

Human rights organizations call for an end to chain deportations from the United States to Costa Rica

- *Organizations assert that past experiences demonstrate that Costa Rica is not prepared to guarantee the human rights of deported migrants.*
- *Our organizations call on the Costa Rican government to provide timely, sufficient, and transparent information about the agreement that potentially allows for the mass deportation of up to 25 third country nationals from the United States per week, so that civil society organizations, experts and individuals with lived experience can contribute to the development of public policies that affect those subject to the agreement.*

Costa Rica, March 26, 2025 – The undersigned organizations, which work to defend human rights, express their concern about the recent announcement by the Costa Rican government that it has signed a memorandum of understanding with the United States for the deportation from the United States of up to 25 foreign nationals per week.

If the agreement is implemented, Costa Rica would be one of the countries in the world to receive the most deported third country nationals from the United States, according to a review of the figures recorded, country by country, by the [Third Country Deportation Watch](#).

This is particularly serious because it has been demonstrated that there are no conditions in place to guarantee the rights of those who would be subject to the agreement. In February 2025, nearly 200 migrants, including 80 children from China, Russia, Armenia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and other countries, were deported on two flights from the United States and detained at the Migrant Assistance Center (CATEM) in Costa Rica. The Costa Rican state arbitrarily detained them, improperly confiscated their identity documents, and failed to provide them with timely medical care, interpretation services, or adequate education or facilities for the children.

To date, our organizations know the whereabouts and fate of approximately 5% of the people detained at the CATEM (Temporary Detention Center for Migrants), and there are indications that a significant number of them were returned to their countries of origin, where their lives and safety are at risk, as in the case of a Russian woman with whom Refugees International interviewed. The [Costa Rican Ombudsman's Office](#) indicates that of the 200 people deported from the United States, 110 left through the voluntary return program (although the voluntary nature of these returns is questionable given this choice was made under duress), 34 left after filing asylum applications, and 57 left voluntarily— many of them to try to reunite with their relatives from whom they had been separated when deported from the United States.

According to findings by civil society organizations, when the deportees were in Costa Rica in 2025, they did not have timely access to information on asylum or other rights in their own

languages, and people in need of international protection were put at risk ([Report of findings: visit of civil society organizations to CATEM-EMISUR, 2025](#)).

In the context of a habeas corpus petition filed by human rights defenders, the [Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice](#) declared in June 2025 that the right to personal liberty of these individuals had been violated, and ordered Costa Rican authorities to release them and determine what type of health, education, and housing assistance they required from the State. In its decision, the Constitutional Chamber also ordered the State to pay restitution for the damages caused.

Nine months after the Constitutional Chamber's decision, the State has still not conducted an analysis of the needs of those who remain in Costa Rica. Those who remain have faced numerous barriers to accessing fundamental rights and have depended on the solidarity of other citizens to stay in the country. While Costa Rican authorities continue to fail to provide effective solutions regarding health, housing, food, and education, these individuals live with the impacts of detention and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatment.

In light of this history, the organizations express grave concern that, if implemented, this new agreement will repeat the human rights violations that have already occurred. Therefore, they are calling for an end to the chain deportations from the United States to Costa Rica.

According to [communications](#) from the incoming president, Laura Fernandez, the agreement will facilitate the return to people's countries of origin—where they could run the risk of refoulement.

Our organizations are emphatic in stating that if this newly announced agreement is accepted, Costa Rica would be failing to meet its national and international obligations, including the principle of non-refoulement, becoming complicit in the implementation of cruel policies that violate human dignity, and disregarding the right to seek international protection, as well as the right to due process.

Measures that transfer the responsibilities of migration governance between states increase the risks of human rights violations for people in situations of human mobility, and position Costa Rica as an accomplice—and also directly responsible—for the violations being committed by the United States through chain deportations without due process, as identified by the organizations Human Rights First and Refugees International in their report [“This is an order from Trump.”](#)

These chain deportation policies have resulted in inhuman, humiliating, and degrading treatment during detention and deportation processes, family separations, and a lack of trust in access to justice and basic social services to which every person is entitled.

All people, regardless of their immigration status, have the right to have their integrity, their life, and their dignity protected. This duty is especially true for people in situations of

particular vulnerability, such as people on the move, children and people in need of international protection.

The signatory organizations call on the State of Costa Rica to comply with its national and international human rights obligations, guaranteeing the protection of people in situations of human mobility. They also demand that the State provide timely, sufficient, and transparent information about the agreement it has reached with the United States, so that civil organizations and experts or individuals with concrete life experiences can contribute to the development of public policies that affect those subject to the agreement.

Our organizations ask the general public to express solidarity with people on the move who have been or are at risk of being detained and deported from the United States, and to call on the Costa Rican government to implement real solutions that promote freedom, security, and well-being for all people and families.

Signed by

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Bloque Latinoamericano sobre Migración

Buen Vivir Costa Rica

Canadian Centre Universal for Human Rights Society

CAREF

Center for Engagement and Advocacy in the Americas (CEDA)

Center for Gender & Refugee Studies (CGRS)

Centro de Amigos para la Paz (Costa Rica)

Centro de Derechos Sociales del Inmigrante (CENDEROS)

Centro por la Justicia y el Derecho Internacional (CEJIL)

CISAS

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Feministas Picos Rojos, Costa Rica

Fundación Arcoiris por el respeto a la diversidad sexual

Fundación Justicia y Género

Fundación para la Justicia y el Estado Democrático de Derecho

Grupo de trabajo Agenda CEDAW

Global Strategic Litigation Council

Hope Border Institute

Instituto para el Desarrollo Sostenible de la Mujer Lenca de Honduras- IDESMULH

Instituto para las Mujeres en la Migración AC (IMUMI)

Jesuit Migrant Service Costa Rica

Latin America/Caribbean Committee (LACC) of Loretto Community
Núcleo de investigación y acción en psicología y violencia
Observatorio de Medios de Comunicación y Género -GEMA-
OTRANS-RN
Plataforma Social Moraviana
Red CLAMOR
Red de Salud de las Mujeres Latinoamericanas y del Caribe
Red Jesuita con Migrantes (RJM)
Red Nacional de Apoyo a Personas Migrantes y Refugiadas LGBT México
Red Sudamericana para las Migraciones Ambientales- RESAMA
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