

2026: A Year That Challenges Us — Defending Life, Protecting Rights, Standing with Movements

Brussels, January 9, 2026 — The beginning of the year finds the **International Network of Human Rights Europe (RIDHE)** at a moment that demands clarity, resolve, and commitment. The end-of-year period unfolded in a region marked by the advance of authoritarianism and the tightening of migration policies, with direct and profound impacts on the lives of people in situations of human mobility.

Today, the effectiveness of International Law depends on our collective capacity to defend, strengthen, and safeguard the consensus and mechanisms that have already been built, rather than allowing them to erode.

In this context, RIDHE reaffirms its role as a network for protection, documentation, and accompaniment, committed to collective action and to education and solidarity as essential responses to exclusion and institutional violence.

In **Venezuela**, the humanitarian crisis and large-scale displacement persist. People in situations of mobility remain exposed to multiple forms of violence, within a regional environment increasingly strained by hostile external decisions that weaken protection frameworks and place civilian populations in heightened vulnerability.

In **Nicaragua**, political persecution, arbitrary deprivation of nationality, and forced expulsions have produced statelessness and prolonged exile, disproportionately affecting women, older persons, and separated families.

In **El Salvador**, the normalization of exceptional measures has eroded basic guarantees and generated new forms of displacement.

Peru continues to be marked by political instability and the criminalization of protest, with severe impacts on Indigenous and rural communities.

At the same time, countries that have historically offered protection, such as **Costa Rica**, are experiencing setbacks in their protection policies, increasing the vulnerability of asylum seekers and racialized communities in situations of mobility.

This regional landscape also includes the **United States**, where the increase in deportations, migrant detention, and restrictions on access to international protection mechanisms have led to serious human rights violations, particularly affecting families and people seeking asylum.

Structurally, **Indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples** continue to be displaced from their territories, while **older persons, persons with disabilities, and LGBTIQ+ individuals** face exclusion and limited protection in contexts of human mobility.

Compounding these challenges is the reduction in funding for long-term human rights programs, which weakens emergency responses and constrains sustained processes of accompaniment, protection, and reparation. In this context, we reaffirm that affected individuals and communities must remain at the center of all public policies and humanitarian action.

From RIDHE's direct experience working with populations in situations of vulnerability, we know that even in contexts of crisis, hope does not disappear.

Education—particularly in emergency settings and forced displacement—has remained a space for reconstruction, connection, and future projection. Throughout this year, we have accompanied women and young people who, despite displacement and uncertainty, sustain learning processes, leadership initiatives, and collective organization. Their efforts remind us that dignity is also defended by creating opportunities and strengthening capacities.

At the start of 2026, we recall that **International Law is tested when it ceases to be merely a reference and becomes a real limit**. In a region marked by tension, displacement, and regression, its relevance depends on the existence of networks capable of upholding it in practice, protecting those most exposed, and preventing protection frameworks from being emptied of meaning.

We remain present — articulating, accompanying, and protecting.

Because we are a protective network.
We are RIDHE.