



National Alliance for Filipino Concerns

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Reference: Terrence Valen, NAFCON President
Contact: president@nafconusa.org, 415-203-0696

Our Solidarity is Our Best Defense

US Filipinos Mobilize on International Workers Day to Defend Rights and Communities

The National Alliance for Filipino Concerns (NAFCON) joins migrants, refugees and all workers in the nationwide strike and mobilizations this May 1st, 2017 International Workers Day, dubbed "A Day Without Immigrants." Just 100 days into office, Donald Trump's immigration and labor policies have further exposed how bankrupt and unjust the US immigration system has become.

While previous administrations have also criminalized migrants and restricted immigration based on U.S. economic need, Trump's administration promised open and directed attacks on migrants, but he has failed at every turn. Filipino migrants, workers and many others have organized a growing resistance to Trump's blatant racism and use of fear to demonize migrants and refugees.

Trump's attacks include the twice-stopped ban on refugees, visa-holders, and even legal permanent residents from Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, Libya, and Syria. While cutting funding to education, healthcare, housing, and environmental protection, the Trump administration has increased the number of Border Patrol agents and ICE officers and empowered state and local law enforcement as immigration officers. Migrants without felonies and even DACA recipients are now being detained and deported in immigration sweeps. Trump has also threatened to strip sanctuary cities of federal subsidies, but just like the "Muslim Ban," organized communities in these cities, even city mayors and their attorneys, and federal courts blocked this empty threat.

Filipinos have suffered alongside other migrants, workers, and refugee communities, from the time they were forced out of their home countries to the current rise of attacks on civil rights, health, education, and social services in this country. Emboldened by Trump's racist rhetoric calling Filipinos "animals" and "terrorists" and his promise to deport 300,000 Filipinos, racists and white supremacists have attacked Filipinos, and some of our kababayans have already been detained, deported and separated from their families by ICE agents raiding our homes and communities.

While Trump's failed immigration policies seem extreme, this is not the first time that the U.S. government has openly attacked, criminalized, or exploited migrants, nor is it the full scope of what can be seen as a war on our communities here and in our homelands. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the U.S. launched its empire-building project overseas and pursued colonial, occupation, and direct intervention policies to protect and expand U.S. profit for the 1% in America. In 1898, the U.S. "bought" the Philippines in the Treaty of Paris, from the dying empire of Spain, to secure cheaper raw materials, and a military and political foothold in the Asia Pacific Region. While pretending to assist the Philippines in obtaining our liberation from Spain, they waged a violent war on the Filipinos killing over 1/3 of the total population.

After declaring the Philippines its colony to teach the "uncivilized" Filipinos about democracy, the US government began importing Filipino workers for cheaper labor as farmworkers, from Hawaii and California, to the canneries in Alaska. This was to fill the gap of cheap labor and pit local workers and

different migrant groups against each other, after the U.S. passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, banning the further migration of Chinese workers. Like the Bracero Program that violently exploited and then disposed of tens of thousands of Mexican farmworkers, the U.S. eventually expelled many Filipino laborers with the Tydings-McDuffie Act, in the wake of the Great Depression, when “disposable” Filipino laborers were seen as “taking away” jobs from white Americans.

This same inhumane treatment of migrants as exploitable and disposable, violent threats and economic scapegoats, continues until today, more than a hundred years later, and just 100 days into the Trump administration. This president has just elevated the racist fear-mongering and scapegoating to a much higher level, from his campaign to his first few months in office, and while millions of people resisting him at every turn is hopeful, we must continue to organize and defend our basic rights, especially as he continues and even expands US wars and conflict with our homelands and other countries overseas.

By fanning the flames of war, dropping bombs in Syria, Afghanistan, and threatening North Korea, the US under Trump is terrorizing the home countries of many of our migrant and refugee communities. These wars combined with the climate crisis (which Trump denies is real) have created the largest mass displacement of forced migrants and refugees not seen since the global devastation of World War II. The inhumanity of this administration’s policies is clear now, more than ever, when the U.S. government bombs the Syrian people, while simultaneously rejecting the humanitarian entry of thousands of Syrian refugees.

The U.S. has imposed exploitative economic policies via the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and free trade agreements that have impoverished nations, later admitting that these policies don’t work at all to develop economies, much less alleviate poverty; and the US has waged war on countries to pacify them and ensure mega-profits like the recent costly and failed wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. These economic, political, and militaristic attacks are at the root of the current crisis of forced migrants and refugees from the Global South, fleeing devastation and wars aggression and seeking a basic livelihood for themselves and their families.

NAFCON stands against the xenophobic exclusion and inhumane treatment of these migrants and refugees in the US, across Europe, or anywhere, and we stand with the International Migrants Alliance (IMA) to ensure that migrants and refugees speak for themselves and are treated with dignity and respect. As our friends from the Arab Resource and Organizing Center mentioned in the SF Bay Area campaign against the Muslim Ban, we should uphold, assert, defend, and even advance our right to stay, our right to move, our right to return, and also our right to Resist!

On this International Workers Day, May 1st 2017, “A Day Without Immigrants,” Filipinos stand in solidarity with all other migrants, refugees and workers to defend our communities and demand:

**END THE CRIMINALIZATION OF MIGRANTS!
END THE RAIDS AND DEPORTATIONS!
NO BAN, NO WALL, SANCTUARY FOR ALL!**

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NAFCON is a national multi-issue alliance of Filipino organizations and individuals in the United States serving to protect the rights and welfare of Filipinos by fighting for social, economic, and racial justice and equality. At present, NAFCON members encompass over 23 cities in the United States and is an active member of the International Migrants Alliance.