



FREEDOM of MOVEMENT: A POSITION PAPER

We, as networks and organisations engaged in the management of international voluntary service projects, are committed to a world in which all people and peoples are free to move and free to settle. This right is universal, inalienable and to be exercised without distinction of any kind, such as 'race', colour, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, economic situation, birth or other status.

We strive for a healthy and sustainable world in which fairly shared resources and social justice lead towards the development of communities living in harmony and solidarity. That is the key objective of all international voluntary service organisations. In thousands of projects throughout the world every year volunteers from all corners of the globe come together to put these principles into practice.

Yet we find ourselves increasingly hampered in this work by movement restrictions that deny many individuals the opportunity for hands-on experience in different countries than their own, learning of other people and cultures as they contribute to host communities that simultaneously gain insight into each other's background and values.

At present it is only a tiny minority of the world's population who enjoy anything like real freedom of movement.

While need and opportunity are abiding drivers of migration we are currently witnessing a movement of peoples and people driven by war, persecution, discrimination and the real danger of death, injury and torture. The scale of this movement surpasses even that seen in the aftermath of World War II. Wars and repressive regimes in the world have caused many to flee, making perilous journeys to what are seen as places of safety.

It is not the purpose of this position paper to examine the causes of those conflicts much less to attribute responsibility to the policies pursued by nations to which migrants and refugees seek entry. The responsibility of those nations pre-exists by virtue of the obligations they have undertaken. For example, Article 13 and 14 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 2, Protocol No 4 of the European Convention on Human Rights provide for freedom of movement, freedom of choice of residence and to seek asylum. We express our deep dismay that far from applying such provisions of international law in an open-minded, measured and fair way we witness national reactions and attitudes that are unwelcoming, mean-minded, grudging and overly defensive.



On behalf of the International Voluntary Service Movement we call on all countries to immediately:

- Support the vision of a world without borders and facilitate the free movement of all people;
- Educate populations on the value of cultural diversity and multicultural societies and also the advantages for all nations of welcoming migrants and refugees;
- Implement programmes to assist migrants and refugees to settle within the communities in which they find themselves;
- Cooperate with one another to facilitate a fair and just application of the principles enshrined in the 1951 Refugee Convention;
- Close detention centres in which migrants and refugees are imprisoned, in humiliating conditions;
- Keep families together and provide protection and a secure environment
- End human trafficking and protect unaccompanied minors;
- Make available to refugees and migrants the same health, education and welfare facilities and civil rights that are provided for the citizenry of the host country;
- Pursue policies that bring to an end war, oppression and poverty in the countries from which refugees and migrants have fled.
- End the arms trade which fuels violent conflict.

We call on all national and international networks of voluntary and non-governmental organisations to join us in this call and in this campaign for freedom and justice for all people.