

Education and Human Rights: The Commitment of Educators in Exile in Latin America

October 5 (RIDHE).— World Teachers' Day is an opportunity to recognize the invaluable contribution of those who teach, guide, and accompany new generations. However, for **many educators across Latin America and the Caribbean**, this vocation is not free from risks. In contexts of political, social, or religious persecution, being a teacher can become an act of courage—sometimes **requiring one to leave their country and face forced displacement**.

The **International Network for Human Rights Europe (RIDHE)** joins the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (**UNESCO**) in commemorating this day and highlighting the 2025 theme: ***Redefining Teaching as a Collaborative Profession***.

Teaching is not only a profession; it is a right and a duty, protected under the principles of education and academic freedom. Educators are entrusted with transmitting knowledge, fostering critical citizenship, and promoting democratic values. At the same time, States are obliged to ensure safe conditions for teaching, including protection against persecution.

Drawing from RIDHE's experience working with **displaced persons across Latin America and the Caribbean**, we recognize that when educators are forced to flee their countries, their professional work and studies are abruptly interrupted. This not only undermines their own development but also deprives thousands of students of essential mentors in their educational journey.

The disruption of teaching due to insecurity reveals a violation of fundamental rights, such as the right to education and freedom of thought.

Academic freedom encompasses the right to teach, research, and express ideas without censorship or retaliation. Yet, particularly in **Latin America**, it has been documented that **this freedom is under serious threat in contexts of persecution**. Exiled educators in the region embody the struggle to safeguard academic freedom and critical thinking, seeking spaces where they can continue teaching and contributing to knowledge without fear.

It is not only educators who suffer; **students across Latin America and the Caribbean are also denied their right to education** when teachers are forcibly displaced. The loss of trained and committed educators interrupts learning

processes, undermines access to quality education, and deepens inequalities, limiting opportunities for human development.

Despite these obstacles, many teachers in situations of forced displacement find ways to continue their vocation. **RIDHE acknowledges the work of** international organizations, educational networks, and migrant communities who provide support so that educators may keep teaching, studying, and engaging in educational processes—rebuilding their professional lives and contributing to new societies.

For **those who teach while in displacement**, education **becomes an act of resistance and dignity**. To continue educating, sharing knowledge, and shaping students is to reaffirm human rights and democratic values, even in adverse contexts. Every lesson taught becomes a gesture of commitment to freedom and justice.

In today's international context—marked by ethical and financial challenges—institutions such as the United Nations, UNESCO, and networks like RIDHE play a crucial role in protecting persecuted educators, ensuring access to training, and facilitating their integration into new educational systems.

Recognizing and supporting educators is key to safeguarding the right to education, regardless of borders.

On this World Teachers' Day, we seek to shed light on the challenges faced by teachers under threat, particularly in Latin America. States, civil society, and the international community must work together to ensure that no educator is forced to abandon their vocation due to persecution, by advancing policies that protect both education and academic freedom.