

# LATIN AMERICA WORKING GROUP

*Action at Home for  
Just Policies Abroad*

2022 ANNUAL REPORT





*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 YADIRA SÁNCHEZ-ESPARZA

*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.*

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 Haugward*

### PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS\*

AFL-CIO

AFL-CIO Solidarity Center

Alianza Americas

Alliance of Baptists

Amazon Watch

American Friends Service Committee

American Jewish World Service

Americans for Indian Opportunity

Bread for the World

Catholic Relief Services

Center for Economic and Policy Research

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.



*LAWG staff.*  
PHOTO BY OLIVIA OCHOA

Center for Gender and Refugee Studies

Center for Global Education and Experience  
at Augsburg College

Center for International Environmental Law

Center for International Policy

Church World Service

Code Pink

Colombia Human Rights Committee

Columban Center for Advocacy & Outreach

Cuban American Alliance Education Fund

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,  
Global Mission

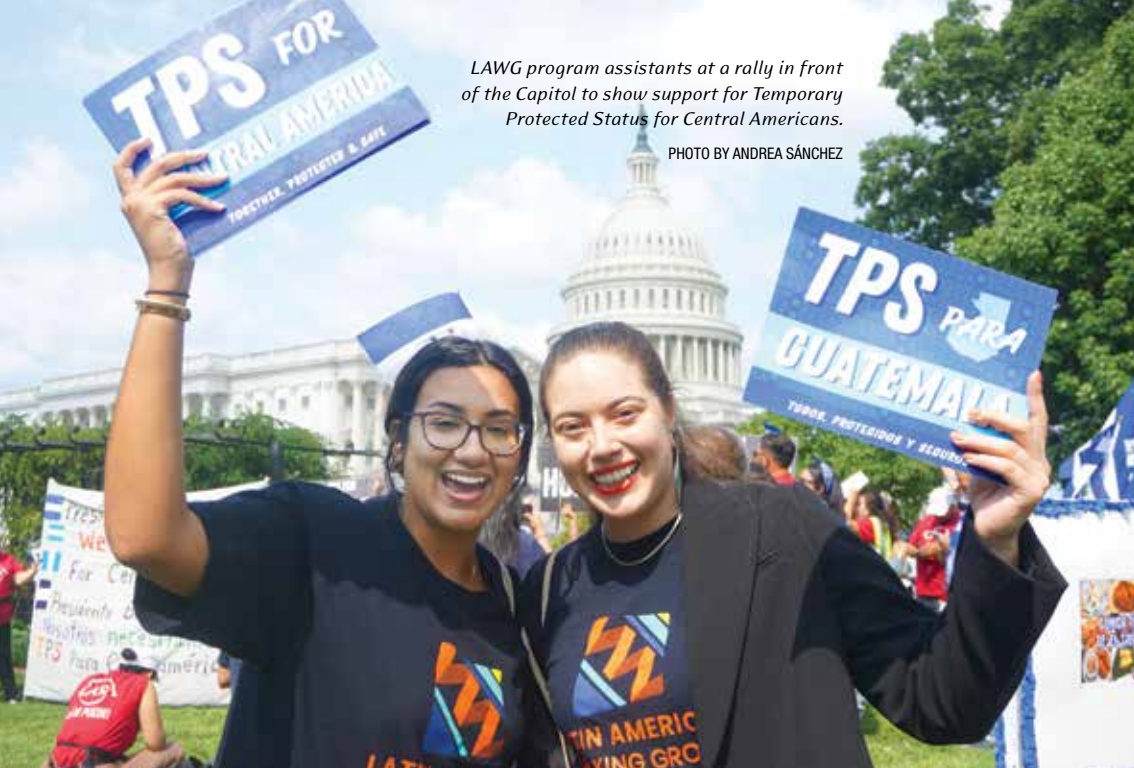
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America,  
Washington Office

# 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

Global Exchange

Global Health Partners

Guatemala Human Rights Commission/USA

Institute for Policy Studies

International Institute on Race, Equality and Human Rights

International Labor Rights Forum

Jesuit Conference Office of Justice and Ecology

Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)

Lutheran World Relief Office of Public Policy

Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns

Mennonite Central Committee

Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Justice and Peace Office



*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.

National Security Archive

Network in Solidarity with the People of Guatemala (NISGUA)

Oxfam America

Peace Brigades International, USA

Presbyterian Church (USA)

Presbyterian Peace Fellowship

Quixote Center

Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights

Save the Children

Sisters of Mercy of the Americas

United Church of Christ

# COLOMBIAN TRUTH COMMISSION REPORT

THE TRUTH COMMISSION LISTENED TO TESTIMONY FROM SOME OF THE 9 MILLION VICTIMS LEFT BY MORE THAN 60 YEARS OF ARMED CONFLICT IN COLOMBIA.

DEATHS DURING THE ARMED CONFLICT  
(1985-2018)

450,664



OF EVERY 10 DEATHS



8 WERE CIVILIANS  
2 WERE COMBATANTS

PERPETRATORS?

45% PARAMILITARIES  
27% GUERRILLAS  
12% STATE AGENTS

#HAYFUTUROSIHAYVERDAD

PLEASE SHARE ON SOCIAL MEDIA TO BRING AWARENESS TO THE TRUTH COMMISSION AND ITS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COLOMBIA.



## 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**.

*Graphic promoting the Colombian Truth Commission report and its powerful information about the human toll of the conflict.*

GRAPHIC BY ANA PEREYRA BARON

- 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.

United Methodist Church, General Board of Church & Society

US-Cuba Cultural Exchange

Washington Office on Latin America

Witness for Peace

Witness for Peace Solidarity Collective

\* 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.



*Yadira participating in an emergency delegation led by Guatemala Human Rights Commission to visit communities affected by extractive projects in Chinautla, Guatemala.*

PHOTO BY FELLOW ACTIVIST

## 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.*

PHOTO BY FELLOW ACTIVIST

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS** **Latin America Working Group** **Education Fund**

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Joe Perez, Businessman and Activist

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Immigrant Justice

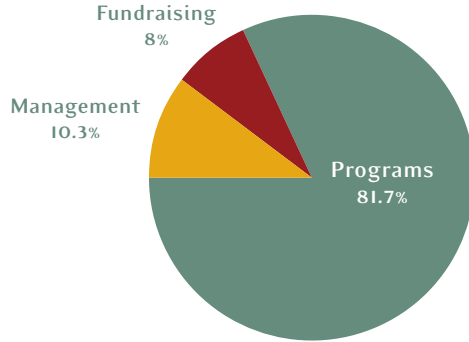


## Finances

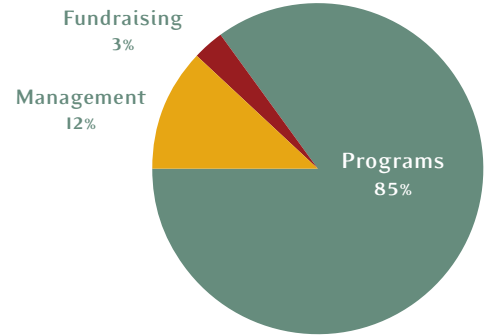
LAWGEF's income of \$477,108 in 2021 came from foundations as well as from individual donors and nongovernmental organizations. Expenditures for 2021 were \$ 350,109. Contributions to LAWGEF are tax-deductible.

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.

### LAWGEF 2021 Expenses



### LAWG 2021 Expenses





## Acknowledgments

Many thanks to the following for their contributions to LAWGEF's public education work: Ford Foundation, Foundation to Promote Open Society, Hispanics in Philanthropy-CAMMINA, Stewart Mott Charitable Trust, Church World Service, Holthues Trust, Oxfam America, United Church of Christ, Jesuit Conference of Canada and the United States, and Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

Many thanks to the following for their contributions to LAWG: Open Society Policy Center, ELCA Global Mission, Save the Children, Mennonite Central Committee, Alliance of Baptists, Justice in Motion, and Presbyterian Church USA, as well as to the other partner organizations and many generous individuals contributing to both organizations.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS Latin America Working Group

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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.

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[www.instagram.com/lawgaction](https://www.instagram.com/lawgaction)



*Ana, Antonio, Daniella, and Yadira signing a book honoring Berta Caceres' legacy at Honduran Embassy after inauguration of President Xiomara Castro.*

PHOTO BY FELLOW ACTIVIST