

Protect the rights of 'Dreamers,' UN human rights experts urge US Government

With hundreds of thousands of migrants who arrived in the United States as children facing possible expulsion, a group of United Nations human rights experts has urged the country to take urgent steps to address their situation and ensure that their rights are protected.

"We are increasingly concerned about the impact that ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) programme could have on the young people who benefit from it," said the rights experts in a [news release](#) issued by the UN human rights wing, OHCHR, Tuesday.

The call comes ahead of the 5 March deadline for the DACA programme, which grants work permits and renewable two-year deferments from deportation to qualifying migrants who arrived as children under 16, are pursuing or have completed a high school education or military service, and have not committed a serious crime.

Often referred to as 'Dreamers,' the DACA beneficiaries – estimated to number around 800,000 – will be stripped of their legal status and their protection from deportation without procedural safeguards if a solution is not reached by the deadline.

The majority of Dreamers are ages 25 or below, and many are current students.

"The US needs to adopt measures to address this situation as a matter of urgency. These migrants risk losing protection of their rights and being expelled from the country where many of them have lived and developed their lives for decades," the experts underscored, noting that of particular concern is that the majority of these migrants are young women at risk of being expelled to countries where there are high levels of violence, lawlessness and crime.

The human rights experts also underscored that an abrupt end to the DACA programme will disrupt the lives of these migrants and cause "profound grief and irreparable harm by tearing their families apart" and making them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse if deported to countries where they barely have any ties.

"Ending the programme without a feasible alternative would also send a wrong signal to the population, as it would reinforce harmful racial stereotypes and stigmatize hard-working, law-abiding young migrants who are an asset to the country which they consider home," they added.

In the news release, the human rights experts also highlighted that the expiry of DACA offers a "unique opportunity" for regularization of many

migrants who have strong economic, social, cultural and family links in the UN, and whose contribution to society is unquestionable.

The UN rights experts making the call include Felipe González Morales, UN [Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants](#); Elina Steinerte, Vice-Chair on Communications of the UN [Working Group on Arbitrary Detention](#); Nils Melzer, UN [Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment](#); Alda Facio, Chair of the UN [Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice](#); and E. Tendayi Achiume, UN [Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism](#).

UN Special Rapporteurs and independent experts are appointed by the Geneva-based [Human Rights Council](#) to examine and report back on a specific human rights theme or a country situation. The positions are honorary and the experts are not UN staff, nor are they paid for their work.