THE MIGRATION POLICY FORUM

AMERICAS WORKING GROUP

PERILOUS JOURNEYS:
Human and Policy Challenges of Transit Migration through Mexico

Photo by Patrick Farrell, Miami Herald

Friday, March 4, 2016
12:30PM-2:30PM
Cabot 206
**Chairs:**
Katrina Burgess, Associate Professor of Political Economy  
Karen Jacobsen, Associate Research Professor, Acting Director of the Feinstein International Center

**Panelists:**
Noelle Bridgen, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Marquette University  
Rafael Fernández de Castro, Professor of Public Administration and International Affairs Maxwell School, Syracuse University and Autonomous Technological Institute of Mexico  
Diana Essex-Lettieri, Strategy and Operations Director, Asylum Access  
Jennifer Podkul, Senior Program Officer, Women’s Refugee Commission

**About the Migration Policy Forum:**
The Institute for Human Security launched the Migration Policy Forum to explore key policy themes related to migration in two regions: the Americas and Europe.

**The Americas Working Group:**
The focus is on Latin American countries, primarily Mexico, as buffer zones or entry points for migration into the United States, with the goal of developing regional solutions to the rapidly growing intersection between violence and migration in the Americas.

The group’s primary focus will be on Central Americans, particularly unaccompanied minors, who are attempting to cross Mexico into the United States in response to extreme levels of violence and criminality in their communities of origin. In addition, the group will explore less well-known groups and pathways through the Americas, such as the recent wave of Cubans opting for land routes to the United States and the small but apparently growing flow of transatlantic migrants entering the Americas at various points in South and Central America.

**Co-sponsored by:**
Institute for Human Security  
Feinstein International Center  
Institute for Global Maritime Studies
Noelle Brigden is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at Marquette University, where she teaches courses on international relations, human security, and migration. She previously held a Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Watson Institute for International Studies at Brown University. She earned her Ph.D. in Government at Cornell University. During her research on the violence and uncertainty that confronts Central American migrants in transit, she conducted over two years of fieldwork along unauthorized routes in El Salvador, Mexico and the United States.

Rafael Fernandez de Castro is a noted Latin American scholar, policy maker, teacher, diplomat, and journalist, who has been named the inaugural Jay and Debe Moskowitz Endowed Chair at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs of Syracuse University. He is the founder and chair of the School of International Studies at the Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México (ITAM) and also the former foreign policy advisor to the president of Mexico.

Diana Essex-Lettieri leads Asylum Access’s internal learning initiatives and directs the organization’s efforts to grow and strengthen the global movement for refugee rights, including directing development of the Refugee Rights Toolkit. She also oversees operations for Asylum Access headquarters and supports operations improvements at Asylum Access offices in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Jennifer Podkul is the Senior Program Officer for the Migrant Rights and Justice program at the Women’s Refugee Commission where she advocates for policies designed to protect women, children and families seeking protection in the United States. Prior to joining the Women’s Refugee Commission, Jennifer worked as an attorney providing representation to immigrant children in immigration and family court first as an Equal Justice Works Fellow at Ayuda in Washington, D.C. and later as a fellow with Kids in Need of Defense (KIND).