



**NEWS**  
RELEASE

# MERCY CORPS CALLS FOR THE PROTECTION OF RIGHTS OF MIGRANTS IN THE CENTRAL AMERICAN CARAVAN

## Statement by Neal Keny-Guyer, Chief Executive Officer

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### ABOUT MERCY CORPS

- Leading global organization powered by the belief that a better world is possible
- Empowering people to survive through crisis, build better lives and transform their communities for good
- Meeting the urgent needs of today through emergency response and disaster preparedness
- Building a stronger tomorrow by connecting people to the resources they need to strengthen their community from within
- About 5,000 team members reaching nearly 22 million people
- \$436.6 million total operating revenue in FY2017; 87% channeled directly into programs in more than 40 countries

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WASHINGTON – The global organization [Mercy Corps](http://mercy Corps.org) urges the governments of Mexico, Guatemala and the United States to protect the estimated 7,000 Honduran migrants traveling in a caravan through Guatemala and Mexico toward the United States, in line with key principles of international human rights.

The people traveling in this caravan are fleeing from systemic risks: gang activity, murder, domestic violence, theft, drugs, corruption, climate change, hunger, poverty and a lack of education and opportunity. The right to migrate is enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and it is imperative that governments commit to basic principles of decency in how migrants are treated. This includes processing asylum claims in a timely manner and providing humanitarian assistance and protection support for vulnerable families and children on the move through unfamiliar and often dangerous areas. If people are returned to Honduras, it must be safe, secure and with respect to the principles of non-refoulement. No one should be forced to return fearing threats to safety.

Over the past few years, the U.S. government has designed smart, effective foreign assistance programs to help the people of Central America address the root causes of migration – particularly economic and physical insecurity. Threats to withhold funding for these programs is counterproductive. Ending this assistance will hurt community-led efforts to build safer and more prosperous living conditions for the people most inclined to migrate. Humanitarian and development aid should never be used as a political bargaining chip.

If we truly want to curb Central American migration, we must address the root causes forcing people to leave their homes in search of safety and opportunity elsewhere. Continued investment to promote good governance, economic prosperity and improved security in Central America is the only way forward.