

'Opening Our Hearts to People on the Move'

ICMC Statement on the Occasion of the 110th World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2024

On Sunday, September 29, Catholics around the world are invited to reflect on and celebrate the millions of women, children, and men on the move during the World Day of Migrants and Refugees (WDMR). In his [message](#) for WDMR, Pope Francis calls for a more inclusive world and powerfully reminds us that “God walks with his people”.

“Dear brothers and sisters, on this day dedicated to migrants and refugees, let us unite in prayer for all those who have had to leave their land in search of dignified living conditions”, writes the Holy Father, adding that *“Jesus is present in the sister or brother in need of our help”*.

Migrants and refugees are amongst the most vulnerable groups in society. Their numbers have been steadily increasing over recent years as conflict, insecurity, and climate change have forced families and entire communities to flee their homes and search for safety both within countries and across borders. In mid-2020, the global migrant population was estimated at over [280 million](#), representing 3.6% of the world population. In 2023, the number of those forcibly displaced from their homes was [117 million](#). [Tens of thousands](#) have lost their lives in their desperate attempt to find safety by embarking on irregular and perilous routes, such as the Mediterranean Sea, the Sahara desert, or the Darién Gap.

Whether fleeing persecution or simply trying to offer their children a dignified life, many people on the move have limited access to essential services such as healthcare and are exposed to abuse and exploitation. Increasingly, the rise of political movements fueled by misinformation has led to the scapegoating of refugees and migrants, resulting in a disturbing increase of xenophobic attacks.

Yet, despite these challenges, migrants and refugees display remarkable resilience, strength, and courage to survive their perilous journeys and ensure better lives for their loved ones. Their talent and skills are invaluable, particularly for countries with declining workforces, contributing to prosperity and sustainable development. States must create regular, humane, and dignified pathways for migration and respect their obligations towards those fleeing persecution in their countries of origin.

On the 110th World Day of Migrants and Refugees, we celebrate the immense value of human mobility, a phenomenon as old as humanity itself. We open our hearts to the most vulnerable among us, showing compassion and solidarity with our brothers and sisters in need.

The International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) protects and serves uprooted people, including refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced people, victims of human trafficking, and migrants — regardless of faith, race, ethnicity or nationality.