

A day of reflection

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By Guillermo Alvarado

Today, December 10, is World Human Rights Day, an appropriate day to remember the suffering of hundreds of thousands of people deprived of their fundamental guarantees, forced to live far below the threshold of decency and dignity.

Much can be written and spoken about the subject but, as always, examples are more graphic than theories and I am going to refer to two cases, not by chance involving the world's leading power, the United States, of unpleasant memories for many peoples of the planet.

The first has to do with migrants, those masses of people who move from the south in the hope of crossing the borders of the northern "paradise" and finding the opportunities denied to them in their place of origin.

It is a hazardous journey and almost always with an unhappy ending, as recalled by the painful images of children taken from their parents and locked in metal cages, as if they were dangerous little beasts.

Unfortunately, the treatment has not improved, as evidenced by the return of the "Stay in Mexico" program, reissued by Joseph Biden.

It means that those who managed to submit an asylum application in the United States, who are a small part of those who try, must wait for a response south of the border, usually in unsanitary camps and dangerous places with no guarantee that they will be admitted.

Humanitarian reception centers are expected to be overflowing, food is scarce and the risk of contracting covid-19 due to overcrowding is very high.

On the other side of the planet, in Afghanistan, militarily occupied for two decades by an international coalition led by the United States and then abandoned to its fate, another very unfortunate crisis is unfolding.

The effects of war, an unusual drought and the sanctions imposed on the Taliban regime are causing an unprecedented famine that threatens children in particular, many of whom are malnourished and on the verge of death.

The UN Children's Fund warned that some three million children lack nutrients and one million could die this winter.

The scenes are horrifying, there are mothers who travel long distances to take their children to hospitals, where sometimes there are no resources to care for them because aid is trickling into the country and Afghan international reserves are still frozen in the United States.

There is no time to talk about Palestine, Syria, Yemen, Haiti and other places, where millions of people will not know there is a Human Rights Day, first because they have never enjoyed them, and second because they are too busy surviving.

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