in five regions of the country on how to do international advocacy.
AYadira, Daniella along with partner organization SERAPAZ accompany Indigenous land defenders from Mexico to ask that U.S. policymakers protect human rights defenders.

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LAWG’s income of $237,013 in 2021 came from contributions by funders and coalition partners, including humanitarian agencies, nongovernmental and faith-based organizations, and individual donors. Expenditures for 2021 were $141,921. Contributions to LAWG are not tax-deductible.
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Ana, Antonio, Daniella, and Yadira signing a book honoring Berta Cáceres’ legacy at Honduran Embassy after inauguration of President Xiomara Castro.

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