PMAC PRINCE MAHIDOL AWARD CONFERENCE 2021

WS205

RESISTANCE, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS DURING COVID PANDEMIC

| BACKGROUND

Almost everywhere in the world, certain groups of people more than others experience severe forms of deprivation and discrimination, violence, abuse and extortion, and even detention and incarceration (including arbitrary arrest) due to their race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, citizenship status, or sexual orientation. Human mobility has increased significantly during the last two decades, as internally displaced or international migrants seek to escape wars, conflicts, ethnic persecution, political instability, armed violence, extreme poverty, income inequality, and, increasingly, climate change impacts. Many of these drivers of population movement originate in corporate practices (e.g., the continuing international arms trade), government policies (e.g., a proliferation of trade and investment agreements compromising livelihoods), and national and global failures to deal effectively with climate change. Extractivism has led to forced displacement and dispossession of indigenous communities all over the world. Many of those most affected by displacement or forced migration are women and children. Others face discrimination within their own countries and may seek migration or refugee status to avoid violence, including members of LGBTQ+ communities, or those discriminated against based on race, religion, ethnicity, or other minority differences. Aggravation

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated these existing social exclusion and prejudice. People of color, people in lower-income households, indigenous communities, unauthorized migrants (especially those in detention centers), refugees and asylum seekers, and prisoners (including political prisoners) have experienced a higher burden of the pandemic. These vulnerable populations and socially excluded groups were heavily impacted in terms of higher prevalence of infections, higher severity of the disease, compromised access to healthcare services, and higher rates of deaths. Mental health impacts, and increase in gender-based violence and domestic violence have also been seen.

| OBJECTIVES

- Identify and describe forms of resistance in terms of enforced extraterritorial obligations, governmental policies, social movements. How may they be supported? What have been the opportunities and threats?
- Identify and discuss policy proposals to address social exclusion at different levels, calling upon the conference participants to adopt.



Panelist

Vicki Gass

Senior Policy Advisor for Central America and Mexico

Oxfam-America
United States of America

Vicki Gass has been working on Central American social and economic justice issues since 1984, and has lived in both El Salvador and Honduras. From 1999-2001, she led regional advocacy efforts in Central America following Hurricane Mitch for WOLA and Oxfam America. At the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), Ms. Gass directed the Rights and Development program, which focused on the relationship between human rights, economic development and US policy towards in the hemisphere. She followed US foreign aid and trade policy, with a special emphasis on poverty reduction, labor rights and the rural sector in Latin America. At Oxfam America, Ms. Gass is the Senior Policy Advisor to Central America and Mexico, advocating for policy issues of concern to the region in Washington, DC including fiscal reform and tax justice, gender equity, migration, climate change and sustainable rural development.