



**World Social Forum - Tunis 2013**

***Al Karama***

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**World Assembly of Migrants, Associations from  
Migrations and Solidarity Associations**

## **Migrants, citizens of the twenty-first century: resist, dare, propose**

Today, throughout the world, many States are leading a true war on migrants. This combat has already cost the lives of thousands of people on the move, who have lived and continue to live human dramas, both at national borders and in receiving societies and transit communities. These “massacres” are largely attributed to the dehumanized and rational strategies undertaken by States against migrants and migration phenomena in general, the magnitude and intensity of which have increased in recent decades with the process of globalization. In the end, the migrants’ fate in store by immigration policies is synonymous with exclusion, death, detention and denial of fundamental human rights. In turn, the crisis of the neoliberal system adds a new level of precariousness to the situation of migrants by directly affecting the most vulnerable sectors of society.

The poverty in which a large majority of people on the move is immersed gives us further evidence of the inability of the existing social and political order to meet the new needs of humanity. North-South inequalities are growing, as well as the inequalities within countries between the rich and the poor. Many fundamentals of the system are being challenged, giving rise to the mobilization of thousands of people around the values of dignity, social and environmental justice, and the freedom to move and settle. New experiences, organizations and networks of resistance emerge and struggle daily to invent new social relations at local and regional level. But we know that the seriousness of the situation requires even more communications, exchanges, debates and unity between the networks and associations, in terms of claims, contents and forms of action.

As pointed out in our discussions during the Assembly on Migration, this migration crisis requires us first of all to resist so that we can transform a migration order we consider at once outrageous, unsustainable and intolerable. It also requires us to transform ourselves, to assume ourselves as migrants and citizens, full holders of rights, values and new identities, to engage in the uncertain adventure of the twenty-first century alongside other actors building with the same determination new responses to the ethical, cultural, social and political crises of our time. This is why it has now become equally necessary for migrants to relate, propose, dare and take initiatives.

## **The Installation of the Debate in Social Forums**

Migration issues have naturally taken an increasing role in the activities of social forums, whether local, regional or international. The World Social Forum 2013, held in Tunis from 26 to 30 March 2013, was a high point for addressing these issues. Hundreds of networks and associations acting in the world of human mobility and solidarity to migrants attended.

The space created by social forums is also a favorable framework to address the migration issues in a cross-link with other experiences and themes. This cross-cutting approach is particularly in the line to imagine global dynamics that can make visible, articulate and change the balance of power in favor of the legitimacy of human mobility and migrants.

In this context, the organization of a “World Assembly of Migrants, Associations from Migrations and Solidarity Associations” at the World Social Forum in Tunis was a new stage of articulation and convergence.

## **Process and Preparatory Works for the Assembly**

The call for the establishment of a “World Assembly of Migrants, Associations from Migrations and Solidarity Associations” was originally launched by a small group who wrote a first call for the organization of this assembly. The call, supported by over one hundred organizations, constituted a basis for discussion to be expanded around a participatory process.

In this respect, three preparatory meetings were held prior to the Assembly, on March 25, 27 and 28, 2013. These meetings were attended by 50 organization representatives. They provided an opportunity to discuss the aims and objectives of the proposal, as well as its practical organization and expansion.

The following were the points of consensus that emerged about the aims and objectives of this process (in particular the meeting of March 27):

- Agreement shared by all participants on the proposed process given the experienced need for convergence;
- The Assembly is primarily seen as an instrument/process and not as a new organization or structure;
- Importance of strengthening the existing transnational collaboration processes;
- Importance of strengthening the exchanges between organizations, whatever their size;
- Importance of taking into consideration previous experiences (e.g. the process of the World Charter of Migrants by maximizing its dissemination) and current dynamics;
- The Assembly is seen as an instrument to expand collaborations;
- The process/platform will be built from the conclusions of the workshops of the WSF 2013;
- A positive opinion is expressed on the proposal to build a website as a tool available to associations and organizations;
- This network could also support situations of alert and emergencies;
- Migration is a cross-cutting issue that refers to the importance of integrating it into the anti-globalization approach and the fights against neoliberalism.

The methodology of the Assembly was also discussed at the same meeting on March 27. It was collectively decided to present all of the conclusions and recommendations of the workshops grouped around thematic axes:

1. Fundamental rights;
2. Migration policies;
3. Forced migrations;
4. Freedom of movement and settlement for all;
5. Racism and discrimination;
6. Migration and the media;
7. Financial crisis, employment and migrations;
8. Women and migrations;
9. Migrant as an actor.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS OF MIGRATION WORKSHOPS OF WSF 2013**

### **1. *Fundamental Rights***

Despite the commitments made by States to promote the respect for human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international legal instruments, many States continue to commit serious human rights violations against migrants. This is why we demand:

- a. Promotion of Art.13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- b. Compliance with the duty to rescue persons at sea: Art. 98 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.
- c. Respect of the principle of non-refoulement: Art.33 of the Geneva Convention.
- d. Promotion of unconditional (irrespective of immigration status) and effective (translations) access of migrants to health care. Especially the elderly.
- e. Promotion of unconditional and effective access of migrants to justice.
- f. Right of citizenship (JUS SOLIS).
- g. Right to vote.
- h. The ratification and implementation of the United Nations Convention for the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

## 2. **Migration Policies**

The non-respect of fundamental rights is one of the consequences of increasingly restrictive and repressive migration policies. In this context, we denounce the criminalization and sidelining of foreigners and the violation of their rights. We also demand:

- a. Stopping the use of imprisonment of foreigners as tools for managing migrations.
- b. Closure of places of detention, regardless of their nature.
- c. The annulment of the FRONTEX Regulation as contrary to the fundamental rights of migrants.

In the meantime we demand:

- i. Transparency regarding the activities and practices of the Frontex agency;
- ii. Clearly defined responsibilities between the Agency, the agents and the States;
- iii. Respect and protection of fundamental rights by the Agency.

## 3. **Forced Migrations**

Population displacements triggered by the degradation of the environment are not new. But human activity in recent years has led to a proliferation of environmental disasters, and more and more people are forced to leave their places of residence. Today there is no effective protection for these persons. This is why we demand:

- a. The development of a treaty of human rights of climate migrants applicable and recognized worldwide and legally binding.

Even for those who fled due to conflicts and for which there is an international legal framework of protection, this right is increasingly trampled upon by States. A good example of these violations are the refugees of the **Choucha Camp** who fled the war in Libya in 2011 and may be left to fall back on their own resources without any lasting solution (this claim is found in *Annex 1*).

## 4. **Freedom of Movement and Settlement for All**

The neoliberal globalization has opened the borders to capitals and goods and these same borders become increasingly tight for the movement of people. Human beings everywhere are deprived of the full enjoyment of their right to freedom of movement and settlement on our planet, a major claim today in the social forums after the final declaration of the World Social Forum held in Dakar in 2011.

We recall that the freedom of movement and settlement is not a utopia. Examples of areas of free movement and settlement already exist at the continental level (e.g. ECOWAS and UNASUR). It is thus necessary to make sure that the gains are applied and the impact of closure policies is prevented. We also call for:

- a. The promotion of the migrants' participation in social forums, especially the undocumented.
- b. Informing migrants about their rights.
- c. Awareness of the customs and border staff.
- d. States to take their responsibilities and enforce the laws establishing free movement.
- e. Strengthening the networks between organizations as well as concrete initiatives for freedom of movement and settlement, such as:
  - i. Specific campaigns:
    1. ECOWAS campaign for the African space;
    2. Campaign "Organization for Universal Citizenship" at the global level with the development of a universal citizenship passport and the organization of a United Nations conference on global freedom of movement and settlement of persons;
    3. Instruments for the international monitoring of violations of migrants' human rights: "Watch the Med."
  - ii. Support to the campaigns of families of migrants missing worldwide, particularly in

Mexico and Tunisia. Endorse the demand for the establishment of an inquiry commission by the European Commission to establish the responsibilities of the Italian and Tunisian States and provide an answer on the fate of the missing.

#### **5. *Racism and Discriminations***

Migration policies based on security discourses have consequences on our living together and are a breeding ground for racist expressions. Racism is not an opinion but a discourse that must be fought against whatever its form or origin, the reasons why we call on governments, political parties and associations to include the fight against racism and discriminations in their programs. We also demand:

- a. The non-criminalization of religious affiliation.
- b. The non-instrumentalization of Islam for political purposes and against the working-class sectors.
- c. Strengthening citizen participation (including migrants) on the political and social fields in order to fight against racism and discriminations.

#### **6. *The Media and Migrations***

The repressive policies implemented by States make believe that migrations are a problem and a threat. The media, implicitly or explicitly, play a crucial role in the stigmatization of foreigners and the reproduction of such discourse. We are convinced of the importance of sensitize all Media on migration issues. We also call for:

- a. Promoting and supporting a transnational observatory of media and social networks against hate and discriminatory speech.
- b. Promoting and supporting the campaigns demanding free access to places of confinement to support the initiatives against administrative detention and its abolition.
- c. Provision of media support to campaigns for the monitoring of borders that are not easily accessible to the press, such as the campaign "Watch the Med."

#### **7. *Financial Crisis, Work and Migrations***

The financial crisis has reinforced the stigmatization and racist discourses against migrants, presenting them as profiteers when they are the first victims. This is why we call for:

- a. The construction and strengthening of networks of resistance between the countries of origin and residence to respond to the migrants' precarization by the crisis.
- b. Strengthening the links between trade unions and migrants and among the trade unions.
- c. Support for the strikes and fights of exploited migrants often forced to work illegally (with particular attention to the trafficking in human beings).

**Aware that these fights can only succeed if the migrants themselves are the main actors and if the equality between men and women is effective, we think that the gender issue and the issue of the migrant as an actor are not claims but positions to integrate in all of our practices.**

#### **8. *Women and Migrations***

- Establish an international multidisciplinary solidarity network comprising professionals from the legal community, feminist and generalist associations, researchers, institutional actors, elected officials of each country to translate into international law true equality between women and men in accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on the occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its adoption (December 2013).
- Women refuse to be an excuse to reinforce racism.

#### **9. *Migrant as an Actor***

- Migrants as social and political actors and not as victims.
- No to the criminalization of the hiring of migrants.
- Promote exchanges between the migrants' self organizing experiences.

- Favor the participation of migrants (as well as the undocumented) in forums.
- Promote the migrants' self-narration as a means of developing a shared memory.

## Actions and Agenda

The preparatory meetings also collected the next gatherings established by the various organizations present at the WSF 2013:

Date	Event
<b>May 23, 2013</b>	Launch of the Organization for Universal Citizenship – Paris
<b>June 6-8, 2013</b>	Alter Summit – Greece
<b>Last week of June 2013</b> (date to be determined)	MERCOSUR Social Summit – Montevideo
<b>October 24-26, 2013</b>	Europe-Africa Counter Summit – Brussels
<b>December 18, 2013</b>	Global Day of Action (theme to be determined) – world
<b>2014</b> (date to be determined)	World Social Forum on Migrations – Johannesburg

With these “internal” dates, three additional dates were identified as important:

- o **October 2013** – The United Nations General Assembly will hold the second High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development – New York.
- o **July 15, 2013** – Civil society meeting to develop recommendations for the UN High-Level Dialogue – New York.
- o **October 2-4, 2013** - 4th International Assembly of Migrants and Refugees (IAMR), New York.

**During the WSF 2013, the reinforcement of links and connections between the World Social Forum (WSF) and the World Social Forum on Migrations (WSFM) had a central place.** The World Social Forum on Migrations was born in the World Social Forum held in Porto Alegre in 2004. It is a thematic forum held five times since its inception. It is essential to connect the agendas of both forums to build together the Johannesburg stage in 2014.

## Discussions

The discussions allowed participants to contribute clarifications in relation to recommendations presented in the first part of the Assembly. The new items proposed were:

- Need for a global movement. An agenda but also common initiatives (e.g. December 18). Establish global themes for common approaches/mobilizations at the international level which can strengthen our fights worldwide. For example, a campaign for the migrants' right to vote, freedom of movement, etc.
- Linking the rights of citizenship to residence.
- In the fight to defend the migrants' rights we must not forget the exploitation of migrants for sexual and other purposes.
- Promotion and ratification of the ILO Conventions n° 97 and n°143 in favor of migrants workers.
- Promotion and ratification of the ILO Convention n°189 on domestic workers, 80% of which are migrants.
- Elimination of the “solidarity crime”.
- Deprive human beings of documents, as many of the most powerful States do, is a formidable weapon to impede their movement, political organization and social claims (Declaration in *Annex 2*).
- Call for a general strike of migrants worldwide.
- The right to decent work.
- Request to support the participation of people who do not have the means to come to the forums.
- How to implement the recommendations?

- Inclusion of health problems (especially AIDS) and lack of access to health care among the causes of migration.
- Support and reinforce solidarity to Romani people, victims of increasingly discriminatory policies.

## **Conclusions**

This Assembly was born from a need for convergence, knowledge, exchange, and the need for mutual reinforcement.

Until today, the preparatory work was sustained by the group of initiators. These persons had the role of facilitators without any political task. It is clear that this process cannot continue without broader participation and without the participation of all of the dynamics recognized in this assembly. That is why all interested persons are requested to join the facilitation group.

“The World Assembly of Migrants, Associations from Migrations and Solidarity Associations” can only be one step in a larger process of discussions and exchanges on migration policies, on the status of the social movement and resistance. This type of process necessarily requires a long-term commitment and capacity of collective coordination. In this sense, the next gathering has been established for 2014, on the occasion of the next WSFM to be held in South Africa. We will have the opportunity at this forum to take stock of this declaration, of what we have achieved, our progress and our difficulties.

**Come join the process, build a dignified and responsible human mobility... and give the world the opportunity to take all paths.**

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