

Mexico and the Northern Triangle: A New Migration Battleground

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- Context and Figures
- ECLAC Proposal
- The Reaction of the Northern Triangle Leaders
- USA-Mex Agreement: Trade/Migration Control

MIGRATORY CONTROLS IN SOUTHERN MEXICO 2012-2018*



1. October 2018 - The end of Enrique Peña Nieto's Presidency, Mexico warned caravan members that only legal admissions would be accepted into our territory. During his mandate, Mexico always rejected to pay for the "Wall".

2. President Trump threatened his peers from Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, as well as the Mexican Government, with economic retaliatory measures if the growing number of transit migrants did not stop.

*Map Source: Angélica Zambrano/El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, "Controles migratorios en el sur de México: 2012-2018", 21-03-2019, <https://observatoriocolef.org/mapas/controles-migratorios-en-el-sur-de-mexico/>, 19-06-2019.

LOOKING FOR A REGIONAL STRATEGY

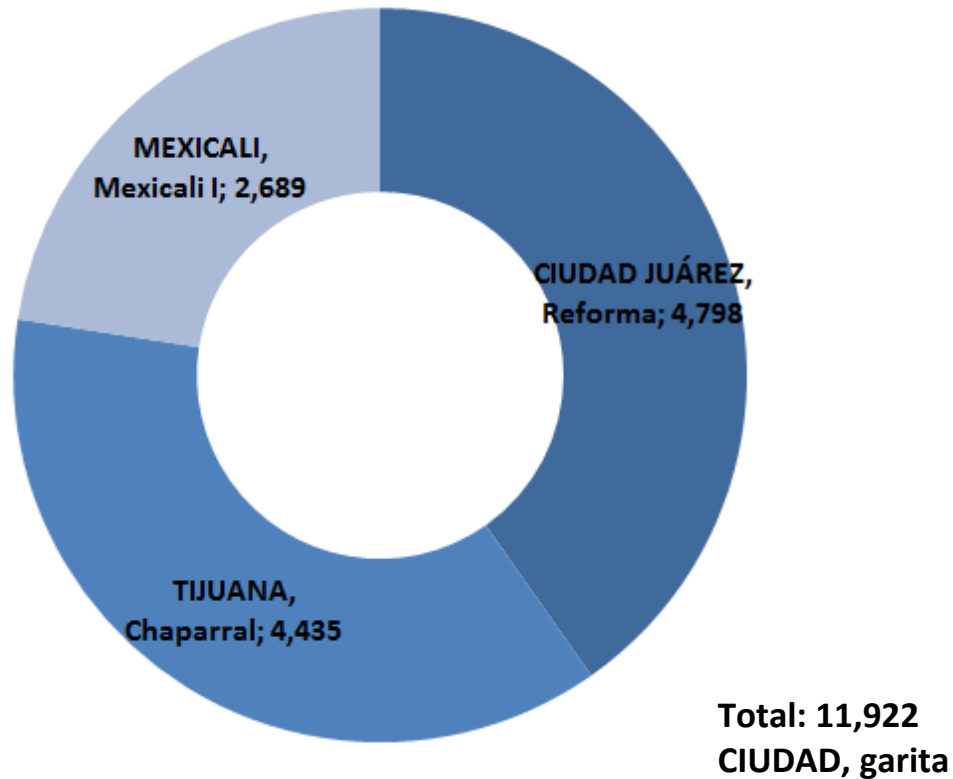
3. December 1, 2018 – Inauguration of new Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO). That same day a signing agreement took place between El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico, promoting a **Comprehensive Development Plan** designed by ECLAC. This would be the strategy in the region to hold back irregular emigration.

4. At the beginning of AMLO's mandate, his narrative supported an **"open doors policy"**, with full protection of human rights. By December 7, INAMI* reported that the first Humanitarian Visitor's Cards (TVRH) had been distributed to caravan members.

*Mexico's National Migration Institute.



Mexico's Northern Border



5. By Jan 2019, DHS implemented the *Remain in Mexico* policy, for citizens and nationals of countries other than Mexico ("third-country nationals"), arriving in the United States by land from Mexico illegally, or without proper documentation.

6. In Jan 29 this action began. An example of its scope can be seen in this graph that counts 11,922 Central Americans removed back to Mexico through 3 ports of entry between January and mid-June (INAMI data).*

7. By mid June, the Mexican Foreign Affairs Minister mentioned that 25,000 irregular migrants are waiting in Mexican towns along the border with the U.S.A.**

* Informe sobre internaciones de centroamericanos a territorio mexicano en espera de la resolución de su trámite de asilo en Estados Unidos, Instituto Nacional de Migración, 13 de junio de 2019

**Isabella González, "Muestran al senado acuerdo 'no revelado'", *Reforma*, 15 de junio de 2019, p. 6.

January-February 2019: The Human Dimension



8. Feb 2019, Mexican authorities counted 58 migratory stations and provisional shelters in 23/32 states. One of the most important for the caravans is Estación Migratoria Siglo XXI, in Chiapas: With a capacity for 960 people, by mid June it was already exceeding its capacity by up to 1,230 people. This situation is now common, as an overflow of 400% has been recognized*, while tensions increase.

9. Mexican Ministry of the Interior (SEGOB) registered the arrival of **53,544** irregular migrants, plus **37,450** deportations.**

*<https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/estados/indocumentados-viven-hacinados-en-estaciones-migratorias-de-mexico>

**Boletín Mensual de Estadísticas Migratorias, SEGOB,
http://www.politicamigratoria.gob.mx/work/models/SEGOB/CEM/PDF/Estadisticas/Boletines_Estadisticos/2019/Boletin_2019.pdf

Mexico's Southern Border



Cientos de migrantes durmiendo en el parque central de Tapachula. JOSE CABEZAS (REUTERS)



U.S.A. Data

U.S.A. Department of Homeland Security reports Oct 2018-May 2019 a total of 593,507 apprehensions in the Border with Mexico (FY 2019). Experts predict that arrivals could hit 1 million this year.

This number is larger than all FY 2018 apprehensions: 396,579 individuals.

Unaccompanied Alien Children for FY 2019 has a record number 56,278

U.S. Border Patrol Southwest Border Apprehensions FY 2019

USBP	Demographic	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	Total
Southwest Border	Unaccompanied Alien Child	4,966	5,259	4,753	5,107	6,818	8,968	8,900	11,507					56,278
	Family Units*	23,116	25,164	27,507	24,189	36,531	53,208	58,724	84,542					332,981
	Single Adult	22,926	21,433	18,488	18,684	23,535	30,664	31,680	36,838					204,248
Southwest Border Total Apprehensions		51,008	51,856	50,748	47,980	66,884	92,840	99,304	132,887					593,507

*Family Unit represents the number of individuals (either a child under 18 years old, parent, or legal guardian) apprehended with a family member by the U.S. Border Patrol.

In May, 132,887 people were apprehended between ports of entry on the Southwest Border, compared with 99,304 in the month of April and 92,840 in March. In FY18, a total of 396,579 individuals were apprehended between ports of entry on our Southwest Border.

Source: <https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/stats/sw-border-migration> , June 17, 2019

A Shift In Mexico's Approach

10. End of January, eruption of discontent from Mexican communities against Caravan members and the rejection of the Open Doors Policy begins to spread in focal points.

11. End of April, AMLO shifts his position and said “We don’t want them to have the freedom to transit our country, due to legal and security issues. Unfortunately, in the northern part of Mexico, there have been some murders of migrants in other times”.*

12. During this period, Mexico implemented 2 identity cards for irregular migrants. The first was addressing the Open Doors Policy. The second is currently in place (Regional Visitor’s Card), as its purpose is to contain the flow of irregular migrants along the southern states of the country.

Tarjeta de Visitante Regional/Regional Visitor’s Card**

- Originally designed for nationals from Belize and Guatemala, has been extended since April 24 to Hondurans and Salvadorans
- Valid for 5 years
- Authorizes transiting through states of Campeche, Chiapas, Tabasco, Quintana Roo and Yucatán
- Not a work permit
- From Jan.-Apr. 2019, 21,400 cards were issued

**Diario Oficial de la Federación, 23 April 2019.

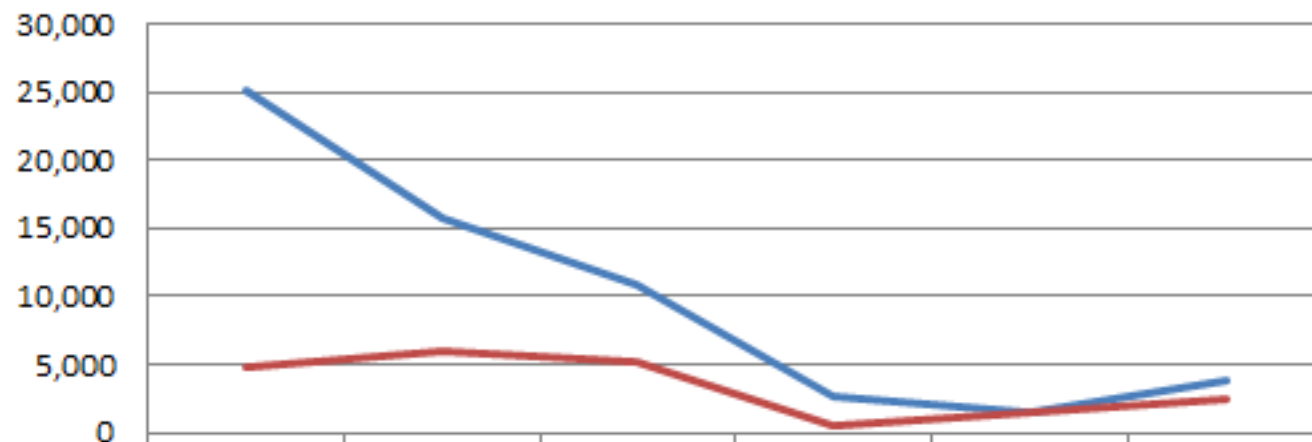
Over this decade, Mexico has had a restrictive policy towards refugees

Number of Applications



Estadísticas

Solicitudes de refugio aceptadas, por país, entre 2013-2018



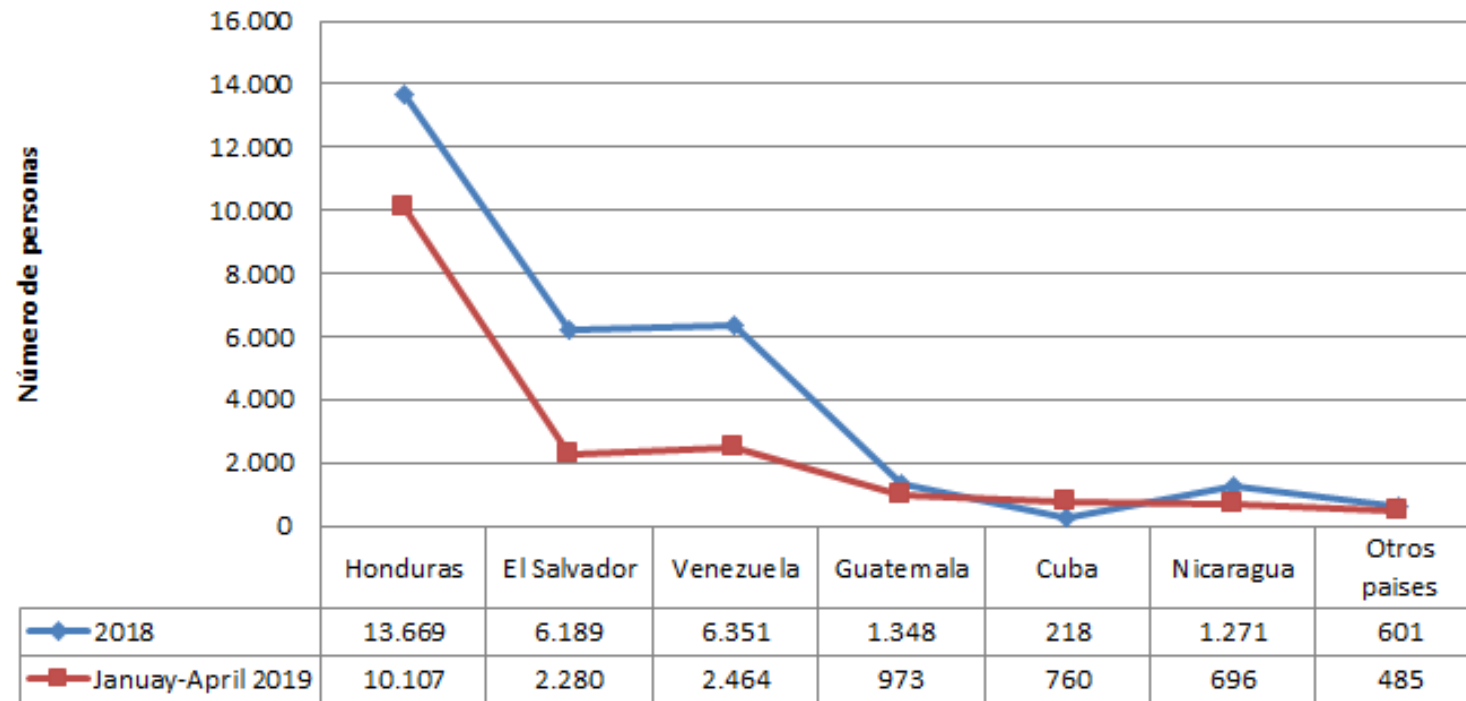
	Honduras	El Salvador	Venezuela	Guatemala	Nicaragua	Otros países
Applications	25,188	15,811	10,822	2,718	1,479	3,841
Accepted	4,814	5,949	5,260	566	1,473	2,412

“Estadísticas de solicitantes de refugio en la #COMAR al mes de abril de 2019”

Comisión Mexicana de Ayuda a Refugiados, 03 de mayo de 2019

<https://www.gob.mx/comar/articulos/la-comar-en-numeros>, June 18 2019

Solicitantes de asilo por país 2018-2019

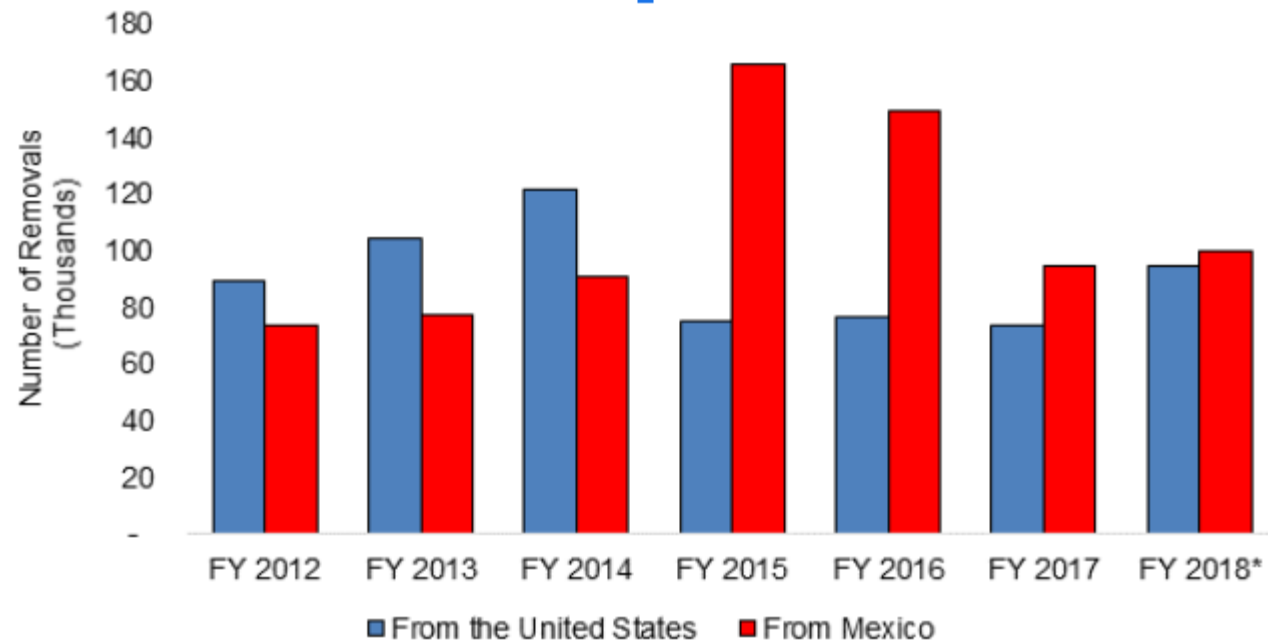


By far the highest numbers of applications for asylum are from Honduras, El Salvador and Venezuela.

“Estadísticas de solicitantes de refugio en la #COMAR al mes de abril de 2019”

Mexican Refugee Assistance Commission, 3 May 2019

Deportations from Mexico and the U.S.A.



MigrationPolicy Inst ✓

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Mexico has deported more migrants back to El Salvador, Guatemala & Honduras since 2015 than has the U.S. government, according to [@MigrationPolicy](#) tally of removals data from [@DHSgov](#) & [@SEGOB_mx](#)

El Salvador-Guatemala-Honduras-Mexico Comprehensive Development Plan

Alicia Bárcena, Executive Secretary of ECLAC (UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean), National Palace, Mexico City, May 20, 2019

An estimated 10 billion USD will be needed yearly*

1. Contains 30 public policy recommendations
2. Four key pillars
 - a. Migration
 - b. Economy and trade
 - c. Social programs
 - d. Sustainable development



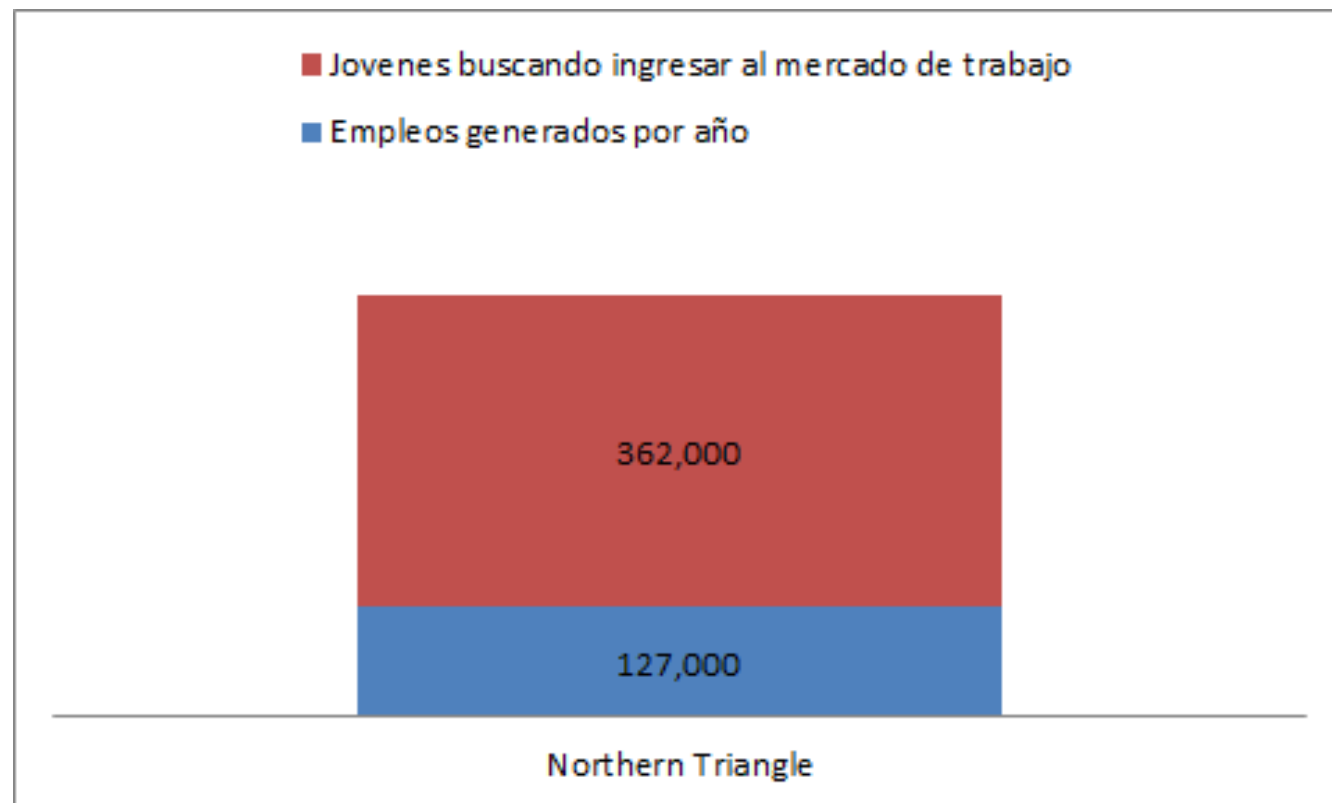
*<https://www.eluniversal.com.mx/nacion/presenta-cepal-plan-para-desarrollo-de-centroamerica>

El Salvador-Guatemala-Honduras-Mexico Comprehensive Development Plan

HIGHLIGHTS

Young people aged 15 to 29 joining the work force annually (2015). **Almost 362,000 young people are seeking a job every year.** These three countries have a huge deficit, as they only add 127,000 new jobs every year.

País	Jóvenes de 15 a 29 años incorporándose a la PEA anualmente (2015)
El Salvador	71,972
Guatemala	194,484
Honduras	95,334
Total	361,790

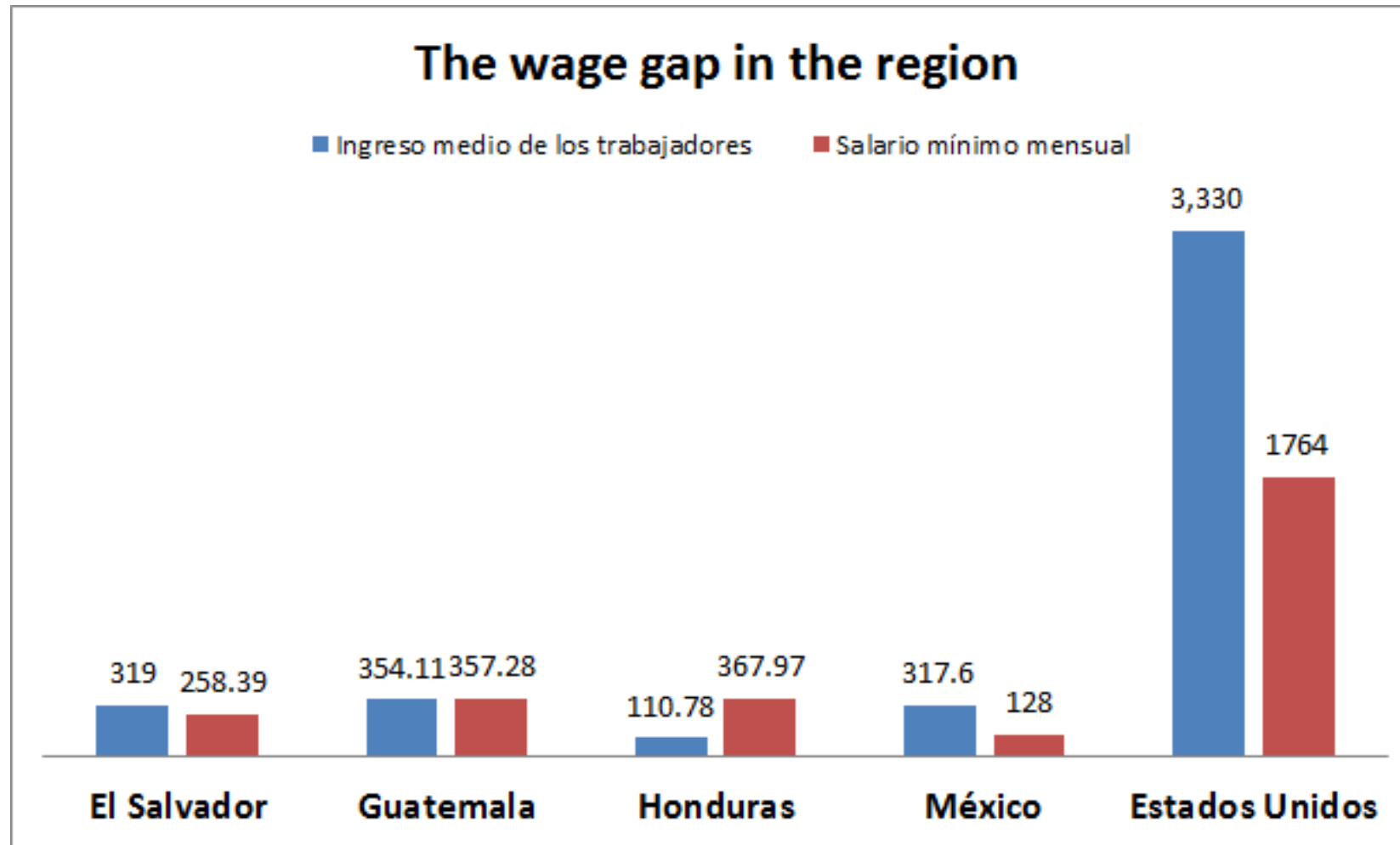


Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2017). World Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision, DVD Edition

THE WAGE GAP IN THE REGION - INCLUDING MEXICO AND USA

■ Average wage of workers

■ Minimum wage per month



Fuente: Elaborado con datos de International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Gobierno de El Salvador, Ministerio de Trabajo y Previsión Social, Consejo Nacional de Salario Mínimo; Comisión Nacional de los Salarios Mínimos, México; y Gobierno de Guatemala, Ministerio del Trabajo y Previsión Social.

El Salvador-Guatemala-Honduras-Mexico Comprehensive Development Plan

HIGHLIGHTS

Pillars of the Proposal

1. **Economic development:** Taxation and investment; integration of trade, energy and logistics
2. **Social programs:** Education, health and employment
3. **Environmental sustainability** and risk management
4. **Integrated management of the migratory cycle** with human security (rights, livelihood and personal security)

Macroeconomics

- **Progressive taxation** to prioritize public investment and eliminate tax privileges
- Strengthen **tax administration**
- **Transparency** and accountability
- Emphasis on **employment and minimum wage**. Plus unemployment protection.
- **Industrial policy** to encourage innovation, science and technology with environmental sustainability

Diagnostics, opportunities and recommendations by ECLAC. Comprehensive Development Plan: El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Alicia Bárcena Executive Secretary of ECLAC, National Palace, Mexico City, May 20, 2019 https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/presentation/files/final_final_cepal-presentacion_palacio_nacional_20-05-2019.pdf

El Salvador-Guatemala-Honduras-Mexico Comprehensive Development Plan HIGHLIGHTS

Migration Management

1. Human rights of migrants and refugees at the centre of the migratory cycle
2. Principle of non-discrimination in the migratory cycle
3. Care of people displaced by violence and natural disasters
4. Comprehensive programs for departure, transition, arrival and return in poor neighbourhoods
5. Programs to combat hunger and rural poverty in regions with a high propensity to migration
6. Inclusion of migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and returnees in education systems
7. Build agreements on the portability of human rights and social security

Diagnostics, opportunities and recommendations by ECLAC. Comprehensive Development Plan: El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Alicia Bárcena Executive Secretary of ECLAC, National Palace, Mexico City, May 20, 2019 https://www.cepal.org/sites/default/files/presentation/files/final_final_cepal-presentation_palacio_nacional_20-05-2019.pdf

The Proposal is Innovative Because it...

1. Fosters development in the place of origin so that migration becomes an option and not a requirement.
2. Establishes a development space comprising El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Mexico.
3. Integrates human mobility into fair and sustainable development.



Reaction from Northern Triangle Governments



- A. The **Honduras** government (President Juan Orlando Hernández) has laid the blame for caravan migration on domestic political groups, as well as on criminal groups that benefit illegally from the caravans.
- B. The new government of **El Salvador** (headed by Nayib Bukele) has expressed its willingness to conform to the US directives on migration in order to obtain broader support from the United States.
- C. The government of **Guatemala** under president Jimmy Morales has abstained from any statements about the events in Mexico, but has backed the military presence of the United States on its soil. The first signs that Guatemalan authorities would start applying new measures to restrict migration to the United States was the expulsion of 150 Haitian and African migrants who were detained in mid-June.

USA-Mexico: An Unprecedented Agreement. Friends, Partners, Allies or Always Distant Neighbours?



- Beyond this “Wall”, Mexico and the U.S.A. do more than 611 billion USD in trade annually.
- Imposing tariffs to certify “good” performance in border control against irregular migrants, could end up having unintended consequences (increasing tensions within Mexico, more violence from gangs and human traffickers).
- By June 18, Televisa Network reported that the Mexican National Guard had deployed 1,300 troops in Chiapas. They immediately detained migrants that were unable to demonstrate their legal status in Mexico.

¡MUCHAS GRACIAS!



- Since the beginning of April, when President Trump threatened to close the U.S.-Mexico border, and some actions were in place, there was an immediate impact on bilateral trade.

However, little attention was given to the mood of thousands of people that have the right and need to cross the border on a daily basis.

SUCH ELEMENTS ARE FORGING A NEW PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS IN MEXICO THAT IS ALREADY WORKING AGAINST IRREGULAR MIGRANTS.

- In my country the role of mass media and social media are decisive in this crisis, as they are framing the conversation. Journalists have been asking already about the possibility of a political force that would embrace xenophobic positions.

WHO BENEFITS FROM THIS CHAOS AND HUMAN SUFFERING?