

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **The Chaparral Humanitarian Alliance denounces the early morning eviction of the “El Chaparral” encampment by authorities, the Municipal Police, and the National Guard in Tijuana while the US continues to deny the right to seek asylum**

**Tijuana Baja California** – Yesterday, around 4:00 AM, while children and families were sleeping in their tents, authorities accompanied by riot police and the National Guard arrived unannounced at the "El Chaparral" encampment in Tijuana to carry out a total eviction. The way in which this eviction was carried out caused chaos, psychological and emotional trauma, loss of belongings, and widespread unnecessary fear among the migrant population; furthermore, it fosters xenophobia in the region. The poor conditions that existed in the encampment for a long time—which have been documented and denounced on several occasions by civil society—are the result of abandonment by the Mexican authorities, the negligence of international agencies, and the denial of the right to seek asylum by the United States government. This early-morning eviction with hundreds of police and military elements was an unnecessary act that violates the rights of people in need of international protection.

Based on face-to-face observation and documentation, testimonies collected in “El Chaparral” and by telephone, public broadcasts, and conversations with authorities, we denounce the following facts:

- **Excessive show of force:** In addition to officers from municipal government agencies, 150 elements of the municipal police and 200 elements of the National Guard were deployed for the eviction. According to data from the Tijuana Mayor's Office, there were 86 family units in the encampment, with a total of 326 people. In other words, the number of police and military personnel deployed for the operation was greater than the number of migrants. Several people stated that they felt fear, panic, confusion, and terror when they were awoken at 4:00 AM by this violent action; children being the most affected. The elements of the National Guard carried batons and anti-riot shields, and we observed several elements on top of trucks with long weapons. This generates more psychological and emotional trauma for people who have - in many cases - suffered violent attacks by authorities or organized crime.
- **Early morning operation without prior notice:** By executing the eviction at around 4:00 AM and without prior notice, the authorities generated unnecessary panic and fear. Several migrants commented that if they had been notified about the eviction, they would have left of their own free will.
- **Destruction of belongings:** The confusion generated by the surprise operation caused several people to lose or fail to retrieve important belongings, which were later destroyed and discarded by the authorities. Testimony of the destruction of important documents, food, water, clothing, children's toys, tents, blankets, grills, pots, etc. was observed and documented. Several migrants said authorities initially told them to bring a few changes of clothes and a backpack.
- **Authorities said they were not going to evict, but they did:** The municipal authorities of the current administration publicly promised on several occasions not to forcibly evict migrants from the “El Chaparral” encampment. They even expressed it in recent days during a meeting with

people from the encampment. These contradictions and broken promises increase the lack of trust and credibility of the authorities.

- **They promote xenophobia:** By deploying large police and military force for an operation that deals with people, including families and children, in a context of mobility -national and from other countries- and in need of international protection, the population is presented with migrants as criminals and is equated with insecurity, promoting and deepening xenophobic attitudes in the general population of the region.
- **Relocation to places without certainty of long-stay:** According to the information available to date, it seems likely that some migrants who were relocated to shelters will be in places where there is no certainty of a long stay. In a previous case, we have documented that people from “El Chaparral” relocated by municipal authorities were sent to shelters where they were not allowed to stay after three days. Several people requested clarity on the length of stay in the shelters and the authorities mentioned that it would be for an indefinite period of time, with no limit. It is essential that this be done.
- **They cause families to be unsheltered on the street:** In the face of confusion, the lack of adequate options, the great distrust generated by the spaces administered by the government, and the current overflow of civil society shelters, many families find themselves unprotected, without a place to go and in a complete unsheltered situation.
- **Lack of access to request asylum in the United States:** Due to United States immigration policies such as Title 42, there is no right to request asylum in the United States and many people are stranded in border cities like Tijuana with no way to protect their lives from the dangers for which they have fled their places of origin. Hundreds of people from other countries and Mexico seek to save their lives and face a closed border where their right to request protection is not respected.

We recognize that the conditions in the Chaparral refugee camp were unacceptable. However, for the reasons mentioned above, we believe that the eviction carried out today by the three levels of the Mexican government was cruel and violent.

We make the following asks:

- That the US government end Title 42, end MPP policy or "Stay in Mexico," and immediately begin receiving asylum seekers.
- That the Mexican government immediately guarantees the human rights of migrants in Tijuana, including a life free of violence, their right to water, physical and psychological health, housing, and security.

In solidarity with those who migrate and seek international protection.

The Chaparral Humanitarian Alliance:

APALA-SD (Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance-San Diego), AFSC (American Friends and Services Committee), Border Angels, Border Line Crisis Center, Psychologists Without Borders BC, and United US Sports Veterans together CHA or the Chaparral Humanitarian Alliance.

This alliance seeks to support migrants and all those seeking asylum in the United States through Tijuana, B.C.