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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 11, 2020

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Zooming to the Border for Human Rights

The Impact of Border Wall in Borderland Communities: Responses and Proposals for Dignity and Self-Determination

On Sept. 17, 2020, a delegation of activists, researchers, and independent journalists, sponsored by the Chicago-based *El Tribuno del Pueblo / People's Tribune*, will convene the third of a series of engaging People-to-People Fact-Finding Panels on the U.S. – Mexico Border.

These presentations are designed to allow community members, workers, legal advocates, migrants and others to share information about how immigration and border policies affect the rights and way of life of the people involved. The series of panel discussions will continue through late October. They are intended to contribute to the ongoing work of building connections with communities along the U.S.-Mexico Border.

We are moved to action by current immigration policies that separate thousands of children from their parents, that allow Border Patrol agents to injure and kill people with impunity, and that allow border walls to desecrate pristine ancestral lands of indigenous people.

This third 90-minute Zooming to the Border panel will focus on the how border wall construction impacts local communities and how it contributes to border deaths. It will include organizers from California/Tijuana, Southern Arizona, and the Rio Grande Valley of Texas. The panel is scheduled for:

Thursday, Sept. 17, 2020

4 PM Pacific / 5 PM Mountain / 6 PM Central / 7 PM Eastern

Please register in advance for this Zoom meeting. After registration, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about how to join the meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0uc06hrz0pGtxDW1lCe6G9rH4SQpyhvZ4x>

Questions: email lauracortezgarcia@gmail.com

Information about the panelists and moderator



Norma Herrera (she/her) was born in Tamaulipas, Mexico and grew up in the Rio Grande Valley. She coordinates a grassroots coalition working to stop border wall construction in the RGV and supports efforts to free people from ICE detention. Her work includes building a base of directly impacted communities to organize against punitive government policies that cause harm and criminalize migration.



Dan Watman is the Coordinador and founder of the Binational Friendship Garden of Native Plants inside Friendship Park at the San Diego/Tijuana border. He is a Spanish teacher in San Diego and online and lives in Tijuana. He documents border wall construction in the Otay Mountains Wilderness highlighting damage to the environment and is a member of the Friends of Friendship Park who is currently working on a campaign called Build That Park! that envisions converting the current Friendship Park from a militarized zone to a truly binational park.



Laiken Jordahl, Borderlands Campaigner with the Center for Biological Diversity, works to protect wildlife, ecosystems and communities throughout the U.S.-Mexico borderlands and draw attention to the costs of border wall construction and border militarization. Before joining the Center, Laiken worked with the National Park Service studying threats to wilderness character throughout the Rocky Mountain West, including Big Bend National Park and Organ Pipe National Monument. He's also worked as a backcountry trail builder, a clam farmer and a legislative fellow in the U.S. House of Representatives.



Alejandro Ortigoza. My mother and father are from Puebla, we migrated to Mexico City at an early age, my second migration experience was the trip to this side of the border, approximately 15 years ago. My brother César migrated a long time before me. For a long time, I've collaborated in Colectivo MAMUT and learned from other groups and collectives, we saw the situation and need to support the migrant community. This vision led us to found ARMADILLOS. For several years we participated with other groups. The structure of ARMADILLOS is formed from human rights and the demands of different voices. In 2015 while we participated in Caravan 43, with many other groups and collectives, we realized that there was much to do in the migrant community everywhere. Thus, after Caravan 43 on October 26, 2015 my brother Cesar and I founded ARMADILLOS. I thank all the people who always supported us, as MAMUT Collective and now with ARMADILLOS.



Moderator

Pedro Rios (he/him/el) serves as director of the American Friends Service Committee's [U.S./Mexico Border Program](#) and has been on staff with AFSC since 2003. A native San Diegan, Pedro has worked on immigrant rights and border issues for over 25 years. Pedro oversees a program that documents abuses by law enforcement agencies, collaborates with community groups, advocates for policy change, and works with migrant communities.

Background

The People to People Fact-Finding Delegation grew out of a series of meetings among activists, researchers and independent journalists who are deeply concerned about the ongoing assault on arriving immigrants seeking help at the Southern Border. Our original plan was to travel the border from Brownsville, Texas / Matamoros, Tamaulipas, to San Diego, California/Tijuana, Baja California, to meet with people on both sides of the border. Because of the challenges involved in such travel as a result of the pandemic, we shifted the plan to hold a series of on-line webinars that will focus on about a half-dozen communities along the border. Each meeting will involve presentations by a panel of people drawn from the area. Interested people and journalists from the region and across the country are invited to attend.

The group will publish a complete report once the series of panels is completed. We also intend to present the report to the United Nations later this year, as part of the 72nd Anniversary of the United Nations' Declaration of Human Rights in December 2020.

The panel recordings will be on the tribunodelpueblo.org and peopletribune.org websites.

Endorsers and/or Sponsors to date:

Dr. Belinda Arriaga, Bay Area Border Relief team

Leno Rose-Ávila, Building Bridges

Héctor Barajas, Deported Veterans

Irene de Barraicua, Lideres Campesinas Integrate,

Eduardo Castro, Veterans for Peace

Laura García, *Tribuno del Pueblo*

Estela Jimenez, migrant and refugee rights activist

Bob Lee, *People's Tribune*

Pastor Ella Garza Luna, CA/NV Conference of the United Methodist Church

Carlos Marentes, Sin Fronteras Organizing Project and Executive Director of the Border Farm Workers Center in El Paso, TX

Marú Mora, La Resistencia, grassroots volunteer Tacoma, WA

Dr. Suzanne Oboler, John Jay College-CUNY

Ted Quant, Former Director, Twomey Center for Peace through Justice, New Orleans, LA

Rebecca Quintana, Advocate, Visalia, CA

Pedro Ríos, Director of American Friends Service Committee, US /Mexico Border Program, San Diego, CA

Alex Sánchez, Homies Unidos

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Gloria Meneses Sandoval, California Central Valley Journey for Justice /*Tribuno del Pueblo*

Yolanda Varona, Dreamer Moms

Elana Zilberg, Associate Professor Communication Department - University of California San Diego