

# **MEDIA COVERAGE OF MIGRATION** IN THE **AMERICAS**

A REPORT FROM THE AUSTIN FORUM ON JOURNALISM IN THE AMERICAS 2011



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## **INTRODUCTION**

More than 50 journalists and experts from 20 countries throughout the Americas attended the 9th Austin Forum on Journalism in the Americas to discuss media coverage of international migration in the Western Hemisphere. This brief report captures some of the main points debated during the September 8-10, 2011 annual conference at the University of Texas at Austin. The conference was organized by the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas and the Open Society Foundations' programs on Media and on Latin America.

The Forum participants – reporters, editors, academics, leaders of journalism and civil society organizations and experts – acknowledged that migration is one of the most complex of human stories. Against the backdrop of globalization in every sphere of our lives, it will only become more prominent as time goes on. Despite this, journalistic resources are lacking to provide good quality coverage of international migration in the Americas.

Journalists and experts spelled out what needs to be done. They looked into ways to collaborate across countries. They recommended a more human, balanced portrayal, going beyond the statistics and anecdotes of people crossing borders with or without papers. More stories need to be written about the migrants themselves, their families, historical explanations for migration, investigations into government policies, health issues, economic and social factors, education, housing and myriad other components that make up migration. In short, about the ways that migration has an important, if not crucial, effect on the daily life of almost everyone in the Americas.

We hope this short report, which highlights some of the findings, problems and relevant discussions that took place during the Austin Forum, will be of use to journalists and experts in the Americas. And that after reading some of the lessons and conclusions of the Forum, journalists can improve the ways they cover international migration in the Americas.

This report has been written by José Luis Sierra, contributing editor for News America Media and a segment producer and assignment editor for the new Spanish Network MundoFox. A Mexican-American journalist, Sierra has had a long career in California, covering issues related to migration.

The booklet was designed by Oscar D. Gomez, from the Knight Center's team.

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**F**or those living in the United States, the word 'migrant' is not only familiar but invokes all kinds of feelings and dreams.

For some, it is the nostalgic sentiment of leaving a country, a place of birth, family and friends, and taking a plunge into the unknown, hoping to survive and thrive.

For others, it is the dream of returning to their homeland, to embrace all those left behind, after a new and better life has been forged in a new and different place. And believing that when things are better, they might go back to their country, or bring those left behind to the new one.

But for many migrants those dreams turn out to be wishful thinking, and quite often end up in tragedy.

That was one of the many conclusions of some 50 journalists and migrant rights advocates from the **U.S., Latin America** and the **Caribbean**, who gathered for a two-day conference September 8-10, 2011, organized by the **Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas** at the **University of Texas at Austin** and the **Open Society Foundations**.

If they are lucky, migrants are able to settle their legal status, most likely after facing tough challenges such as language barriers and the lack of education.

Throughout the years, if they are a bit luckier, they might adjust to a different way of life, accept new rules and laws, and even build a family — often different from the one left behind. At some point, however, the great majority realize that even if their situation has changed in terms of relatively better food, clothing and housing in comparison with where they grew up, they still have to face a life of discrimination, inequality, civil rights violations and persecution.

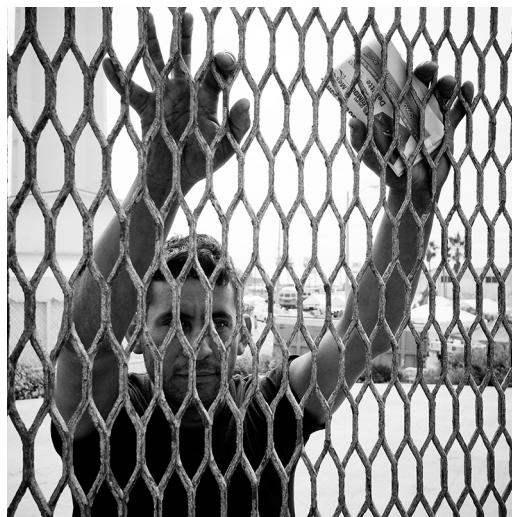


Photo by Brian Auer

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## DIASPORA IN THE AMERICAS

There is no way to understand migration movements without understanding history, sociopolitical conditions, and climate upheavals. Yet, like plate tectonics in slow motion, migration movements are responsible for shaping the past, present and future of a neighborhood, county, city or nation. This has been, for the most part, the history of the U.S.

After only a day of discussion, participants at the Austin Forum recognized that properly understanding and covering migration in the Americas requires education, balance, and objective reporting. Participants agreed that, based on these criteria, the media in North America fail to provide fair and accurate coverage.

Pressed by deadlines, scarce resources, a lack of training, and plain ignorance about migration movements, much of the media coverage is rather superficial. There is little understanding of the socioeconomic and political pressures migrants bring to the regions where they immigrate, and how their absence similarly affects the region they left.

Journalists agreed that covering the immigration beat is in itself a specialty that requires training, experience and education, not only for the journalists involved, but for the organizations that provide support to migrants during and after their journey.

This, according to numerous statements from the participants, is needed not only in the U.S., but also all over Latin America.

"We journalists, unfortunately, tend to follow the chimes and glitter of the migrants' success stories, or the sensationalism of their tragedies, but pay little, or no attention at all, to their travails or their daily lives," said **Cecilia Alvear**, a veteran journalist and former news producer for the **NBC** network.

In between the successes and the tragedies, millions of stories about human rights violations, the lack of equal opportunities, scams, and social

degradation fall into the cracks.

Few of those who leave home ever hit the jackpot of the promised land. Most just manage to eke out a living, while some even lose their lives and their dreams in the quest. Often, these migrants end up in an unmarked grave in a foreign country, as has been the case with hundreds buried in common graves along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Unless they somehow manage to have a rags-to-riches story, or a tragic end in their struggle for the American Dream, they will go unnoticed. Their search for a better life, their dreams of helping those they left behind, and all of their struggles will go unnoticed.

"We tend to criminalize migrants due to the mere fact that they decided to come into this country to look for work with no documents and we classify them as *illegal aliens* before knowing the facts," added **Alvear**. The reason, **Alvear** said, is that the media rarely take the time to look in-depth at the socioeconomic and political factors that force migrants to leave their countries.

In general terms, the media mostly ignore migrants. And when the media ignore such issues, so does society.

**"We tend to criminalize migrants due to the mere fact that they decided to come into this country to look for work with no documents"**

These were just some conclusions reached during a pre-forum panel session at the University of Texas entitled "**How We Cover International Migration in Central America and North America**," on September 8, 2011, in front of a group of aspiring journalists and students.

Responding to a question posed by **Professor Charles Hale**, director of the **Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies at the University of Texas**, panelists identified the





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reasons for which migration stories receive front page coverage. Participants agreed that whether it is the U.S. or any other country in the Americas or the Caribbean, the migration phenomenon is tackled only to highlight a political issue, a sensationalist crime story or a sensationalist success story.

Journalist **Julian Aguilar**, from the *Texas Tribune*, argued that given the current economic crisis, many media outlets in the U.S. sacrifice quality for quantity, allowing reporters “little time to work on in-depth stories or investigative reporting.”

Migrants in the U.S. come from all backgrounds, social standings, and political and religious beliefs. Those with money will simply show their visas, board a plane and land in places like Miami, New York or Los Angeles. Sometimes they come for fun, sometimes for work. Some will start a new business, quite often to provide services to migrants coming from their own country.

**“Most migrants suffer from discrimination even in their own country, but once they leave their homeland — often by force — they are subject to all kind of abuses”**

Just like in the past, migrants in the U.S. end up, or begin, at the bottom of the social scale. Unlike the past, however, when they had opportunities to survive, thrive and be successful, today they face persecution, prosecution or deportation back to a life from which they were trying to escape. This treatment of migrants is common practice in countries undergoing an economic crisis or social upheaval.

“Few ever manage to make their case and get political asylum. Yes, there are some success stories, but they are few and far between. Usually, most of them exchange one poverty for another,” said **Oscar Chacón**, a panelist from the **National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean**

**Communities**, based in Chicago.



Oscar Chacón, Executive Director of the National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities.

Those without money take the hard road of survival and find themselves subject to all kinds of abuses with no resources for assistance and few means to defend themselves.

“Most migrants suffer from discrimination even in their own country, but once they leave their homeland — often by force — they are subject to all kind of abuses, quite often by the same authorities that are supposed to protect them,” said **Fabián Sánchez**, a lawyer and member of **I(DH)EAS**, a Mexican non-profit legal agency based in Mexico City. **Sánchez** said that last year his organization conducted a poll among migrants seeking shelter in sanctuaries along the common routes used by Central American migrants traveling to the U.S., and found countless examples of mistreatment.

“We asked them if during their journey they had been subject to some kind of abuse, either by civilians or authorities. The vast majority said yes. We asked them then if they have had some kind of access to the justice system — 93 of 100 said no,” declared **Sánchez**.

But the September 8 panel saw the journalists generally agreeing that while they seek to provide objective coverage of migration, that coverage may end up being far from accurate. This lack of accuracy exacerbates a societal lack of



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understanding about the problems of migration.

On a more hopeful note, the reason everyone gathered at the **Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas at the University of Texas at Austin** was, as **Director Rosental C. Alves** said, “to find out where we are on covering migration and identify what we need to improve.”

## THE MIGRATION PHENOMENON

Understanding why events happened, how they happened and what kind of consequences they will bring, on both an individual and societal level, is key for a journalist. Given a complex social phenomenon like migration, not accurately understanding the underlying causes could be tragic.



Thelma Gomez Duran of *El Universal* and Fabian Sanchez, executive director of the organization Strategic Litigation for Civil Rights.

Working on deadline and without the time and space to go in depth, journalists are often forced to produce a piece that will probably cover the basics of the 5 W's, but will lack analysis.

“We need to train our students to think more critically to conduct more in-depth journalism,” said **Glenn Frankel**, **Director of the School of Journalism at the University of Texas at Austin**, during the opening session on September 9. At the university there are “51,000 students who are not training to be journalists who need to understand more about this issue of migration,”

**Frankel** added. He also said these students represented millions of readers, viewers and curious minds that depend on journalists to be informed and make decisions.

“This is about equality and civic participation. The media have the mandate to represent and amplify those voices not heard,” said **Marie Struthers**, Senior Program Manager at the **Open Society Foundations (OSF)** Media Program. Struthers, along with David Holiday from the OSF Latin American program, posed four questions to all participants. Each question is a challenge, not only for journalists but also for immigration advocates.

- How can journalists best integrate migrants' voices and maintain balance and objectivity?
- Migration is perceived as a threat that siphons off public funds. How do journalists tell those stories but also portray the positive side of migration?
- Migration is often covered as a national security issue in the post-9/11 world. Some experts who favor open borders believe migrants would add \$39 trillion to the global economy. How can we better report these positive aspects?
- Shrinking media budgets have taken away the depth from issues that deserve deeper analysis. How to capitalize on civil society participation in order to better flesh out the issues and collaborate with the beleaguered newsroom?

Of course, answering each of these questions was a daunting task to solve in just two full days, since migration throughout history has been the sum of several factors, including economics, politics, and cultural and climate change. Migration, like all social phenomena, has no age, gender, social status, political affiliation, or nationality preference. Anyone, anywhere, at any time, can eventually turn into a migrant.

## WHERE MIGRANTS COME FROM

When the global economic and political climate shifts, so does migration. As noted above, while



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most migrants move from their country of origin to seek better opportunities elsewhere, migration trends also result from political and social upheavals, climate and seasonal changes, and family reunification needs.

An historical review of the last century can pinpoint how Mexicans moved back and forth into the U.S. in the 1910s during the Mexican Revolution, in the 1930s during the U.S. economic depression, in the 1940s during World War II, in the 1950s during the Bracero program, and in the 1960s during post-war economic growth.

Always moving in cycles of relative “acceptance,” migrants move back and forth but only a minority manages to settle down in a foreign land.



José Luis Benítez, Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas (UCA), El Salvador.

According to a recent report by the Pew Hispanic Center, by sheer geographical circumstance, nearly two-thirds of Hispanics in the U.S. are of Mexican origin, followed by (according to population numbers) those of Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadoran, Dominican, Guatemalan, Colombian, Honduran, Ecuadorian and Peruvian origin.

This is why the largest concentration of Mexicans can be found along the U.S.-Mexico border, while Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Colombians, Venezuelans, and people from the Caribbean have settled along the U.S. east coast,

from Florida to New York. Central American and South American migrants have also moved all over the country, following family and friends.

Of course, there is no country in Latin America without representation in the U.S. But migration in the U.S. goes beyond those coming from Latin America. Geographic and economic factors, along with political upheaval and natural disasters, have brought migrants to the U.S. from nearly every corner of the globe.

According to 2010 figures from Mexican immigration officials, of the 69,903 arrests of undocumented migrants in transit on Mexican territory, 11,282 came from Africa, 1,047 were from Asia and 216 were from Europe. Mexico is a gateway into the U.S. for more than Latin American migrants, but these figures are rarely reported, giving news consumers the impression that all migrants “wear sombreros.”

Just as in the past, migration movements arise from the need of people to find better living conditions, and through sheer survival instinct they look for geographical areas that offer the path of least resistance. For decades, the Mexico-U.S. border has been that easiest point of access, although this seems to be rapidly changing.

## MIGRATION AND MEDIA COVERAGE

“Mass media play one of the most prominent roles in influencing the development of racist tendencies and prejudices,” said **José Luis Benítez**, a scholar from **Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas (UCA)** in El Salvador. Mainstream mass media often do not even enter into direct contact with migrants, all the while producing stories rife with negative undertones and stereotypes.

With reference to a recent analysis of media coverage of migration in El Salvador and other countries in Central America, **Benítez** explained that news coverage in his country has increased in recent years, but the content remains poor.

In Mexico, according to **Benítez**, 32 percent of stories about migration focused on “violence

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and public insecurity,” and about 30 percent on “migration policies.” The economy, culture and education added up to just 15 percent of stories, while health — a pressing issue for most migrants in transit — was barely more than 1 percent.

In Central America and Mexico, media coverage of migration centers on tragic and sensationalist issues. Migrants are shown to contribute to “a climate of social insecurity,” concluded **Benítez**.

## “This tendency to cover migration on a very superficial level omits pressing social aspects”

A subsequent panel about **Myths and Stereotypes** reached similar conclusions. **Julie López**, from **Plaza Pública News** in Guatemala, described the widely held belief that most migrants are *campesinos*, or fieldworkers, as they are generally known in the U.S. But recent migration trends show more Chinese and Indian citizens migrating to Central American countries, with the objective of “sneaking” into the U.S. These migrants can pay top dollar prices in comparison to what Central American migrants can afford.

This new migration influx has reinvigorated the industry of human trafficking, with ominous consequences, especially when the migrants try to cross Mexico.

“This tendency to cover migration on a very superficial level omits pressing social aspects,” said **Sister Leticia Gutiérrez** of **Human Mobility**, a migrant assistance organization linked to the Catholic Church.

“There is no in-depth coverage to help [people] to reflect,” added **Gutiérrez**. She said that media coverage fomented xenophobic sentiment, but overlooks abuses suffered by migrants — including those committed by authorities mandated to protect their rights.

“Look what happened in **San Fernando** (Tamaulipas),” said **Gutiérrez**. She was referring

to the August 2010 massacre of 72 migrants (most from Central America and 14 of whom were women) by members of a Mexican drug cartel.

She said that the Mexican government took months to identify the victims. The criminal investigation raised suspicions when authorities argued that the victims’ bodies were quickly decomposing; they urged families “not to open the caskets.” One Guatemalan family who decided not to comply discovered that the body received was that of a Brazilian victim, not their family member.

## Basic human rights for migrants are routinely ignored by Mexican authorities, mainly because the Mexican justice system as a whole is “a shambles”

U.S. media coverage of the San Fernando massacre was minimal: 30 seconds at the top of the hour, and coverage disappeared after 24 hours.

Mexican media, on the other hand, concentrated coverage on images of dead bodies piled inside of what looked like an abandoned barn miles away from **San Fernando**. The images, which traveled around the world, showed most of the victims with their hands tied. It was clear they had been executed at gunpoint.

“At the time of the discovery, access to the site of the tragedy was pretty limited, and only a handful of Mexican media outlets were able to get close,” said **Thelma Gómez Durán**, from the Mexican daily **El Universal**.

According to **Fabián Sánchez** from **I(DH)EAS**, basic human rights for migrants are routinely ignored by Mexican authorities, mainly because the Mexican justice system as a whole is “a shambles,” and authorities at all levels are not held accountable. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that victims lack access to adequate legal





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advice, and legal files are routinely incomplete or non-existent.



Sister Leticia Gutierrez, director of the Mexican bishops' human mobility ministry.

**I(DH)EAS'** interviews with Mexican detainees show that 93 percent of those interviewed have never been informed of their rights or had access to legal advice or representation. "Most had been detained for more than three months," **Sánchez** said. "Some didn't even have access to interpreters," he added, speaking of migrants not only from foreign countries, but even of some Mexican migrants with limited command of Spanish.

To boot, when Mexican journalists submit a request for information under the country's Freedom of Information Act, a response can take

months, if it is ever received.

Many regional newspapers and media outlets in addition largely depend on the income they receive from government advertisements, and it is not unusual for reporters to receive orders "not to cover" certain issues that might "not be appreciated" by government officials.

### NORTH, SOUTH, EAST AND WEST

The mass killing of migrants in San Fernando, Mexico, shone the spotlight on the harsh obstacles faced by thousands of migrants (mostly from Central America), on their way to the U.S. Some end up held hostage by gangs, others fall into the hands of "La Bestia" (the Beast — the cargo trains that many ride into the U.S.) or face extortion from Mexican authorities.

Wholly reliable numbers are not available, but some migrant organizations claim that 140,000 migrants from Central and South America make more than one attempt to get to the U.S. every year. Likely those that are killed, disappeared, or taken hostage number in the thousands.

The biggest hurdle for most migrants trying to get into the U.S. used to be crossing the *Rio Bravo*, since crossing Mexico boiled down to having enough money to bribe Mexican customs officers to get to the Mexico-U.S. border.

Recently, however, President Felipe Calderon's crusade against the drug cartels has forced criminal organizations to "diversify" and make up losses in the drug trade through kidnappings and extortions. It didn't take long for organized crime to realize that migrants were, and still are, easy prey.

Very few migrants traveling through a foreign country will dare report violations of their rights, as they fear deportation or falling victim to abuse by authorities. In more ways than one, they are often "between a rock and a hard place."

And the media rarely show migrants as exiles forced to seek a better life, but rather too often provide negative coverage.

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“Media tend to portray negative images of migrants, most often linking them to crime and violence,” said **Alejandro Delgado**, from the **Press Institute for Freedom of Expression (IPLEX)**, Costa Rica. By doing that, he says, “a lot of rights are violated.”

This perception is so pervasive that even the U.S., a country considered at the forefront of freedom of the press and freedom of speech, fails to correct these stereotypes.

According to a presentation made by **Summer Harlow**, from the **Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas**, 59 percent of stories published in the U.S. focus on the negative aspects of immigration.

“About one-third of stories on immigration present the issue as a problem,” she said. But her research also shows that 59 percent of the stories are based only on official sources: they contribute to the politicization of the issue as they report only the government’s perspective.

And how the issue is politicized depends on whether the country is a sender or a receiver, said **Carlos Chamorro** from **Confidencial**, Nicaragua.



Carlos Fernando Chamorro, director of the weekly *Confidencial*, Wesley Gibbings, president, Association of Caribbean Media Workers (ACM), and Leonarda Reyes, Executive Director of the Center for journalism and Public Ethics (CEPET).

**Chamorro** stated that in countries with weak economies, those seeking better lives tend to be portrayed by local media as “heroes,” or “fighters.”

But in the countries where they land, they are portrayed as “unemployed,” “illegal” and quite often as law-breakers that “steal” local jobs (they are willing to accept low wages without benefits).

**Chamorro**, citing unofficial figures, said there are about 11,333 claims of Central American migrants who have either been temporarily kidnapped or abused in Mexico. Most have been ignored by the authorities and the media.

One way to provide a more fair and balanced depiction is “to get to the (editorial) decision maker,” said **Julie López** of **Plaza Pública**,

## “We need to convince editors about the need to present a more human portrait of migrants”

“It is not enough to get reporters interested in an issue or a story. We need to convince editors about the need to present a more human portrait of migrants,” **López** said. “Journalists must be aware that they are for the most part opinion shapers. Therefore they have to take the responsibility of being objective and balanced,” **López** added.

## DOWN BELOW

Not all migrants heading north have the intention of crossing the *Rio Bravo*. Some are just looking to escape the violence within their own countries.

As the deceased Uruguayan poet and writer **Mario Benedetti** said, “El Sur también existe.” South America is no stranger to migration, and migrants there often suffer abuses with little or no attention from the media.

“There are 4 million people in Colombia who have been forced to migrate, either internally or externally,” said **María Teresa Ronderos**, from the online news site **Verdad Abierta**, which reports on the impact of violence and paramilitary movements in Colombia. “Most of them are poor,” **Ronderos** added.



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The displacement of people in Colombia is almost a daily event, said **Ronderos**. There are 117,000 Colombian nationals officially recognized as refugees and about 280,000 “in serious need of protection.”

**“There are 4 million people in Colombia who have been forced to migrate, either internally or externally”**

For 15 years migration coverage in Colombia has been dominated by the 4 million internally displaced. The story of these migrations has become so common that some editors view the coverage as banal. But regional media coverage and the use of caricatures and photos have been effective, and go beyond the banal. A recently enacted law will allow restoration of lands to those who lost them during the long years of conflict, and this provides **Verdad Abierta** and other media organizations “a new and exciting angle of coverage,” said **Ronderos**.



María Teresa Ronderos, director of *Verdad Abierta*.

**Ginna Morelo**, from the organization **Consejo de Redacción** and **El Meridiano** newspaper, also from Colombia, asserted that areas like Córdoba,

bordering the Caribbean Sea, are completely under the control of drug cartels and that gangs in their service roam and patrol the zone. They instill fear among those who resist cooperating.



Ginna Morelo Martínez, *Consejo de Redacción*.

“We are three journalists at **El Meridiano** who consistently — and with some success — have argued with our editors to keep forcibly displaced migrants on the agenda,” said **Morelo**. “From the mountains to the Caribbean Sea, coca goes out while arms come in,” declared **Morelo**. She added that the constant harassment of the population has forced thousands to move out to nearby towns and cities.

“The fields are emptying as workers leave. Agricultural production has fallen 68 percent,” added **Morelo**, as she showed some pictures of farm families begging in the street after being displaced.

Bordering Colombia is Venezuela, which has become involved with Colombia’s internal migrations. Human rights advocate **Luis Carlos Díaz**, from **Centro Gumila**, said that about 200,000 Colombians had opted to cross the mountainous terrain that separates both countries. Here, there is an open market of sorts, where Colombians and Venezuelans exchange goods back and forth at will. Migration back and forth between the border of Venezuela and Colombia is underreported, **Díaz** said.



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Luis Carlos Diaz, communication coordinator for Centro Gumilla.

Venezuela, said Diaz, was entering a polarizing political debate about the prospects of re-electing President Hugo Chávez. Under heavy Chávez control, most of the Venezuelan media have been forced to publish official, government information. Nevertheless, social discontent against Chavez's populist policies is growing.

**“What’s unknown or underreported is the exodus of educated people from Venezuela, due to insecurity and instability”**

“Inflation has grown to about 44 percent and violence is increasing,” said Venezuelan journalist **Frank López**, from the daily *El Universal*. **López** added that Chavez’s policies had forced thousands of professionals and business people to flee the country. “We call it the exodus of the educated,” he said.

“What’s unknown or underreported is the exodus of educated people from Venezuela, due to insecurity and instability, such as high suicide rates and high inflation. Most of these have gone to Florida. Around 95 percent speak English, and in the U.S. 75 percent are employed,” said **López**.

Things do not seem to be better on the west side of Ecuador. According to **Sandra Ochoa**, a

journalist from the newspaper *El Universo*, about 600,000 Ecuadorians have moved out, most of them to New York, Chicago, Miami and Los Angeles.

“About a similar amount have opted to move to Spain,” **Ochoa** said.

**600,000 Ecuadorians have moved out, most of them to New York, Chicago, Miami and Los Angeles.**

As for Brazil, according to **Mauri König**, a journalist from *Gazeta do Povo*, there are about 3 million Brazilians somewhere around the world — almost half in the U.S. — and more than two-thirds have expired visas, or are undocumented.

“In the U.S. alone there are about 1.5 million Brazilians,” said **König**. According to Brazil’s foreign ministry, there are 3,122,813 *brasileiros* dispersed around the world, two-thirds of them living abroad illegally.

Citing Wikileaks data released last year, **König** said the U.S. Department of State classified Brazilians’ requests for visas as “the good, the bad and the ugly.” The good are young educated professionals, the bad just want a visa to enter the country to look for any kind of job and the ugly are those who are willing to bribe their way in to the country.

But not all Brazilians opt to move far away from their homeland. **König** said that there are about 200,000 Brazilians living in Paraguay. That figure has multiplied since the original migrants from the 1960s and 1970s produced a second generation. This has led to social conflicts, sometimes violent, as Paraguayan nationals consider Brazilian migrants “invaders.”

And just as there are “brasiguayos,” there are also about 80,000 Paraguayan migrants living in Brazil. This mix, according to **König**, has led to a land conflict similar to the one experienced for decades between Israel and Palestine, “where





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both countries believe the other is slowly invading each other's land."



Mauri König, ABRAJI and *Gazeta do Povo*.

Conversely, *Última Hora*, a daily newspaper in Paraguay, has amplified the voices of 500,000 (mostly undocumented) Brazilians in Paraguay to promote national dialogue.

"As much as Paraguay is a source of migrants, it is also a receiver," said **Andres Colman**, from *Última Hora*. He added that more than half-a-million Paraguayans had moved to Argentina.

### "Bolivian media coverage of migration reflects the Bolivians' lack of hope about their country"

"Buenos Aires is now the capital of Paraguay," commented Colman, reflecting on the fact that Paraguayans are the largest migrant group in Argentina. This is mostly due to lack of employment opportunities at home, and there are now more Paraguayans living in Buenos Aires than in Asuncion, Paraguay's capital.

**Colman** said that *Última Hora* responded with comprehensive coverage of the topic, with stories on cultural comparisons, anti-racist pieces and an in-depth look at human trafficking. The last piece included collaboration with a Spanish NGO about Paraguayan prostitutes in Spain. Colman

added that he and a photographer spent a great deal of time chronicling the lives of Paraguayans in Buenos Aires, covering issues that the Argentinean press routinely ignored.

"I realized that their stories and their drama were being ignored by the Argentinean media, and yet, for us back home, their stories were important," **Colman** commented.

According to **Gabriel Michi**, from FOPEA, the Argentinean journalism forum, more than 800,000 Argentines have migrated, most of them to countries like Spain and the U.S., where about 300,000 are believed to have settled. Nonetheless, as many Argentines work to get out of their country, migrants from neighboring countries strive to get in.

"In general, Argentinean media coverage of migration is weak and riddled with stereotypes. Bolivians experience the most discrimination due to their darker skin color, followed by Paraguayans," said **Michi**. To prove his point, he presented a series of newspaper headlines from Argentina, with one in particular proclaiming the "arrest of three criminals and one Bolivian."

In Argentina, according to **Michi**, remittances amount to about \$1 billion (U.S.). In El Salvador, according to the latest report from the U.S. Department of State, remittances in 2010 were about \$3.5 billion, or close to 18 percent of El Salvador's GDP.

### "In general, Argentinean media coverage of migration is weak and riddled with stereotypes. Bolivians experience the most discrimination due to their darker skin color, followed by Paraguayans"

In **Bolivia**, according to **Raúl Peñaranda** from the publication *Página 7*, the phenomenon of

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migration has existed for centuries.

**Peñaranda** pointed out that more than 25 percent of Bolivia's population had opted to emigrate, most of them for economic reasons. The majority has gone to the U.S.

"In this regard we have the same problem as other countries and also similar prejudices toward foreigners," added **Peñaranda**. He said that Bolivia is a host and a source of migration, and that more than half-a-million Bolivians had fled to Argentina.

"Bolivian media coverage of migration reflects the Bolivians' lack of hope about their country. Nearly half of Bolivians say they would leave if they could, and 25 percent already live abroad," said **Peñaranda**. Bolivian remittances are also much larger percentage-wise compared to other South American countries.



Raúl Peñaranda, Director of *Página Siete*, in Bolivia.

In Chile, according to **Silvia Viñas** from **Global Voices**, about 800,000 Chileans have moved out of the country, the majority during the coup d'état of the 1970s. **Viñas** said that since then, many Chileans have opted to return, but the country is also a host of incoming migration.

"We have about 300,000 migrants, 60 percent of whom are women, and most are from Peru," added **Viñas**.

"There is little coverage of migration to Chile. Citizen journalism does some migration coverage,

and social media networks have contributed some coverage of human rights abuses related to migration," said **Viñas**. But the issue is largely ignored.

## THE CARIBBEAN — THE BEGINNING

When it comes to discussing migration movements in Latin America, everything began in the Caribbean.

The discovery of the "new world" by Christopher Columbus in 1492 opened the door to the biggest migration movement of the past 500 years.



María Isabel Soldevila, Editor-in-Chief at *Listin Diario* and Wesley Gibbings, president, Association of Caribbean Media Workers (ACM).

Within decades, migrants from all over Europe and Africa — many of them brought by force — began to populate what is now known as Latin America. By the 1800s, the U.S., already a powerhouse in the hemisphere, sought to secure the Caribbean as a strategic zone for national security and commercial purposes, and set up a military presence in Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico.

## Caribbean Migration

Two centuries later, citizens from these islands constitute the bulk of migrants from the Caribbean living in the U.S.

In an ironic turn around that has been repeated all over Latin America, "the conqueror" began to





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be conquered. According to recent numbers from the Pew Hispanic Center and the U.S. Census Bureau, there are more Puerto Ricans living in the U.S. at present — 4.6 million — than Puerto Ricans living in their native country.

Cuba, with a population of about 11 million, has about 1.7 million nationals permanently residing or exiled in the U.S.

The Dominican Republic, with almost 10 million citizens, has about 1.4 million people living in the U.S. Jamaica, with about 2.8 million citizens, has more than half-a-million in the U.S. Haiti, ravaged in 2010 by an earthquake that killed more than 200,000 people, has more than 1.2 million Haitians living mostly in the U.S., Cuba, Canada and the Bahamas. Another million Haitians live in the Dominican Republic, where several recent reports from the United Nations revealed pervasive racism against blacks, specifically Haitians.

Just days after the earthquake, President Barack Obama's administration granted temporary protection status for about 200,000 undocumented Haitians living in the U.S., and Canada announced similar measures.

**The Dominican Republic is largely “institutionalized,” meaning that Media outlets use the government as their source almost exclusively.**

María Isabel Soldevila, from *Listin Diario*, explained that the migration discussion in the Dominican Republic is largely “institutionalized,” meaning that Media outlets use the government as their source almost exclusively when it comes to informing about Haitian migration, which gives a partial and incomplete view of the situation, especially when the more conservative and nationalist sectors are the ones directing

the institutions linked to Migration and Exterior Relations in the government. A similar practice exists in many other Latin American countries. Prejudice is routinely manifested not only against migrants from other Caribbean countries, but also against migrants within the country. There has been an increase in women moving from the countryside to urban centers, like the capital Santo Domingo. They leave behind their children in the care of family members.

**Gotson Pierre**, from *AlterPresse* in Haiti, pointed out that outside migration is altering the culture and language of a country where Creole and French are the official languages. “The vast majority of outside migrants come from the Dominican Republic, therefore more people living in the countryside now speak Spanish,” said **Pierre**.



Gotson Pierre, Editor of *AlterPresse* and Colette Lespinasse, director of the **Support Group for the Repatriated and Refugees** in Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

“We live back-to-back on the same island, but each of us lives his own reality,” added **Colette Lespinasse**, director of the **Support Group for the Repatriated and Refugees** in Port-au-Prince,



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Haiti.

## THE OLD COLOSSUS



Photo by Iván Lara

*"Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to  
breathe free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming  
shore.  
Send these, the homeless, tempest-  
tost to me,  
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"*

**Emma Lazarus, 1883**

("The New Colossus" is a poem  
engraved on bronze at the pedestal of  
the Statue of Liberty.)

social and political upheaval, the U.S. has ceased being "the golden door" it once was for migrants and become a fenced country, with electronic sensors, radar and unmanned aircraft patrolling the U.S.-Mexico border. Individual states have also started passing legislation, which has made life more difficult for documented and undocumented migrants.

"U.S. federal authorities only think of migrants as criminals," said **Julián Aguilar**, from the **Texas Tribune**.

The politics of migration has become a hot topic in the U.S. President Obama, who led his 2008 election campaign with repeated promises to back migration reform and ease deportation policies, has sent home more than 1 million migrants, according to **Néstor Rodríguez, Ph.D.**, a professor in the **Sociology Department at The University of Texas at Austin**. About half of these migrants have been sent home in the last year, more than the number of deportations during the two terms of former President George W. Bush.

"There have been over 1 million deportations since January 2009. These have greatly increased since the arrival of the Obama administration, and anti-migration laws are increasingly passed at the local and state levels," said **Oscar Chacón**, from the **National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities (NALACC)**. In response, NALACC has developed "Somos," a campaign to highlight the importance and the contribution of migrant communities in the U.S.

**Rodríguez** added that, paradoxically, more deportations mean a greater public cost.

According to a presentation made during a U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee hearing in January 2011, arresting, processing and finally deporting a migrant costs the federal government about \$12,500. This fee does not include the subsequent costs to the government, such as placing children in Child Protective Services if their parents have been deported.

Next, a panel addressed the political climate of migration in the U.S. In the midst of economic,





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Apparently, the federal government had to spend about \$5 billion to deport 393,000 migrants. The government estimates that there are about 11 million people in the country without proper documentation. Were the U.S. to deport all of them, it would cost nearly \$140 billion.

"Some local communities appreciate the detention centers because they create jobs," said **Rodríguez**. "Still," he added, "it's a myth that most migrants are criminals. Studies show that only 20 percent have ever committed a crime, but fear about deportation is increasing among Latinos."



María Sacchetti, *The Boston Globe*.

Obama is facing a re-election battle and the reaction of Latino voters during the next presidential election remains to be seen. Pollsters

and political pundits seriously doubt whether Obama can garner the 67 percent of Latino votes he received in 2008. Even Republicans, traditionally against migration, are paying close attention to the political inclinations of those non-native U.S. citizens able to vote.

"The current immigration climate is polarized to the extent that there is no dialogue" said **María Sacchetti**, a reporter for *The Boston Globe*. "The only place people truly exchange their views is in the pages of our newspaper, and I talk to 10-20 people for every story I write in order to provide as much balance as I can," she added.

Nationalism is on the rise and will probably increase as the world economic crisis worsens. The U.S., Spain, France, Australia, Canada and many other countries that a decade ago used to "ignore" the presence of migrants now complain about their presence. Many argue that migrants represent a social expense instead of a benefit, and they demand strict migration laws which reward migrants with financial and intellectual capital, and to punish all others.

### BEYOND EXCELLENCE

The news media industry is suffering financially, but journalists are still pursuing their quest with passion. Their resources are scarce, their jobs are more dangerous, but their commitment and creativity are alive and well as they keep searching for answers.

"My name is **Carlos Dada**, and I had the difficult job of saying yes," said the Executive Editor of *El Faro*, a multimedia journalist enterprise from El Salvador. He was talking about an award winning documentary film, *María en Tierra de Nadie*, or *María in No One's Land*. It was produced by *El Faro* as part of a larger journalistic migration project entitled *En El Camino*, or *On the Road*.

**Dada's** opening statement represents a decision about a complex project that required time, money and a great deal of safety precautions for the reporters, photographers and supporting crew. For **Dada**, and any other executive producer willing to say "yes" to projects

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like these, it means countless sleepless nights, anxious phone calls, and most of all, raising the money and finding the resources to complete the project.

Doing good journalism has always been expensive, but in a period of shrinking editorial budgets a “yes” to a project can easily put a media outlet in the red. Or in the spotlight.



Carlos Dada, Director of *El Faro*.

When **Dada** said “yes” to the documentary project *María en Tierra de Nadie*, he was walking the editor’s wire in which journalistic instinct and belief had to be weighed against the harsh realities of money and time.

“You need to spend a lot of time on the various aspects of migration in order to best cover its multiple dimensions. Further, editorial support on migration issues is crucial because teamwork is needed, and security for journalists is paramount,” said **Dada**. He added that it is too dangerous to conduct in-depth work on migration without the full backing of the home media organization.

*María en Tierra de Nadie* is a documentary about two Central American women — one from Guatemala and one from El Salvador — who were kidnapped in 2009 while traveling in the cargo train from Tenosique, Tabasco, to Coatzacoalcas, Veracruz. They were kept for four months by a faction of the Zetas cartel, inside a house containing other hostages. The house was just a few blocks from the railroad tracks. One

of the women was forced to work as a cook for the criminals, and the leader of the gang kept the other as a personal sex slave.

During their ordeal they witnessed the torture and execution of migrants whose families couldn’t pay the ransoms — between \$500 and \$5,000. The women miraculously escaped just before Mexican soldiers launched a rescue operation, thanks to an alert received from one of the gang members. The women were later called upon by Mexican authorities as witnesses against the kidnappers.

**“You need to spend a lot of time on the various aspects of migration in order to best cover its multiple dimensions. Further, editorial support on migration issues is crucial”**

It took nearly 14 months to make the film; four months alone were devoted to filming. The documentary cost \$100,000. **Ruido Photo**, a documentary producer from Spain, collaborated, and **I(DH)EAS** provided support.

Fortunately for **Dada** and his team, the project was a success and won awards at the Icaro Central American Film Festival and the International Film Festival of Human Rights in Mexico. Yet, notwithstanding high quality content, not all journalistic projects are successful or help editors or producers to get funding for additional projects.

“Above and beyond the awards, we are still waiting to see if the success of the project will allow us to continue with other similar ones,” said **Oscar Martínez**, the journalist in charge of the reporting. “The whole project included 24 stories and photo documentaries, one book (*Los migrantes que no importan*, Icaria 2010) and a photo album (*En el Camino*, Blume 2010). All of these have been an indispensable tool for Mexican human rights organizations, the Mexican



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Human Rights Commission and the Mexican Congress in their debates about the violations of Central American and Mexican migrant rights.”



Oscar Martínez, *El Faro*.

Another project that proves good journalism is alive and well in the Americas was presented by **Thelma Gómez Duran**, a journalist from the Mexican national daily ***El Universal***. This one was about the San Fernando, Tamaulipas massacre. This project was conceived and launched by renowned Mexican journalist **Alma Guillermoprieto** as a way to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the August 23, 2010, execution of 72 migrants. The project, 72migrantes.com, is a joint collaboration of more than 70 journalists, writers and Mexican opinion makers, along with several Mexican photographers and graphic designers.

The Web page has an impeccable design, excellent photos and very compelling stories about nearly all of the victims. The site also

requests donations for the organization **Hermanos en el Camino**, which manages a network of migrant shelters in several states in Mexico. These shelters are located along the “Death Road,” which runs across the states of Veracruz and Tamaulipas, and through San Fernando itself.

The site has had so much success that ***El Universal*** decided to print two full pages (an unusual undertaking for most newspapers these days) upon the anniversary of the tragedy. The pages contained details of the crimes, updates of the authorities’ investigations — which so far have failed to bring any perpetrator to justice — and reactions of some of the victims’ families.

**Zuha Kafati**, a Honduran journalist, presented ***Departamento 19***, a Web page on migration issues and the constant struggle of Honduran migrants. The name of the electronic publication stems from the fact that Honduras has only 18 departments, or counties, but the migration of her compatriots has expanded throughout the years to ostensibly create another Honduran county outside the country. In the U.S., that is.

“There are more than 1.5 million Hondurans living in the U.S.,” said **Kafati**. “Due to poor circumstances in-country, Hondurans keep on trying to migrate. More than 75 percent of them have been caught as they try to cross Mexico, and the whereabouts of quite a few remain unknown.” departamento19.hn contains information about migration (both in Honduras and the U.S.), and also information about the country’s economy, sports and other topics. The site is a reference of the media in this country, and serves as a wake-up call so that the government as well as other media outlets become interested in the topic; Departamento19 conducts humanitarian interviews, which help bring to life the sad reality of its fellow citizens, who suffer mutilations, kidnappings and persecution during their migration to the United States.

The Verdadabierta.com site in Colombia, founded in 2008, covers migration, concentrating on the paramilitary forces still operational in the country. A joint project of **Fundación Ideas para**



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**la Paz** (**FIP**, or Ideas for Peace Foundation) and the independent Colombian Magazine **SEMANA**, it aims to expose facts about the armed conflict that has affected Colombia for several decades.

“About 4 million people have been forced to migrate,” said **María Teresa Ronderos**, a member of **Verdad Abierta**. “The vast majority of them are poor and invisible.”

**Donna DeCesare**, from the **University of Texas at Austin**, presented her photo project **Destiny's Children** containing graphic pictures of the spread of U.S. gang culture to Central America. **DeCesare** has documented through her photographs the life of many young undocumented migrants deported back to Central America and the ways in which they have transported gang culture back to their home countries. She has won national and international awards, including an Alfred Eistendstadt magazine photography award (2000), a Canon photo essay award and a Picture of the Year award (2000). In 2002, she was awarded a top prize in the NPPA Best of Photojournalism contest for her photo-essay on Colombia published by *Crimes of War*.

DeCesare called her project “a work in progress.” Most of it can be seen at <http://www.destinyschildren.org/>.

## ETHNIC MEDIA IN THE UNITED STATES

While mainstream media struggle for ratings and readers, ethnic media are growing audiences in the U.S. and worldwide as more and more people migrate across borders. This prompts consideration of a new term befitting ethnic media's cosmopolitan reach: global diaspora media.

According to the most recent U.S. census, there are close to 312 million people living in the United States. Findings from some independent studies show that about 50 million people above the age of five speak some other language at home besides English, and read and consume information in their native tongue.

In TV lingo, that's more than twice the audience of *Two and a Half Men* (CBS), which has an estimated viewership of 20 million across the nation. This figure represents almost three times the regular viewers of NFL's regular season, almost five times the viewers of ESPN programming, and 10 times the most popular Spanish soap opera from Univision, *Teresa*.

But there is a catch — those 50 million are divided into about 30 languages. More than half speak Spanish, while around 10 percent are from Asia; the rest are from all over the world. It is difficult to find an exact count of how many ethnic media news outlets are currently active in the U.S., but those registered with New America Media amount to more than 3,000, providing news, information and entertainment to almost 60 million ethnic adults — one out of four adults in the U.S.

“How could I do justice to such landscape?” said **Sandy Close**, Executive Editor of **New America Media (NAM)**, which she founded in 1996 as a project of the nonprofit Pacific News Service. “From Kurdish media in Nashville to Filipino media in Alaska, Bosnian media in St. Louis, Nigerian media in Houston, Korean media in Atlanta, Venezuelan media in Miami, and Oaxacan media in Los Angeles, these are the media serving our new global society and they want to connect, be visible, exchange content and break out of their ethnic silos.”

## “Ethnic media show us what it means to be inclusive in a global age”

“We — referring to ethnic media — are building a new community of media and the news axis is anything but insular or parochial. It's cosmopolitan, at the tip of the global-local news curve, connecting the home country to the neighborhood, serving diaspora populations not just in the U.S. but all over the world,” she said.

“Ethnic media show us what it means to be inclusive in a global age,” Close added, as she explained NAM's vision of information exchange across cultural and socio-economic divides.





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Today NAM acts almost like an Associated Press of ethnic media, translating and aggregating content from dozens of leading international and English-language newspapers and journals, and producing original multi-media content tailored to ethnic media audiences. NAM also serves as a trade association for ethnic news organizations, providing professional training, news briefings, awards and fellowships. It further operates a social marketing arm, steering ad dollars for public awareness campaigns that its ethnic media partners help plan and implement.

In spite of the recession, as mainstream newsrooms downsize, Close suggested that ethnic media are growing more indispensable to their audiences than ever.

“What is ethnic media doing right?” **Close** asked. “For centuries it survived by serving the needs of audiences that mainstream news media couldn’t or wouldn’t reach. It chronicled the intimate life and amplified the voices of those populations, even as mainstream news organizations lost touch with their own audiences.”

But ethnic media now must reach outside of their silos if they are to keep pace with the multi-ethnic, multi-racial complexity of those in their audiences. “We’re all challenged with building inclusive journalism for a global age,” Close concluded. Ethnic media offer a prophetic voice — hyper-local but global, intimate but cosmopolitan. Perhaps it is time to change the word “ethnic” to “diasporic” media.



Sandy Close, Executive Editor and Director of New America Media.

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## PARTICIPANTS LIST

Gabriel Michi	Foro del Periodismo Argentino
Raul Penaranda	<i>Pagina Siete</i> , Bolivia
Mauri Konig	ABRAJI and <i>Gazeta do Povo</i> , Brazil
Silvia Viñas	<i>Global Voices</i> , Chile
Ginna Morelo Martínez	Consejo de Redacción, Colombia
Paola Valderrama	FNPI, Colombia
María Teresa Ronderos	<i>Verdad Abierta</i> , Colombia
Daniel Gonzalez	AVINA Foundation, Colombia
Alejandro Delgado Faith	IPLEX, Costa Rica
Maria Soldevilla	Listin Diario, Dominica Republic
Sandra Ochoa	<i>El Universo</i> , Ecuador
Carlos Dada	<i>El Faro</i> , El Salvador
Jose Luis Benitez	UCA, El Salvador
Óscar Martínez	<i>El Faro</i> , El Salvador
Julie López	<i>Plaza Pública</i> , Guatemala
Colette Les Pinasse	Support Group for the Repatriated and Refugees, Haiti
Gotson Pierre	<i>Alterpresse</i> , Haiti
Maude Malengrez	FOKAL/OSF, Haiti
Zuha Kafati	<i>Departamento 19</i> , Honduras
Manuel Torres	UTV, Honduras
Ana Arana	Fundación MEPI, Mexico
Fabian Sanchez	IDHEAS, Mexico
Leonarda Reyes	CEPET, Mexico
Thelma Gomez Duran	<i>El Universal</i> , Mexico
Jose Luiz Sierra	New America Media, USA
Leticia Gutierrez	Movilidad Humana, México
Maria Elena Meneses	Fundación MEPI, Mexico
Carlos Chamorro	<i>Confidencial</i> , Nicaragua
Andres Colman	Foro de los Periodistas del Paraguay
Carlos Cardenas	Red TV, Peru
Wesley Gibbings	ACM, Trinidad & Tobago
Jane McElhone	OSF Media Program
Marie Struthers	OSF Media Program
David Holiday	OSF Latin America Program

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Cecilia Alvear  
Charles Hale  
Donna DeCesare  
Luis Botello  
Sandy Close  
Cecilia Balli  
Nestor Rodriguez  
Summer Harlow  
Nuri Vallbona  
J. Ian Tennant  
Rosental Alves  
Naomi Spitz  
Julian Aguilar  
Oscar Chacon  
Maria Sacchetti  
Irma Herrera  
Luis Carlos Diaz  
Frank Lopez Ballesteros  
Carolina Jimenez

NAHJ/UNITY, USA  
UT Austin/Latin American Institute  
UT Austin/School of Journalism  
ICFJ, USA  
New America Media, USA  
UT Austin/Anthropology  
UT Austin/Sociology  
Knight Center  
Knight Center  
Knight Center  
Knight Center  
OSF Int'l Migration Initiative  
Texas Tribune, USA  
NALACC, USA  
*Boston Globe*, USA  
New America Media, USA  
Centro Gumilla, Venezuela  
*El Universal*, Venezuela  
OSF Latin America Program

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## **PROGRAM**

### 9th Austin Forum on Journalism in the Americas: Media Coverage of Migration in the Americas

Organized by the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas  
and the Latin American and Media Programs of the Open Society Foundations

September 8-10, 2011

#### Thursday, Sept. 8 (Panel for UT students)

6:00-7:30pm: **Covering International Migration in Central and North America**, a panel discussion  
Chair: Professor Charles Hale, director of the Lozano Long Institute of Latin American  
Studies, UT Austin

- Julián Aguilar, Texas Tribune, USA
- Cecilia Alvear, National Association of Hispanic Journalists and UNITY Journalists of Color, USA
- Oscar Chacón, National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities, USA
- Fabián Sánchez, ID(HE)AS, strategic litigation for Central Americans in Mexico
- Jose Luis Sierra, New America Media, USA

#### Friday, Sept. 9

8:45-9:00am: **Welcome session**

- Glenn Frankel, director, School of Journalism, UT Austin
- Rosental Alves, Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas



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- Marie Struthers, Open Society Foundations' Media Program
- David Holiday, Open Society Foundations' Latin American Program

9:00-9:45am: **International migration and the media in the Americas**

Keynote speaker: José Luis Benítez, Universidad Centroamericana José Simeón Cañas (UCA), El Salvador

9:45-11:00am: **Challenges of covering migration beyond myths and stereotypes**

Moderator: Rosental Calmon Alves, Knight Center

- Ana Arana, Fundación MEPI, Mexico
- Carlos Fernando Chamorro, Confidencial, Nicaragua
- Summer Harlow, Knight Center, USA
- Alejandro Delgado Faith, IPLEX, Costa Rica
- Sister Leticia Gutierrez, Movilidad Humana, Mexico
- Julie López, Plaza Pública, Guatemala

11:00-11:15am: Break

11:15am-12:30pm: **South America's Southern Cone migrations and the media**

Moderator: Daniel González, AVINA Foundation

- Andrés Colman, FOPEP and Última Hora, Paraguay
- Mauri Konig, ABRAJI and Gazeta do Povo, Brazil
- Gabriel Michi, FOPEA, Argentina
- Raul Peñaranda. Página Siete, Bolivia

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- Silvia Viñas, Global Voices, Chile

12:30-1:30pm: Lunch

1:30-2:15pm: **Mexico's own immigration problems: the dangerous cross between Central America and the United States**

Keynote speaker: Fabián Sánchez, I(DH)EAS, strategic litigation for Central Americans in Mexico

2:15-3:45pm: **Innovative initiatives in the coverage of international migration**

Moderator: Marie Struthers, OSF Media Program

- Carlos Dada and Oscar Martinez, El Faro, El Salvador
- Donna DeCesare, Destiny's Children, UT Austin, USA
- Thelma Gómez Durán, 72Migrantes and El Universal, Mexico
- Zuha Katafi, Departamento19.hn, Honduras

3:45-4:00pm: Break

4:00-5:30pm: **South America's Northern Cone migrants: escaping from violence and political and economic ordeals**

Moderator: Carolina Jimenez, OSF Latin American Program

- Luis Carlos Diaz, Centro Gumila, Venezuela
- Frank López, El Universal, Venezuela
- Ginna Morelo, Consejo de Redacción and El Meridiano, Colombia
- Sandra Ochoa, El Universo, Ecuador
- Maria Teresa Ronderos, Verdad Abierta, Colombia

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## Saturday, Sept. 10 (by invitation only)

At the LBJ Conference Room, College of Communication CMA building, 5<sup>th</sup> floor

### 9:00-10:30am: **The Caribbean migration**

Moderator: Jane McElhone, OSF Media Program

- Wesley Gibbings, Association of Caribbean Media Workers, Trinidad and Tobago
- Colette Lespinasse, radio host, Haiti
- Gotson Pierre, Alterpresse, Haiti
- María Isabel Soldevila, Listín Diario & Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra, Dominican Republic

10:15-10:30am: Break

### 10:30-11:15am: **Ethnic media: The voice of migrants in the United States**

Keynote speaker: Sandy Close, New America Media, USA

### 11:15am-12:30pm: **Immigration environment in the United States: From reform to the wave of deportations**

Moderator: Luis Botello, International Center for Journalists

- Julián Aguilar, Texas Tribune, USA
- Cecilia Alvear, National Association of Hispanic Journalists and UNITY Journalists of Color, USA
- Oscar Chacón, National Alliance of Latin American and Caribbean Communities, USA
- Nestor Rodriguez, Department of Sociology, UT Austin, USA
- Maria Sacchetti, Boston Globe, USA

12:15-1:30pm: Lunch — the working group conversations starts here



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1:30-2:45pm: Breakout sessions: **Working groups on recommendations to improve the quality of coverage of international migrations in the Americas**

1. Mexico
2. Central America
3. South America
4. Caribbean
5. United States

2:45-3:00pm: Coffee break

3:00-4:30pm: **Working group presentations and discussions**

Moderator: Rosental Calmon Alves, Knight Center

1. Mexico, Leonarda Reyes, CEPET
2. Central America, Carlos Fernando Chamorro, Confidencial
3. South America, Carlos Cárdenas, Red TV
4. Caribbean, Wesley Gibbings, ACM
5. United States, Cecilia Balli, Texas Monthly/UT Austin

4:30-5:00pm: **Rapporteur's highlights and final discussions**

- Jose Luis Sierra, New America Media

