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## Acupuncturists Without Borders: Bringing Trauma Healing to People Seeking Asylum at the Texas-Mexico Border

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*Acupuncture treatments at night on the International Bridge in Matamoros, Mexico in January*

***What has happened to humanity? I am with migrants/asylum seekers camped under tarps on the Matamoros International Bridge. Trapped in Mexico with the US only allowing two to three people in per day. I am sitting with people from Ghana, Cameroon, Honduras, Nicaragua. Most of them were in tears. They have left behind young children, families, their life. I believe their stories of persecution otherwise why would they leave all this? They are terrified.***

***We give them a treatment in the dark behind their encampment. Some of them get to rest and get a little respite. Others clearly cannot let themselves and their guard down even for a moment. I hear stories from the man from Cameroon whose name is Ivan. He traveled from one country to the next to the next, thousands and thousands of miles, eventually to end up in Costa Rica and then Panama where he walked through the jungle and had to push aside dead bodies to get through. He left Cameroon because he is gay and he said he would be killed. The woman from Nicaragua who is with her son tells me that her son was protesting in opposition to the Ortega government and was on a targeted list for being killed. I don't know the story of the man from Honduras but he tells me he is going to escape alone tomorrow and try to cross the Rio Grande River. -Diana Fried, AWB Founder***

***In January 2019, AWB volunteers began treating asylum seekers and community volunteers on both sides of the border: in Brownsville, Texas and Matamoros, Mexico at the international bridge.***

The international bridge at Brownsville-Matamoros is one of the “points of entry” at which people can supposedly apply for asylum. Essentially, it is closed, allowing only several people to be “processed” each day. Asylum seekers are living on the Mexico side of the bridge with few resources. Meanwhile, those who have managed to get through are placed in detention centers for several weeks and then released without food or money. Detention centers in the Rio Grande Valley (RGV) have been releasing 300-400 people a day since June 2018. Often families are left with nowhere to go while they wait for their asylum paperwork to be processed. Some end up sleeping under the international bridge on the Texas side. The numbers keep growing as the winter deepens.



***AWB mobile clinic at the international bridge, January 2019***

Community “first responders” and volunteer groups, including Las Angry Tias y Abuelas of the RGV, Team Brownsville, and Catholic Charities, have been assisting asylum seekers with food, water, warm clothes, transportation, shelter, medicine, and toiletries. They have been working around the clock since the summer. Many volunteers have been experiencing secondary trauma in response to their work. AWB has partnered with Las Angry Tias y Abuelas to support both migrants and community volunteers in the coming months.



*AWB clinic for community volunteers at the border*

Here's what AWB is doing:

- Providing community-style ear acupuncture treatments to asylum seekers on the Texas and Mexico sides of the international bridge
- Treating highly stressed community volunteers in Brownsville, TX
- Organizing a clothing drive for asylum seekers living outside this winter
- Expanding this project to locations on the AZ and CA-Mexico border

**[Click here to see AWB in action at \(Telemundo report in Spanish\)](#)**

***We need your help to continue to offer trauma healing treatments and support vulnerable people at the border:***

- Donate to the AWB Refugee Support Project at:  
**<http://www.acuwithoutborders.org/donate/>**
- Send warm clothes for distribution at the border to Cindy Candia, 22737 N. Oscar Street, Harlingen, TX 78552.
- Attend an AWB training, become a member, and volunteer on an AWB team to provide treatments at the border. Contact Carla Cassler at **[director@acuwithoutborders.org](mailto:director@acuwithoutborders.org)** for more information.