



2021 ANNUAL REPORT



FROM THE BORDER TO WASHINGTON D.C.



INTRODUCTION

This year, the staff, organizers, and members of the Border Network for Human Rights continued with the mission to facilitate the education, organizing, and participation of marginalized border communities to defend and promote human and civil rights. Our communities work to create political, economic, and social conditions where every human being is equal in dignity and rights. To make our mission a reality, we embarked on 13 campaigns taking us from our backyard in El Paso/Las Cruces to the national stage of Washington, D.C. The success of these campaigns advanced our goals and reached millions through grassroots mobilizations, advocacy, direct actions, earned media coverage, and social media strategies.



AT THE BORDER

BNHR CAMPAIGNS AND EVENTS FOCUSED ON EL PASO AND THE BORDER REGION

The border region continues to be the epicenter of some of the most backward, abusive elements of U.S. immigration and border policies under the Biden administration. BNHR continued its ongoing resistance against the harsh and abusive treatment by border law enforcement agencies as suffering remains rampant and immigrant families and children continue to be imprisoned by policies that oppress the most vulnerable amongst us.

Throughout the year, BNHR held a variety of events denouncing and calling attention to the current reality of immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees:

CARAVAN & RALLY FOR IMMIGRATION REFORM

During the worst of the pandemic, we organized a caravan and rally on immigration reform, calling for accountability and transparency of border enforcement operations, an end to the mistreatment of migrants at the border, and a pathway to citizenship for the more than 11 million undocumented people living in the U.S. More than 100 cars participated in the COVID-era action.



Fernando García, executive director for BNHR, met with Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas and Congresswoman Veronica Escobar to discuss the arrival of migrants, including unaccompanied minors, at the border.



Fernando García, BNHR executive director, is part of a select group of immigrant advocates and leaders to meet with Vice President Kamala Harris during her brief visit to El Paso, Texas.



Kamala Harris 'receptive' to immigrant rights organization's concerns during border visit

Anthony Jackson | El Paso Times
Published 5:45 p.m. MT June 25, 2021 | Updated 9:51 a.m. MT June 26, 2021
[View Comments](#)  

A look at Kamala Harris supporters, protesters during VP visit to El Paso

The vice president met with border officials and migrant children during a trip to El Paso. Nathan J. Fish, El Paso Times



Fernando García, executive director for Border Network for Human Rights, said his meeting with Vice President Kamala Harris was brief, but a success.

García announced the results as Harris was wrapping up her first visit to the U.S.-Mexico border as vice president and immigration activists and community organizers with BNHR held a demonstration at the Pass Del Norte Bridge. Harris met with BNHR and other border organizations during her visit to El Paso.

During the meeting, where García said he only had "literal minutes," he said the vice president listened to his comments about solutions for humanitarian issues along the U.S.-Mexico border. García said he encouraged the VP to change the narrative on the border to one closer to "humanizing immigrants and immigration" and end expelling migrants from the U.S. under Title 42, a public health law in use because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"WE ARE THE 11 MILLION" IMMIGRATION REFORM CAMPAIGN



In the spring, BNHR and RITA launched the national "We Are the 11 Million" campaign with the border regions' largest in-person mobilization on immigration reform since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The "We Are The 11 Million" campaign calls for a commitment to achieve holistic immigration reform that includes a pathway to citizenship for all 11 million undocumented people, the demilitarization of the southern border, and increased transparency and accountability among federal immigration enforcement agencies such as U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

With events in Dallas, El Paso, San Antonio, Laredo, the Rio Grande Valley, and more than 20 organizations, the **"We Are the 11 Million"** campaign kicked off with in-person marches and caravans.

Phone banking continued throughout the year to educate members of Congress on the need for a pathway to citizenship.



"We Are The 11 Million" for Citizenship in El Paso, Tex. More than 200 people took part in the event.



"We're here today to demand an immigration reform, so that the 11 million people living undocumented in this country can be part of the solution"

FERNANDO GARCIA
BNHR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

NEW ELLIS ISLAND BORDER POLICY GROUP



New Ellis Island Border Policy Group

ADVOCATING FOR BORDER AND IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT ACCOUNTABILITY

For border communities, it is important to emphasize the need to demand change in immigration enforcement practices. BNHR has been working with allies to demand accountability and transparency from CBP, BP, ICE, and USCIS, ban family separations at the border, and implement training protocols that address the needs of those seeking asylum, migrating, and living at the border.

At the beginning of the year, BNHR convened the New Ellis Island (NEI) Border Policy Group, composed of stakeholders from the local, state, and national levels, to develop policy recommendations from the perspective of border communities. These border policy recommendations are rooted in shared values of acceptance, opportunity, and humanity.

The NEI Border Policy Group sent a clear and concise message to the Biden administration in a letter demanding bold and immediate action to fix the broken immigration system, highlighting how decades of inaction have impacted border residents, immigrants, Black people, and communities of color.

Congresswoman Veronica Escobar joined members of the NEI Border Policy Group in a virtual press conference titled '**Building a New Ellis Island at the Border**' to discuss Texas's role as the new epicenter of anti-immigrant policies and rhetoric. Also discussed was the necessity of a holistic and inclusive reform that will demilitarize the border, provide a pathway to citizenship for the 11 million undocumented people, improve border enforcement accountability/transparency, and reinvest in critical infrastructure to welcome migrants and support border communities.



BNHR joins a group of El Paso leaders in a meeting with Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas and U.S. Rep. Veronica Escobar to discuss the arrival of migrants and unaccompanied minors at the border and the ongoing pandemic. Executive Director Fernando Garcia detailed the need to build Welcoming Centers along the U.S.-Mexico border to provide wrap-around services for migrants and provide guidance on the U.S. asylum process.

BORDER REPORT

REGIONS ▾ CORONAVIRUS HOT TOPICS ▾ LIVE CAMERAS BORDER REPORT TOUR EN ESPAÑOL ABOUT US

Border advocates and lawmakers join summit to discuss 'New Ellis Island'



Credit : Voice of America

BNHR convened the inaugural New Ellis Island Virtual Policy Summit: Voices from the Border with Solutions for the Border. The day-long Summit brought together diverse regional leaders, organizations, and elected officials with deep roots in the border region and specialized expertise on border issues. The panelists discussed viable solutions to the challenges facing the southern border and strategies to build a more welcoming border. The live event reached over 3,500 on Facebook, with an active engagement of 397 viewers the day of the event, including viewers from Texas, New Mexico, California, Colorado, Arizona, New York, Oregon, Illinois, Chihuahua, and Tamaulipas, Mexico.

HUGS NOT WALLS

BORDER NETWORK FOR HUMAN RIGHT



#HUGS NOTWALLS

Border Network for Human Rights

— 8TH EDITION —



Under 109 degree heat, the eighth edition of the historic **"Hugs Not Walls"** took place at the El Paso-Juárez border, where 200 families (over 1,000 individuals) briefly hugged their loved ones from whom they had been separated due to cruel immigration policies. COVID-19 vaccinations were mandatory for all who participated on the U.S. side, and COVID-19 tests were mandatory for those on the Mexican side. The event coincided with Juneteenth, a new national holiday that celebrates the anniversary of the full emancipation of enslaved people in the U.S. on June 19, 1865. "Hugs Not Walls" highlighted the interconnectedness of the experiences of Black Americans and immigrants in the U.S.



The **top post for BNHR's Facebook** was a video posted during "Hugs Not Walls" featuring several families embracing each other. The post reached over 600,000 people, over 19,000 people engaged with it, which means that people watched at least 10 seconds of the video or hit the play button. The video also gathered 864 likes and reactions, 58 comments, and 102 shares.

 Border Network for Human Rights

Published by Alia El-Assar - June 19 - 4

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Four minutes is not enough! ¡Cuatro minutos no son suficientes!

Families deserve to be together, and we will keep fighting until our vision for the future of our communities, the border, and our nation as a whole become a reality. #HugsNotWalls

Las familias merecen estar juntas, y vamos a seguir luchando hasta que nuestra visión para el futuro de nuestras comunidades, la frontera, y nuestra nación entera se haga realidad. #AbrazosNoMuros



ENDING CHILD DETENTION



ENDING CHILD DETENTION

On the 100th day of the Biden administration, BNHR partnered with Witness at the Border, the Coalition to End Child Detention, and others, in observation of Mexico's national holiday, 'Children's Day' (Día del niño) in the eight-mile "Walk for the Children/Caminata por la Niñez," to demand an end to Title 42 expulsions, an end to family separation, and the immediate reunification of children with their families.



Photo extracted from KFOX14 article "Immigrant rights group hold a rally in honor of unaccompanied minors in El Paso"

With over 4,000 children detained at the Fort Bliss Army base in El Paso, BNHR partnered with Coalition to End Child Detention to organize ongoing actions protesting poor conditions and a lack of transparency and calling for the reunification of children with their relatives and the closure of Fort Bliss.



During Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra's trip to El Paso, just four days after the Vice President's visit, BNHR and the Coalition to End Child Detention called for the closure of Fort Bliss in the **"Shut it Down/Free Our Children"** protest at Cassidy Gate.

POLICE ACCOUNTABILITY CAMPAIGN EL PASO POLICE DEPARTMENT (EPPD) ACCOUNTABILITY TASK FORCE



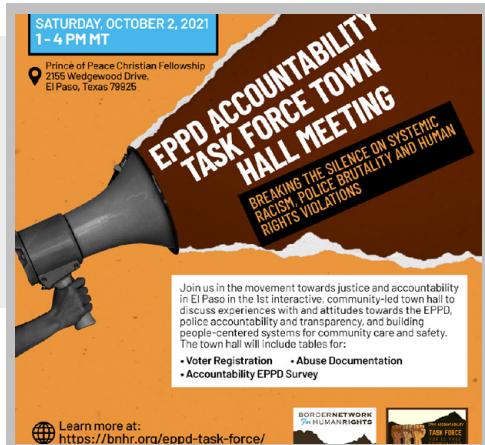
The Black Lives Matter movement directly relates to communities in the U.S./Mexico border. Border residents, Black, immigrant, and refugee communities are subjected to systems of oppression, abuse, and vitriol that permeate in the rest of the country. In the summer of 2020, amid the renewed national outcry for justice and the transformation of policing institutions following the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and many other Black and Brown people at the hands of law enforcement, BNHR launched the El Paso Police Department Accountability Task Force. As a project of BNHR, the EPPD Accountability Task Force calls for an independent civilian-led commission via city ordinance to oversee and overhaul the EPPD.



State Senator César Blanco joined BNHR and fellow EPPD Accountability Task Force members for a virtual public town hall to discuss the culture of abuse and impunity within the EPPD, the ongoing efforts to achieve systemic transformation, and reimagine community safety in El Paso.

BNHR and the EPPD Accountability Task Force held a virtual forum titled **"Breaking the Silence: Police Brutality, Systemic Racism, and Human Rights,"** featuring testimonies from survivors of EPPD abuse as well as remarks from legal and civil rights experts. The event was the first in a series of ongoing actions to build a community engagement platform and empower local El Pasoans to speak up against EPPD misconduct and become active participants in the push for accountability and change.





EPPD Accountability Task Force Town Hall was the first interactive, community-led forum to discuss experiences of abuse and violence by the El Paso Police Department.

The Task Force not only engaged communities and allies in multiple dialogues, events and actions, but was able to substantively engage with the City of El Paso to the point where BNHR-Task Force recommendations are now, at least, included in the final report that City Manager staff will present to the City Council regarding police reform and accountability.

EL PASO FIRME



On the second anniversary of the 2019 mass shooting by a white supremacist at an El Paso Walmart - which killed 23 individuals and injured 23 more - BNHR led a memorial service commemorating the victims' lives and taking a stand against white supremacy, racism, and xenophobia. The memorial included the participation of community stakeholders, including elected officials, Congresswoman Veronica Escobar, faith-based leaders Bishop Seitz and Pastor Grady, allied organizations, community leaders, and families of the victims. The event also called for the end to systemic white supremacy and denounced current efforts and actions by Texas government officials that continue to perpetuate abuse and hate against Brown, Black, and immigrant communities.



Border report on El Paso Firme

ABUSE DOCUMENTATION CAMPAIGN



BNHR trained 50 members of our organization to help document abuses and engage community members in the BNHR organizing process. In total, BNHR organizers set up 80 documentation tables from Las Cruces, N.M. to San Elizario, Tex. More than 30 cases of abuse by law enforcement agencies were documented. A full report will be publicly released by BNHR in early 2022.

I AM EL PASO YO SOY EL PASO COMMUNITY IDENTIFICATION CAMPAIGN



The El Paso County municipal identification campaign calls for a city government-issued ID to combat racial profiling, abuse, and exclusion of people without a U.S. identification card. The municipal ID will also provide access to banking systems, school registration, entrance to government buildings like public schools, and establish an identification process when interacting with law enforcement. The municipal ID will provide proof of identity and residency necessary for essential services, regardless of immigration or gender status, to members of our community.

BNHR relaunched the community ID campaign with a diverse coalition of stakeholders. After presentation, engagement, and dialogue, the County Commissioners Court passed a resolution supporting the creation of the Community Identification Program. Moreover, the Court allocated \$500,000 in its 2022 budget for the implementation. The next step in the campaign is to obtain support from the El Paso City Council.

THROUGHOUT TEXAS: BNHR STATEWIDE PARTNERSHIPS AND CAMPAIGNS FOR ALL TEXANS



The Reform Immigration for Texas Alliance (RITA) is a Border Network for Human Rights project, which brings together community-based organizations and diverse stakeholders to advocate for immigration reform and defend the rights of immigrant and border communities in Texas.

Stop the White Supremacy and the Anti-Immigrant Agenda in Texas

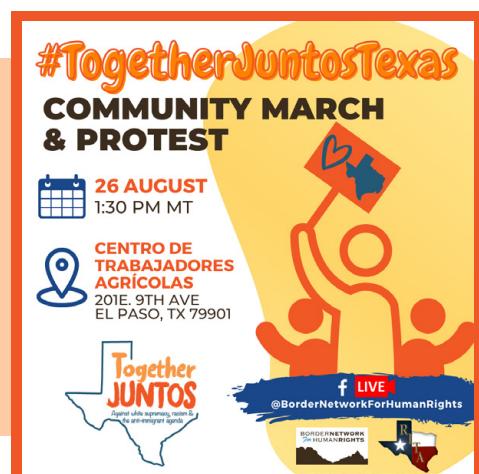
The #TogetherJuntosTX campaign against white supremacy, racism, and the anti-immigrant agenda in Texas led by BNHR and RITA is an organized movement of impacted communities in reaction to the increased attacks of Governor Greg Abbott toward refugees and asylum seekers, border residents, Latinos, and people of color, disenfranchised voters, and other impacted communities.

In 2021, RITA collaborated with member organizations and partners to combat the anti-immigrant agenda in Texas. RITA started the year by launching the Texas Immigrants Deserve Better campaign with elected officials and community leaders to establish a strong defense on the anti-immigrant agenda in the 87th Texas Legislature.

RITA also launched the Drive Texas Adelante to educate legislators on the need for a driver's permit in Texas. This had a series of digital actions and culminated in the People's Hearing at the end of the Legislative session.



BNHR and RITA convene hundreds of Texans in the #TogetherJuntosTX community march and protest denouncing Gov. Abbott's racist and white supremacist policies and tactics against immigrants and in support of the demilitarization of the southern border and creation of welcoming infrastructure for refugees and asylum seekers.





In response to Governor Abbott's executive orders to increase the presence of state troopers at the border, use state funds to build a border wall, and incarcerate migrants crossing the border, RITA and BNHR led advocates from across the state in the two-day #TogetherJuntosTX Caravan to Austin, including a press conference prior to departure in El Paso; a car rally and action outside the U.S. Rep. Henry Cuellar's office in San Antonio; and actions outside the Texas Capitol and Governor's mansion and a closing rally in Austin.

COVID-19 ECONOMIC EMERGENCY FUND: FROM PEOPLE TO PEOPLE FUND



Fighting Exclusion and Discrimination at the Border during the COVID-19 Pandemic

We support the movement that helps the thousands of essential workers and their families excluded from federal financial aid established in response to the COVID-19 pandemic because of their immigration status or other extenuating circumstances. We insist on the inclusion of sectors excluded by the government's economic support packages. This means allowing these sectors to be vaccinated at no cost and completing the doses on time, investing funds in reopening schools in a safe manner, increasing the salaries of educators and staff forced to work, and finally, eradicating the invisible enemy of COVID-19.

BNHR collected funds to provide direct support of \$500-\$1000 to more than 60 families during the year. More funds will be available in 2022 to reach or surpass that number of families. Also, BNHR, in collaboration with community partners, pressured the El Paso Independent School District trustees to reimplement the mask mandate in all schools in the district.

MADE TO SAVE COVID-19 VACCINATION CAMPAIGN

In the last half of the year, and with the support of Made to Safe, BNHR launched an unprecedented outreach campaign to promote COVID-19 vaccination and awareness in the El Paso County Metropolitan area. A dedicated team of consultants, staff, and organizers carried out dozens of events that reached more than 79,000 members of our community. Also, as of today, through vaccination fairs and as a direct result of this campaign, more than 1,000 members of our community have been vaccinated. This campaign is still ongoing, anticipating even greater outcomes to protect the wellbeing of immigrant and border residents.



TO THE NATION: BNHR CAMPAIGNS AND INITIATIVES BRINGING THE BORDER TO THE NATION



BORDER DELEGATION TO WASHINGTON

As part of BNHR's efforts to bring the voices of the border to Washington, BNHR brought a border delegation to DC to meet with elected officials. BNHR met with Members of the House and Senate to advance transparency and accountability of border enforcement operations. Senator Ben Ray Luján and Congresswoman Veronica Escobar joined members of the delegation for a press conference at the nation's Capitol.



BINATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRAM (US-MEXICO)



Over the last five years, BNHR has established a working relationship with the Mexican Observatory on Human Rights (Observatorio Mexicano de Derechos Humanos A.C.) to conduct joint activities across Mexico with communities that have vested interest and knowledge of human rights, its promotion, and defense. As joint efforts with the Observatorio became more frequent, and individuals and small organizations became integrated with this partnership, BNHR held the following activities:



Training course for
human rights promoters



Providing financial assistance toward
purchasing medicine after the
September 19 earthquake in Oaxaca



Building teams of collaborators
to support migrants



Implementing community organizing
strategies by BNHR trained human
rights promoters

In 2021, we held the following activities: a meeting of leaders from different areas of the south of Mexico, two workshops for promoters, a regional meeting, and an annual meeting. Emblematic of this year was the Observation Tour conducted by OMDHAC and BNHR in different cities of the southern border of Mexico to observe the actions of the Mexican National Guard on the southern Mexican border.



COMMUNITY ORGANIZING AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



In 2021, BNHR trained 13 new Human Rights Promoters, two Regional Sub-Coordinators, and one Regional Coordinator. The human rights promoters' training took place from May 14 to 16. We held 33 meetings with all Regional Coordinators. Seven new human rights committees were formed throughout Las Cruces, N.M., and far east of El Paso.



**VACCINATED
EL PASOANS**

Made to Save & BNHR
Vaccination Campaign



FAMILIES REUNITED

Hugs not Walls 2021



DOCUMENTED CASES

Abuse Documentation
Campaign

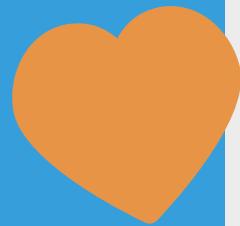


FAMILIES ASSISTED

Fighting Exclusion and
Discrimination at the
Border during the COVID-19
Pandemic Campaign

TO OUR PARTNERS, FUNDERS, AND DONORS...

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMITMENT TO OUR STRUGGLE FOR DIGNITY AND RIGHTS IN 2021.



On behalf of our members, families, organizers, staff, the Board of Directors, and our Executive Director and Founder Fernando Garcia, the Border Network for Human Rights would like to thank and recognize the contributions and support of our partners, funders, and donors. We thank you for your commitment to our struggle for dignity and rights in 2020. Without you, our work to advance human and civil rights at the border and build a voice for the most marginalized communities would not have been possible.

The Ford Foundation
Four Freedoms Fund
Tao Rising (Vanguard Charitable)
Libra Foundation
Civic Nation (Made to Save)
Catholic Campaign for Human Development
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
Resourcing Justice Fund
Threshold Foundation
Nanaro Foundation
Tides Foundation
Anonymous Donor
And hundreds of individual donors!

