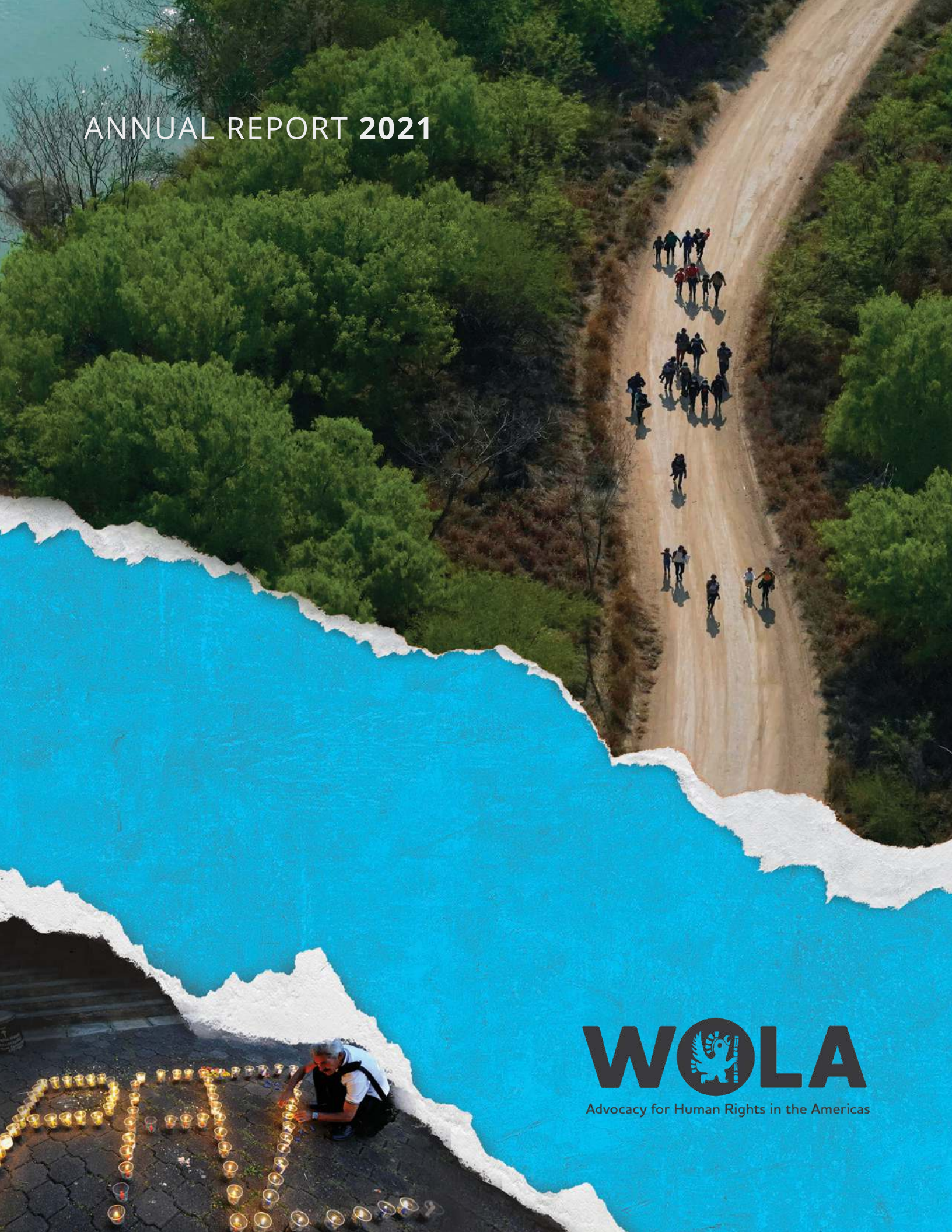


ANNUAL REPORT 2021



WOLA

Advocacy for Human Rights in the Americas

WOLA is a leading
advocacy and research
organization advancing
human rights in the
Americas

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Our Vision

We envision a future where public policies protect human rights and recognize human dignity, and where justice overcomes violence.

What We Do

We help to create impact in Washington and throughout the Americas.

1

PARTNER

We partner with courageous people throughout the Americas to identify urgent human rights problems.

2

RESEARCH

We bring decades of expertise to analyze these problems and propose concrete policy solutions.

3

ADVOCATE

We advance human rights by combining cutting-edge communications and advocacy strategies.

4

IMPACT

By changing policies, we create lasting impact for human rights and social justice in the Americas.



Message from The Chair

The year 2021 brought important transitions in the United States government and at WOLA. The inauguration of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris promised a shift away from the Trump administration's support for authoritarianism to new international engagement with Latin America based on the values of democracy, human rights, and rule of law. WOLA worked consistently throughout the year to hold the U.S. government and others throughout the region to these values.

Underlying challenges remained. Authoritarian leaders continued to advance their power in many countries. Anti-corruption reformers and democratic activists faced crackdowns, criminalization and the threat of death. The Covid 19 pandemic disrupted lives and exacerbated inequalities. Yet, there were rays of hope as social movements brought new energies and some democratic leaders won important elections.

The WOLA Board of Directors and our staff took stock of these challenges and opportunities by mapping out a new three-year strategic plan reaffirming and updating our core areas of work: protecting migrant and refugee rights; supporting human rights defenders and anti-corruption efforts; promoting justice reform and strengthening the rule of law; advancing alternative approaches to the war on drugs; challenging abusive police and militaries; and encouraging peace processes and negotiated solutions to conflict. We highlighted new priorities including a greater focus on the rise of anti-democratic forces, the impact of climate change, the role of gender, racial and sexual inequities, and

the promise of emerging social movements.

This year also brought major institutional changes to WOLA. We said good-bye to President Geoff Thale who worked for WOLA for 26 years, including as Vice President for Programs and as an expert on Cuba and Central America. Geoff now turns to a well-deserved retirement, but thankfully he will continue to be close to WOLA as an advisor and friend.

“ We were excited to welcome Carolina Jiménez Sandoval as our new president. Dr. Jiménez brings to WOLA over 20 years of experience in research and advocacy for human rights in the Americas and throughout the world. She is the first person from Latin America to head WOLA in its over 45-year history. As a leader in the field who has worked extensively throughout the region and in Washington, she is poised to guide WOLA's team to even greater strategic impact for social justice and human rights in the years to come. ”

As we enter 2022 with new leadership, plans, and energy, we are deeply grateful to all who have supported WOLA's work. We begin the year on a strong financial footing, with a passionately engaged board, and a first-rate staff who are primed to meet the challenges ahead.

Nancy Jane Belden
Chair of the Board of Directors



Message from The President

I have known WOLA over the years through its deep connection to partners in the region, and through its sophisticated research and advocacy. It is my honor to have been chosen this year as its new leader.

We are living through difficult and complex times. The COVID-19 pandemic is revealing the worst faces of inequality that has long characterized our societies. We are seeing the rise of new forms of authoritarianism in elected leaders who use the tools of democracy to undermine the very institutions of democracy. Despite these dangerous trends, we see, throughout the Americas, a vibrant civil society more empowered than ever before—one that is more adaptable to the fast pace of changing social reality.

We see movements and organizations that are more interconnected across the region. Groups that were marginalized in the past (women, LGTBQ+, Black, Indigenous, migrants) are amplifying their voices. People who were once silenced now proudly stand for their rights, and youth boldly embrace the fight for the future of our planet.

In this annual report, you will see the many ways that WOLA is leading with innovative strategies that provide vital support for human rights, democracy, and the rule of law. For each country and issue, our experts have developed a unique approach to meet the challenges – whether it protecting the rights of migrants at the U.S. and Mexican borders, standing with prosecutors who are being persecuted for their fight against corruption in Guatemala, reckoning with fifty years of a failed war on drugs, supporting new networks of women and families who have suffered from unjust incarceration, accompanying

civil society leaders and groups in Venezuela, or upholding the promise of peace in Colombia. WOLA works with courageous partners on the ground to bring about real change.

“ People often ask me why I work to defend human rights at a time when these values are at risk almost everywhere and populist leaders come to power openly opposing many of these principles. I answer—I do this because I know I am not alone. ”

I am excited to be at WOLA. I believe in its mission and vision. I believe that we need to advocate for a region where human rights are respected, where justice is a reality.

I am energized by WOLA's staff—our senior experts who know the region well, the young people passionate about Latin America, and teams dedicated to development, communications, and finance and operations that keep WOLA running. I am inspired to work with our Board of Directors who bring decades of rich experience in the Americas.

And I am grateful to our many supporters, individuals and foundations who have given generously and place their confidence in WOLA. As we turn toward WOLA's 50th anniversary in just a few years, we know our work has just begun.

Carolina Jiménez Sandoval
President

Our Impact



Photo by Matthew Bocanumenth

PUSHING BACK AGAINST POLICIES THAT FAIL TO PROTECT MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

The change of administration in the United States brought promises of a dramatic shift in migration policy in 2021. Unfortunately, new policies did not always match the rhetoric. At the U.S.-Mexican border and beyond, a confusing maze of regulations, court decisions, and administration backtracking exacerbated increasingly harsh realities on the ground. By the end of the year, many Trump era policies continued in force at the border. The U.S. government also proceeded with harmful efforts to externalize migration policies by pressuring Mexico to tighten its borders and receive expelled migrants with dangerous consequences.

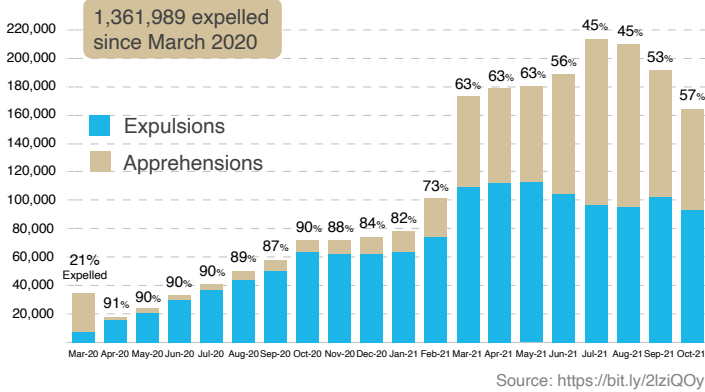
WOLA documented the dangers facing migrants and pushed back on every front, making the case that, as migration levels rise, it is even more critical for the United States to model rights-respecting approaches to protect lives

and secure borders. Our [Weekly Border Updates](#), tracking rapidly changing conditions and policies, reached a widening audience of policymakers, the press, partners, and supporters of our [Beyond the Wall Campaign](#). WOLA's Adam Isacson and former WOLA Executive Director Joy Olson traveled to El Paso and reported on threats facing migrants. WOLA gained the support of key leaders on Congressional Appropriations Committees for legislative restrictions on harsh policies. WOLA's VP Maureen Meyer coordinated our joint project with Temple University Law School in providing country conditions research to



Director for Defense Security Adam Isacson and former WOLA Executive Director Joy Olsen discuss migration policy with former Representative Beto O'Rourke in El Paso, TX. - Photo by Matthew Bocanumenth

Title 42 Expulsions and Regular Apprehensions of All Migrants at the U.S. - Mexico Border



help lawyers with asylum claims from Central America. She also joined the directors premiering a new documentary, *Missing in Brooks County*, as deaths of migrants on U.S. soil reached a grim record. Stephanie Brewer, WOLA's Mexico program director, provided path-breaking analysis exposing the human cost of Mexico's violent crackdown at its southern border, briefed officials on the dangers of current policies, and formulated alternatives for regional cooperation that will alleviate the escalating humanitarian crisis.

COUNTERING MILITARIZATION AND THE LACK OF JUSTICE IN MEXICO

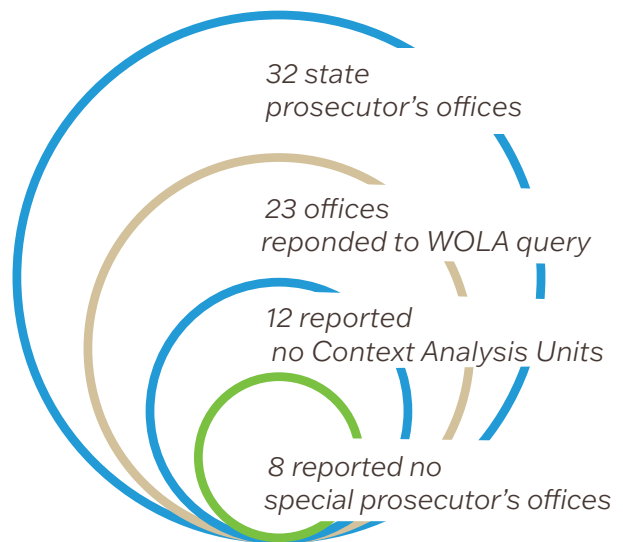
WOLA has taken a lead in examining the dangers of Mexico's increasing militarization of policing tasks, migration control, and other



Director for Mexico and Migrant Rights Stephanie Brewer moderates an event on "Militarization and Militarism in Mexico: Implications for Security and Democracy."

functions. Stephanie Brewer published an influential analysis, hosted a webinar of security experts, and provided background to Members of Congress who called on the U.S. Secretary of State to focus bilateral relations on "civilian institution-building and strengthening the rule of law and human rights." Her *comprehensive analysis* of the newly adopted, official "Bicentennial Framework" for security cooperation between the two countries sets the stage for future WOLA advocacy around U.S.-Mexico relations.

Meanwhile, over 97,000 people are currently recognized as disappeared or missing in Mexico. While the government has taken steps to improve the search for and identification of the disappeared, the vast majority of these crimes are neither solved nor prosecuted. This year, WOLA mounted an online campaign, *For Disappearances to End, Justice Must Begin*, to tell the story of how justice is failing victims at each step of the process, and to pressure authorities to take concrete steps to improve disappearance investigations. The campaign generated widespread media coverage and provided key resources for continuing advocacy by family collectives and allies in Mexico.





Program Associate Julia Cifuentes and Guatemalan human rights activist Helen Mack Chang discuss threats to anti-corruption efforts with Representative Norma Torres, Chair of the House of Representatives Central America Caucus.. Photo by Rep. Norma Torres' Office

STANDING FOR DEMOCRACY AND RULE OF LAW IN CENTRAL AMERICA

New data released this year by the [Central America Monitor](#) – a partnership between WOLA and key civil society organizations in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras – documented the setbacks in judicial independence, attacks against human rights defenders, and the persistence of gender inequality within these countries' judicial systems. The Monitor is an interactive online resource that will continue to provide data to allow governments, international donors, and civil society actors to develop and propose evidence-based policies to strengthen institutions, the rule of law, and citizen security in the region.

In El Salvador, the government's efforts to consolidate power prompted the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee to pass a bipartisan resolution, backed by WOLA, that called for a halt to attacks on democracy. In Guatemala, WOLA continued to respond to the efforts of

government officials and illicit networks to undermine judicial systems and integrity. We provided briefings for key U.S. decision-makers, including Vice President Kamala Harris, with our experts Geoff Thale and Adriana Beltrán and with independent judges and prosecutors who have taken a courageous stand for the rule of law. WOLA published [recommendations](#) for the international community calling out the sham elections in Nicaragua. Our expert [commentary](#) outlining steps to safeguard the electoral process in Honduras influenced coverage in the *The New York Times* and elsewhere.





WOLA's new President Carolina Jiménez, invited to Bogotá as a guest by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP) to commemorate the 5 year anniversary of the Colombia Peace Accord, meets with WOLA partners, the National Organization of Indigenous Peoples of Colombia (ONIC).



Program Director for the Andes Gimena Sánchez and Representative James McGovern meet with the Black Communities Process (PCN) during a fact-finding mission to Colombia. Pictured second from the right, Francia Márquez, Vice President candidate with Colombian presidential candidate Gustavo Petro.

CONTINUING THE CAMPAIGN FOR PEACE IN COLOMBIA

The fifth anniversary of Colombia's peace accord marked the occasion for WOLA to press for promises to be filled. Adam Isacson released a comprehensive analysis, *"A Long Way to Go"* assessing progress and shortfalls in implementing the accord. Director for the Andes Gimena Sánchez reported on views from *community interviews in Chocó* and co-hosted a *series of webinars* featuring Colombian partners' search for peace. WOLA's President Carolina Jimenez Sandoval was a special guest at the commemoration in Bogota and her New York Times opinion piece, *"Colombia Can't Afford to Abandon Peace,"* underscored the need for candidates in Colombia's upcoming presidential election to embrace clear steps to support peace.

WOLA's Urgent Actions throughout the year called immediate attention to ongoing dangers for human rights defenders and social leaders as violence surged to levels not seen since 2013. WOLA's multi-faceted *Con Lideres Hay Paz* campaign, highlighting the courageous work of social leaders who risk their lives to build peace in their communities, launched at a critical moment that dovetailed with widespread protests to end

police brutality. This campaign broke new ground in reaching a rising generation of activists in the United States and the region. In October, WOLA's experts traveled with Representative James McGovern to examine the human rights situation and meet with actors on the ground in Colombia, especially in rural areas where the government has failed to provide protection and services. WOLA also worked with key congressional committees to include human rights conditions on U.S. assistance to Colombian police forces who use extensive brutality to suppress social protests.

CONFRONTING DECADES OF DAMAGE FROM THE WAR ON DRUGS

The year 2021 brought the anniversaries of two watershed moments in drug policy that have generated disastrous consequences for human rights worldwide, particularly for the people of Latin America and the Caribbean. Fifty years ago, President Nixon announced the war on drugs, an "all-out offensive" waged within and beyond U.S. borders. A decade earlier, the United Nations launched the UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, the cornerstone of a prohibitionist global treaty regime that obliges countries to ban and

DECADES OF DAMAGE DONE: THE DRUG WAR CATASTROPHE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN.

Vicious Cycle: Forced Crop Eradication and the Never-Ending War on Drugs

Webinar, Jul. 15, 2021

The Catastrophe of Prohibition and the War on Drugs in Latin America and the Caribbean

Webinar, Aug. 05, 2021

Criminalized and Incarcerated in Latin America: How the Drug War drives the region's prison crisis

Webinar, Sep. 14, 2021

On a War Footing: How Armed Forces' Counter-Drug Mission Threatens Human Rights and Alters Democracies' Delicate Civil-Military Balance

Webinar, Oct. 29, 2021

punish drug activity for other than medical or scientific purposes. Far from achieving a “drug-free world,” decades of the drug war and punitive, prohibitionist policies have witnessed vast growth in illegal drug markets and fueled organized crime and corruption, all generating an incalculable toll of human bloodshed and suffering.

WOLA’s drug policy expert, John Walsh, and VP for Programs, Maureen Meyer, marked these somber anniversaries with a series of webinars highlighting how the “war on drugs” has been no mere

metaphor for Latin American and the Caribbean, but a lived reality with devastating consequences for millions of people. Gathering experts from around the region across all our program areas, WOLA’s webinar series, *Decades of Damage Done*, examined the catastrophic results of the drug war through a historical and contemporary lens and offered alternative approaches consistent with protecting human rights and achieving social justice. These webinars will be an important resource for reform for years to come.



Director for Drug Policy and the Andes John Walsh hosts the first in a series of webinars examining the disastrous impact of the war on drugs over the past decades.

WORKING TO SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE WOMEN’S INCARCERATION IN LATIN AMERICA

WOLA was among the first organizations to shed light on the terrible conditions facing women imprisoned for drug offenses throughout Latin



Inside Out from Women's Prisons: Resisting Punitive Drug Policies, co-produced by WOLA, features formerly incarcerated women discussing options for reform and efforts to mobilize for change. AWID Video - bit.ly/WOLA-IOWP



Assistant Director Mariakarla Nodarse moderates “The Road Ahead: Exploring the Situation in Cuba,” a webinar featuring experts such as WOLA Senior Fellow William LeoGrande and WOLA Board Member Philip Brenner.

America and the impact of harsh sentences on their families. WOLA Senior Fellow Coletta Youngers, who pioneered this work, coordinated regional and international advocacy among partners on these issues in 2021, making policy recommendations to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) and various U.N. bodies.

WOLA also provided ongoing expertise and advocacy guidance for a Latin American network of formerly incarcerated women, and launched a coalition with that network and a group of formerly incarcerated women in Spain. WOLA is also an instrumental source of support for a new women-led network of organizations of family members of people in prison.

Through these essential partnerships, WOLA encourages women whose views are rarely heard in policy debates, including those who are often in situations of vulnerability such as trans women and women of color, and helps amplify their voices with cutting-edge communications strategies. This year, WOLA co-produced *Inside Out From Women's Prisons: Resisting Punitive Drug Policies*, a video that features formerly incarcerated women discussing options for reform and efforts to mobilize for change.

ADDRESSING HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN CRISES IN CUBA

Cubans are experiencing the worst economic and humanitarian crisis in recent times with shortages of food, basic goods, and medical supplies amidst the COVID-19 pandemic; U.S. regulations exacerbate the situation on the ground. The summer of 2021 also saw rising protests met with increasing government repression and intimidation. WOLA condemned the Cuban government's response and called on Cuba to refrain from violence and repression, recognize the need for greater participation in the public sphere, and clear protection for free speech.

WOLA called for a renewed focus on the humanitarian needs of the Cuban people and a critical understanding of how restrictive U.S. policies cause greater human hardship without leading to greater rights or freedom. Meeting with an array of policymakers on Capitol Hill and in the Biden Administration, WOLA's Mariakarla Nodarse Venancio provided background briefings to explain why now is the time to renew engagement with Cuba. In an effort supported by WOLA, 114 members of the House of Representatives joined in a letter

calling on the U.S. administration to take swift actions to address the humanitarian crisis on the island—including suspending regulations that prevent food, medicine, and other basic needs from reaching the Cuban people; and rolling-back Trump-era restrictions on travel and family remittances that create roadblocks to dialogue and meeting humanitarian needs.

DEEPENING THE IMPACT OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN VENEZUELA



Venezuela’s human rights and humanitarian crisis continued in 2021, and the government has increased persecution and repression against critics or perceived opponents. In November 2021, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) announced a formal investigation into crimes committed by government officials and pro-government individuals. WOLA’s Venezuela team has been clear in calling for justice for victims, an end to impunity, and for the peaceful restoration of the democratic rule of law through free and fair elections. WOLA has continued to work closely with partners on the ground, including a broad civil society coalition, the Foro Civico, which brings together NGOs, faith-based

groups, union leaders, academics, and the private sector. In 2021, WOLA hosted a visit of the Foro Civico in Washington and supported their efforts to improve electoral conditions in Venezuela ahead of regional elections.

With a new administration in the White House, WOLA issued a *series of recommendations* on how U.S. policy can contribute to a peaceful, democratic solution, defend human rights and address humanitarian needs. WOLA’s Venezuela team visited the country in August and September, a time when negotiations between the Maduro government and the opposition began to show promise and the parties created a working group to address the humanitarian emergency. The trip provided the basis for WOLA’s policy memo, *The Crisis Can’t Wait* on how the U.S. government can better support humanitarian accords. Although the Maduro government suspended its participation in talks in October, WOLA pressed for a way forward. WOLA’s Geoff Ramsey underscored the importance of U.S. leadership in a December Washington Post opinion piece, “*Joe Biden Can Jump-Start his Stagnant Venezuela Policy.*”

WOLA also deepened work with key partner organizations across the region to raise awareness of the more than 6 million refugees who have fled Venezuela, and to address the gaps in the regional response. Throughout 2021, WOLA provided up-to-date analysis of key aspects of the Venezuela crisis on the Venezuela Politics and Human Rights blog and on the newly-launched Venezuela Briefing podcast..



2020 Latin Grammy nominated singer Gina Chavez performs at WOLA's 2021 Human Rights Awards and Benefit Gala.



Human Rights Awards & Benefit Gala 2021

Honoring Courageous Leaders for Human Rights Across the Hemisphere

WOLA's 2021 Human Rights Awards Ceremony on September 22nd was held at a moment when people throughout the Americas were standing up against abuses of power and for a more equitable future. This virtual gala allowed hundreds of participants from around the region and the world to join in celebrating three honorees who exemplify courageous leadership for human rights.

Special Guest Emcee – Gina Chavez

Our host for the evening, singer Gina Chavez, has been a friend of WOLA's for many years.

Her commitment to Latin America is deep and personal. She and her wife are the founders of Niñas Arriba, a fund that allows young Salvadoran women to pursue their dreams of college education.

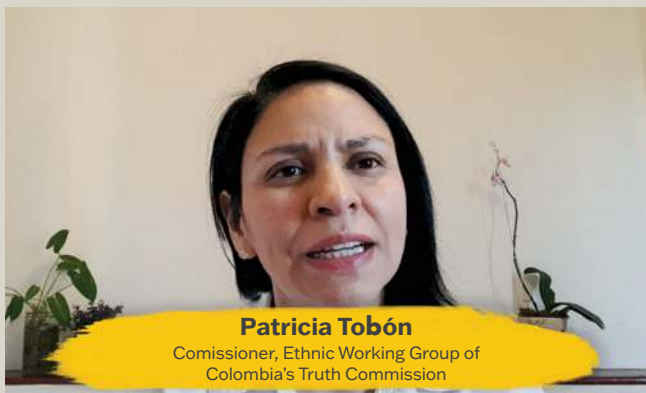
She has been praised as a “masterful storyteller of the Latin American song movement.” With vocals and rhythms that cross cultures, she evokes the power of taking a stand for what is just and true. She brought the evening to a dramatic close with a moving performance of the title song from her Latin Grammy-nominated album -- *La Que Manda*.

WOLA'S 2021 HUMAN RIGHTS AWARDEES



The Ethnic Working Group of Colombia's Truth Commission who, despite immense danger and personal risk, are working to establish the truth of what Afro-Colombian and Indigenous communities experienced during Colombia's decades-long conflict. Commission members *Leyner Palacios Asprilla* and *Patricia Tobón* accepted the award on behalf of the Ethnic Working Group of Colombia's Truth Commission.

“ WOLA plays an irreplaceable role in supporting human rights work in Colombia,” said Palacios. “Our hope is to create a path forward for redress and healing for all Colombians. ”



Representative Barbara Lee who, with her bold leadership for peace and justice in the U.S. Congress, is an international role model inspiring others to work for an end to war. She is chair of the House Appropriations subcommittee that shapes U.S. foreign aid, has been a staunch advocate for migrants from Haiti, has pushed for policies that put at the center Afro-Colombian and Indigenous communities in Colombia, and continues her long commitment to greater engagement with Cuba.

“ Whether it is fighting for rights of people who have been displaced, supporting peace in Colombia, or helping to open a new era of U.S.-Cuba relations, WOLA has been there,” said Representative Lee. “Tonight, let's recommit ourselves to the cause of human rights -- because when we fight, we win. ”



Fundación Mi Sangre who is lifting up new generations that are committed to a culture of peace in Colombia. Since 2006, they have been training young activists and leaders working for causes such as voting rights, aid to landmine victims, and alternatives for at-risk youth in their communities. Co-founder and musician *Juan Esteban Aristisábal Vásquez*, known



Catalina Cock Duque
 Director and co-founder, Mi Sangre

professionally as *Juanes*, and co-founder, Director *Catalina Cock Duque*, accepted the award on behalf of Fundación Mi Sangre.

“Thank you WOLA ... for your work to defend peace and human rights in Colombia,” said Juanes. “At Fundación Mi Sangre, we believe in the transformative power of young people ... they are not only the future but the present of our country.”

WOLA Partners' Council

The WOLA Partners' Council is a community of people that plays a vital role in championing human rights and democracy in our hemisphere. It is a non-governing membership body whose participants strengthen WOLA's ability to fulfill its mission through their financial contributions and their strong engagement with our research and advocacy work.

Through the Partners' Council, members are connected to a vibrant group of leaders and the social changemakers in the Americas. In 2021, WOLA's experts offered an array of private briefings, memos, and events especially for our Partners' Council such as:



WOLA's Vice President for Programs Maureen Meyer provides an exclusive briefing on migration policy for members of the Partners' Council.

1 Biden's First Year: Key Actions for Latin America

2 The 50th Anniversary of the War on Drugs

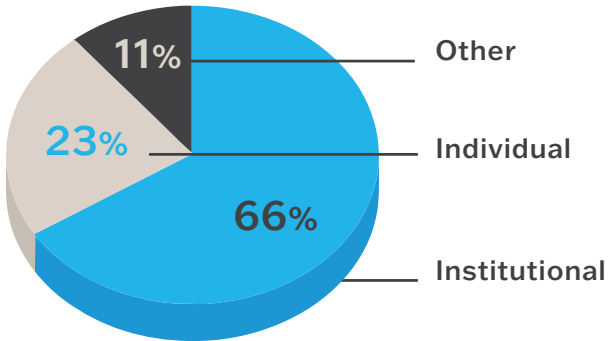
3 The Current State of Human Rights in Colombia

4 An Urgent Discussion on Human Rights Abuses at the U.S.-Mexico Border

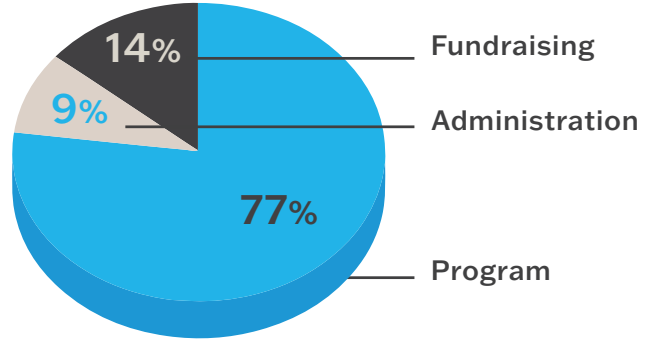
Our Impact by the Numbers

FINANCIAL REVIEW 2021
BUDGET: \$4,001,381

INCOME



EXPENSES



**Unaudited figures as of February 2022.
 Audited figures will be updated on our website.*

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28,000+
 TOTAL DOWNLOADS

Latin America Today:
 TOP EPISODE -
 Understanding Colombia's Latest Wave of Social Protest

2,000+
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 TOP EPISODE -
 Leyner Palacios Asprilla: A Vision for Peace (English) and Darío Mejía: Una visión del futuro (Spanish)

4,000+
 TOTAL DOWNLOADS

The Venezuela Briefing:
 TOP EPISODE -
 Venezuela's Changing Political Landscape

WOLA'S EXTENSIVE DIGITAL OUTREACH

WEBSITE
885K
 UNIQUE IMPRESSIONS



PRIMARY SOCIALS

+1200
 Instagram followers

+7600
 Twitter followers

+1300
 FB followers

SECONDARY SOCIALS

YouTube
 Subscribe **+420**

+5000
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Forbes MEXICO

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



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The New York Times

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The Washington Post



Research and Advocacy: Funded by People Like You

VISIONARIES CIRCLE \$50,000+

Anonymous	Open Society Foundations
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Lippincott Foundation	Stewart R. Mott Foundation
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Marlene Johnson
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Pat Davis & Wes Callender
Peggy Healy
Richard Newfarmer & Margaret Sarles

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Recor Rieber Law Firm, Miami, FL

(Term started: June 2021)

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Former Deputy Director for Partnership
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International Fund for Agricultural Development
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(Term ended: July 2021)

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WELCOMING WOLA'S NEW PRESIDENT, CAROLINA JIMÉNEZ SANDOVAL

Carolina Jiménez Sandoval is the new President of the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA). She brings over 20 years experience in research and advocacy for human rights in the Americas and throughout the world. As a leader in the field who has worked extensively throughout the region and in Washington, she will guide WOLA to a new era of strategic impact.

She comes to WOLA from Amnesty International where she was Deputy Research Director for the Americas in Mexico City. In her almost seven years there, she led a team of researchers documenting human rights violations and designing advocacy strategies to guarantee respect for human rights. Prior to that, she was program officer for the Open Society Foundations' Latin America Program and International Migration Initiative where she led the creation of CAMMINA (the Central America and Mexico Migration Alliance), a donor collaborative funded by OSF, AVINA, and the Ford Foundation to support migrants' rights organizations in the region. She is a frequent contributor to media outlets and publications across Latin America and the U.S.

Dr. Jiménez has a PhD in international studies from Waseda University, Japan, and did a postdoctoral program in human rights and ethics at the Central University of Venezuela. She holds a master's degree in international law and Asian studies from Chuo University, Japan, and a master's of philosophy in international relations from the University of Cambridge, England. She graduated from the Universidad Central de Venezuela with a BA in international relations. She is a national of Venezuela and Mexico.

“The Americas are home to a vibrant civil society, filled with energy and committed to the defense of human rights,” according to President Carolina Jiménez. “Now and in the future, WOLA will remain a close ally and partner as we take the principles of human rights and social justice as the primary guide that determines each action and initiative of our work.”



THANKS TO GEOFF THALE FOR 26 YEARS OF SERVICE TO WOLA

Geoff Thale has dedicated his life to human rights in Latin America. He came to WOLA in 1995 to work on Central America issues after years as an activist for peace and justice in the region. He assumed the Presidency of WOLA in the fall of 2019 and is retiring after providing decades of strong and inspirational leadership to WOLA staff and partners.

Geoff was WOLA's Vice President for Programs for 14 years, working with staff on advocacy strategies and expert analyses. He founded WOLA's Cuba program, supporting normalization of relations between the United States and Cuba. He has remained one of the most impactful experts on Central America.

At WOLA, we will miss Geoff's passion, strategic insights, relentless commitment to justice, and the unflinching good humor that have carried WOLA through some of the toughest challenges. We know he will continue these commitments in new ways as he leaves the leadership of WOLA in the hands of a new generation of human rights advocates.



CONGRATULATING ADRIANA BELTRÁN, WOLA'S CITIZEN SECURITY DIRECTOR

This year brought an important new opportunity for one of WOLA's key experts as Adriana Beltrán became Executive Director of the Seattle International Foundation (SIF). Since first coming to WOLA in 1998, she has been a brilliant and passionate advocate for human rights. She has headed our Citizen Security program, bringing her expertise on fighting corruption and impunity to strengthen the rule of law, promote human rights guarantees, and address root causes of migration, especially in Central America. She authored, *Hidden Powers*, a ground-breaking study of the impact of illegal armed groups in post-conflict Guatemala, and she played a key role in advocating for the creation of the International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIIG). She started our Central American Monitor (CAM) and coordinated work with regional partners to improve accountability and reduce violence. We look forward to working with her at the helm of SIF, one of the key organizations championing justice in Central America.



WOLA Staff

CAROLINA JIMÉNEZ SANDOVAL
President

GEOFF THALE
President (mid-2021)

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Vice President for Programs

MELISSA GOLLADAY
Vice President for Finance and Operations

MARIO MORENO
Vice President for Communications

LAUREN KIMBALL
Vice President for Development

STEPHANIE BREWER
Director for Mexico and Migrant Rights

LISETTE ALVAREZ
Director for Digital Strategy

JOHN WALSH
Director for Drug Policy and the Andes

GEOFF RAMSEY
Director for Venezuela

JILLIAN LESLIE
Director for Individual Giving

ADRIANA BELTRÁN
Director for Citizen Security

GIMENA SÁNCHEZ-GARZOLI
Director for the Andes

ADAM ISACSON
Director for Defense Oversight

CAYLA SPEAR
Assistant Director for Human Resources and Internship Coordinator

AUSTIN ROBLES
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ALEXANDRA KONICKI
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JOE ELDRIDGE

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COLETTA YOUNGERS

Senior Fellow

KATHY GILLE

Senior Fellow

JO-MARIE BURT

Senior Fellow

DAVID SMILDE

Senior Fellow

WILLIAM LEOGRANDE

Senior Fellow



Interns participate in a series of "brown bag" meetings with experts, such as WOLA's Colombia team.

The Sally Yudelman Internship Program

WOLA's Sally Yudelman Internship Program is named after the late chair of WOLA's Board of Directors for her enduring commitment to supporting the next generation of human rights advocates. The program gives individuals hands-on, productive experience that will help them find future opportunities in the field of human rights and encourage a lifelong interest in Latin America. In 2021, WOLA took the important step of making our internships more accessible to all by procuring the funds to pay an hourly wage. While this has meant fewer interns in the short term, we are proud of WOLA's abiding commitment to equity and are grateful to generous donors who make this possible. The program continues to offer one of the most thorough, engaging, and formative human rights experiences in Washington, D.C.



Yadira Sánchez-Esparza
Mexico & Colombia Intern

“ I have a great deal of admiration for both the mission and the method of

WOLA... they are adamant about treating their partners and the individuals they support in the Latin American region with respect and as equals. ”



Austin Montgomery
Border Security and Development Intern

“ I chose WOLA because I have deep passion for improving human rights across the western hemisphere.

I am excited to join the team and learn skills that can be applied to my future endeavors in the foreign policy arena. ”



Cover Pictures Photo Credit

*Migrants walk on a dirt road after
crossing the U.S.-Mexico border
(AP Photo/Julio Cortez)*

*A man sets up candles to form the word Paz, Spanish
for Peace, during a vigil to ask for the release of rebel
hostages in Cali, Colombia
(AP Photo/Carlos Julio Martinez)*

*TOC picture Photo Credit
(AP Photo/Gregory Bull)*

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