



TodoSomos

As a United States-based non-governmental organization (NGO) registered in Colombia, TodoSomos will, through the collection of first person handwritten testimonials by Venezuelan refugees, create an archive of individuals' and families' stories in this crisis - the exodus and their experience as part of the Venezuelan diáspora.

The TodoSomos archive will be available to everyone – journalists, aid agencies, donors, researchers, government and United Nations officials, and the general public. On a periodic basis TodoSomos will select, transcribe and translate a selection of the writings that reflect the greater body of work. These selections will be published in bilingual books which will be distributed in print form throughout the Americas and in a digital format online.

Together with population based data, this will shine light on the Venezuelan crisis in a way that will better engage the attention of the global community and in turn help to insure the needs and voice of ordinary Venezuelans are heard and that they are louder than politicians and powerful special interests. It is our goal to make these voices part of Venezuela's – indeed, the world's – historical record.

Our methodology will ensure that those that choose to write will understand our respect for anonymity, the value of handwritten testimony, and the greater purpose of our work in advocacy and creation of a permanent archive.

This work is important. As of October 2019 the UN estimates that more than 4.5 million Venezuelans have left their country. The majority have crossed on foot through a high Andean mountain pass (3,900m) near Cucuta in Colombia. Today more than 10,000 Venezuelans make this crossing each month.

Observations from the story collectors

Comenzamos nuestro primer libro en un refugio en Pamplona...

Allí, noche tras noche,
Nos hemos visto abrumados por el silencio cuando pedimos su ayuda,
Nos hemos visto conmovidos por sus palabras escritas,
Nos hemos visto,
Los hemos visto cuando nos buscaban y nos miraban a los ojos
tomando la mano con firmeza y diciendo:

Gracias...

Alguien tiene que saber, alguien debe escucharnos ...

December 2019

Friends,

Every day for the last four years more than a 1,000 of our people leave, most on foot with more hope than money, and often more hope than plans. 1,000 people per day is 30,000 per month, that is the size of 10 small towns per year. Its important the world understands why you are leaving. Its important you understand why you are leaving. Its important we understand how you have been treated along the way – by your country people, by Colombians, by police; by the people that want to help you and the people that have meant you harm. We would like you to write down these histories. We will share these with others so your voice is not lost.

We hope to get support to put these into a book, to put these on a website, and to store these where journalists and others can find them. What is happening to you and to your country is too important for your story to simply disappear.

I'm asking you tonight, though you are tired and perhaps a little afraid; please take a little time and put down your thoughts. We want the story you would tell your brother, your father, your best friend – Why did you leave? How has it been? What do you hope for in the future? I know you listen, and maybe you think, ‘..... what are my words worth? I am a simple person..’ And you might ask, ‘how do I begin?’ Please try, start at the beginning, it is so very important.

We have a small printed book you can look at. It is an example of how we would like to share your story with others.

If we publish your story in a book we will not use your name, this to protect your privacy and your identity. If you are comfortable please put your name in the book as you write, this may be helpful for family and others if they search for you in the future. When we have finished with our work we will store these books with an International NGO or the United Nations.

Sincerely,

TodoSomos

