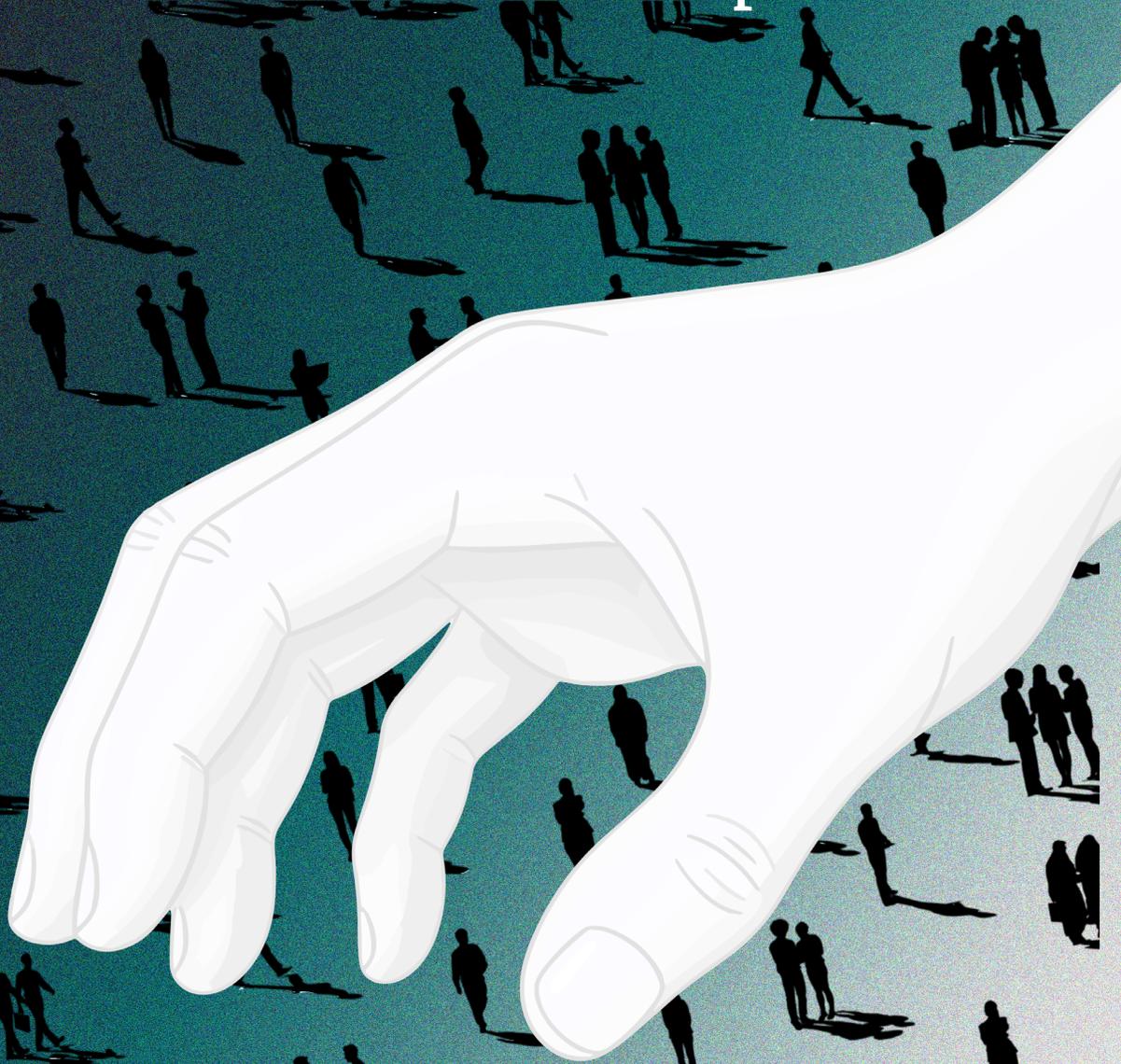


Cruelty as Policy:

Migration and the Human Experience Along
the U.S.-Mexico Border Under Trump



February 2026

The **Red Pedro Pantoja de Casas y Centros de Derechos Humanos de Migrantes de la Zona Norte (Red Pedro Pantoja)** is a group of twenty six migrant shelters and human rights centers located in nineteen municipalities in the six northern border states of Mexico. With twenty-seven years of experience, the Red Pedro Pantoja Network seeks to work for the dignity of those who live in the context of human mobility.

Rooted in Catholic social teaching, the Hope Border Institute (HOPE) is a strategy center for faith leaders pursuing justice at the U.S.-Mexico border. Through a robust program of research, human rights advocacy, leadership development and humanitarian action, HOPE works to build solidarity and the common good across borders.

Derechos Humanos Integrales en Acción (DHIA) is a Ciudad Juarez-based nongovernmental organization committed to the respect, promotion and defense of the human rights of people on the move, working at the intersection of age, gender and diversity.

The Iniciativa Kino para la Frontera is a binational, non-profit, inclusive, Roman Catholic organization rooted locally in Nogales, Arizona and Sonora, Mexico on the United States-Mexico border. KINO works in the dimensions of humanitarian care, education, research and advocacy to respond to the needs of migrants and those in need of international protection, with a regional perspective within Central and North America.

The Casa del Migrante Saltillo is non-profit organization, founded in 2003, which promotes and defends the human rights of people on the move within the state of Coahuila (Mexico) through humanitarian, legal, psychosocial and advocacy strategies. It currently has a presence in the cities of Saltillo and Piedras Negras.

The Centro de Atención al Migrante Exodus (CAME) is a non-profit civil society organization that assists people in contexts of human mobility in the border city of Agua Prieta, Sonora, recognizing and respecting their dignity. It provides humanitarian, educational, and psychosocial services and works under the principles of solidarity, justice, equality, and non-discrimination.

The Centro para Migrantes Jesús Torres 24/7, located in Torreon, Coahuila, is a non-governmental organization that aims to provide free assistance to migrants passing through the city. It offers humanitarian and comprehensive services, including legal and psychosocial accompaniment to a wide variety of people on the move.

The Servicio Jesuita a Refugiados México (JRS MX) is an initiative of the Society of Jesus with a presence in Mexico that focuses on human mobility. Our mission is to accompany, serve and defend people in forced mobility so they can heal, learn, and determine their own future as political and human agents.

The albergue diocesano “Belén” is based in Tapachula, Chiapas at the southern Mexican border next to Guatemala. It is the first shelter in Mexico to primarily focus on humanitarian assistance of people in the context of human mobility and asylum seekers.

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Executive Summary

In 2025, the US-Mexico border became the epicenter of migration flows. On the one hand, thousands of people seeking international protection saw how asylum access at the border became impossible after the beginning of the Trump administration, facing the challenge of integration in Mexico or the departure from the country. On the other hand, the influx of Mexican citizens and individuals from other nationalities detained primarily in the interior of the United States for their deportation to Mexico, as a result of a massive deportation and detention campaign, they face the rupture of their life projects, family separation, as well as the need to overcome, in some instances, severe human rights and integrity violations.

This report gathers the human experience at the border through 112 testimonies, collected over the course of 2025 at migrant shelters in northern and southern Mexico and the perspectives of dozens of humanitarian and faith leaders who accompany them. Finally, data analysis obtained through transparency mechanisms related to the implementation of the immigration policy by the Trump administration and the government of Claudia Sheinbaum.

Our analysis sheds light on a deepening human rights crisis facing migrants in the United States, driven by nativist and racist discourse materializing into systemic violence. This paralleled an inadequate response from Mexico. It is worth noting the following trends:

1. The number of deportations of Mexican nationals decreased by 22% from 2024 to 2025. However, the profile of the deported Mexicans changed drastically. In 2024, three out of four had been in the United States for less than a month; in 2025, one out of four had been in the US between one and 10 years and almost one out of five, 11 years or more. The range of documented cases spans individuals who had lived in the US from 20 years to almost 40 years, most of them with no criminal record and with children who are US citizens.
2. The majority of deported Mexican nationals have been detained in the interior of the U.S. and not at the border. In 2025, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) arrested and deported four out of five of all deported Mexican nationals. In 2024, ICE arrested and deported one out of three of all deported Mexican nationals.
3. Arrests are increasingly conducted following racial profiling, during immigration court hearings and immigration check-points, and in public spaces, with the collaboration of local law enforcement agencies. “I was detained due to my skin color and my Mexican features”, an interviewee stated.
4. Deported interviewees report inhumane conditions during their immigration detention, including a lack of essential medical assistance, lack of access to calls, attorneys and them being provided spoiled food or undrinkable water, among others. “The desperation and injustice feelings were so deep that I thought about taking my own life”, said a mother. ICE had prevented her from accessing any information about her children, from whom she was separated at her arrest. It is a pressure strategy to force migrants to opt for “voluntary departures”.
5. In 2025, 81% of deportations of Mexicans to Mexico occurred via the U.S.-Mexico land border, including to some areas where there are no México Te Abraza (“Mexico Welcomes You”) reception centers and to remote areas. Our analysis shows that the México Te Abraza program seeks to adapt to changing patterns of deportations from the U.S., without any apparent prior coordination between the two countries.

6. Almost half of all Mexican nationals deported between January 20 and July 31, 2025 were as a result of immigration-related offenses. Many of these individuals had deep roots to their communities, and were individuals for whom the U.S. had not provided a legal alternative to adjust their status. Between January 20 and July 31, 2025, only one out of ten deported Mexicans were returned due to criminal sentences related to violent, coercive or sexual crimes.
7. The United States continues to deport nationals from Venezuela, Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and, according to information gathered through transparency requests obtained for this report, other nationalities to Mexico. This has all occurred despite the absence of any public agreement between the two nations authorizing such deportations.
8. An organization in Northern Mexico conducting monitoring in a migrant detention center reported that the majority of third-country nationals “were not clear about where the U.S. immigration agents' role ended and where the Mexican one began”. The majority of individuals were transferred by bus to Southern Mexico to avoid their re-entry to the U.S. The lack of communication could be considered as a short-term forced disappearance. “We receive between 30 and 40 calls a week from families that don't know where their relatives are”, a humanitarian worker in Southern Mexico stated.
9. In many cases, ICE and CBP confiscate belongings and documentation of deported individuals, leaving them in an extremely vulnerable situation in Mexico.
10. We have documented cases of family separation, where ICE is not allowing parents to follow the procedures to determine their children's future. This includes a case of a Venezuelan mother who was deported to Mexico when she was eight months pregnant, and whom ICE prevented from completing the necessary processes to determine the custody of her two underage children.
11. ICE is deporting people in conditions of extreme vulnerability, including elderly homeless migrants from Cuba and patients recovering from acute medical conditions. This includes the case of Matias, who suffered a heart attack in immigration detention and was kidnapped after being deported to Mexico.
12. 12 out of 16 Mexican interviewees declared that they could not return to their communities of origin due fear of persecution or widespread violence. People of other nationalities stranded in Mexico are looking for other cities where they can work and ensure their safety, or directly starting their journey to the South, facing new risks. The use of CBP Home is anecdotal, and we could not verify if users are receiving the amount of money promised by the U.S. government.
13. The closure of access to asylum at the US-Mexico border continues. Documented cases show Border Patrol agents telling people that there is no asylum and that they should return to Mexico, even when they are Mexicans fleeing violence. Others at and between ports of entry are not given meaningful opportunities to request other forms of international protection.
14. Individuals stranded in Mexico as a result of the end of CBP One and the restriction of asylum access at the border, as well as some people deported from the U.S., face significant challenges integrating into Mexico. These challenges include: difficulty obtaining documentation in a timely manner due to COMAR delays and obstacles to obtain humanitarian visas and asylum; lack of access to dignified housing; and threats to their safety, with kidnapping cases still on the rise. As a result, many stranded and deported individuals face systemic exclusion in Mexico.

15. Migrant shelters and other faith-based and civil society organizations continue to provide accompaniment and basic services, even though they face a significant decrease in funding due to the ending of U.S. support to UNHCR and other international organizations. In light of this, several shelters and organizations are starting to implement new programs based on community relations and public-private partnerships.

This report concludes with urgent recommendations to the congresses and governments of the United States and Mexico, as well as to international organizations and the Catholic Church, in order to uphold the dignity of migrants and to protect their integrity, that of their families and that of our communities.



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I. Introduction

On January 20, 2025, Donald Trump took power as president of the United States, promising to carry out mass deportations. Mexico, as a response to the threat of returns of nationals in great proportions, implemented a strategy called Mexico Welcomes You along the northern border, which consisted of immediate accommodations, processing of identifications, and enrollment in benefits and social security programs, as well as transport to their communities of origin, limited to Mexican people. One year since the beginning of the second Trump administration, this report showcases the reality of people who have been arrested/detained in the US and deported to Mexico; of the population in ‘voluntary’ departure process¹; and of those seeking asylum stranded at the border between the US and Mexico after the end of CBP One and the suspension of the right to apply for asylum.

To this end, we present recommendations to the United States, Mexico, international organizations, and faith actors to facilitate the reparation of damage caused by action and omission, to allow the progression to a model that respects the dignity of every migrant person and family. This must involve urgent political changes that foster, protect, promote, and integrate all people, regardless of their origin, ethnicity, religion, or other factors.



Photography: Joselo / Archive CDMS.

¹ The organizations that have written this report believe that there can be no discussion of voluntary return in the current context in the United States if it is not framed within the official narratives of criminalization, persecution, and repression of migration and, at the same time, the well-founded fear of possible family separation. These factors compel us to reflect on the voluntariness of return, which is why we believe that instead of voluntary return, we are facing coercive return processes. Unless explicitly mentioned, this report uses the words deportation, removal and return (unless it is explicitly mentioned as a “voluntary return”) interchangeably, given the current similarity of many of these procedures despite their legal differentiation in the U.S. It is important to note that the U.S. only provides information of ICE removals and returns, excluding information of enforcement returns and repatriations. The lack of data in this realm is then complemented in the present report with data provided by the Mexican government.

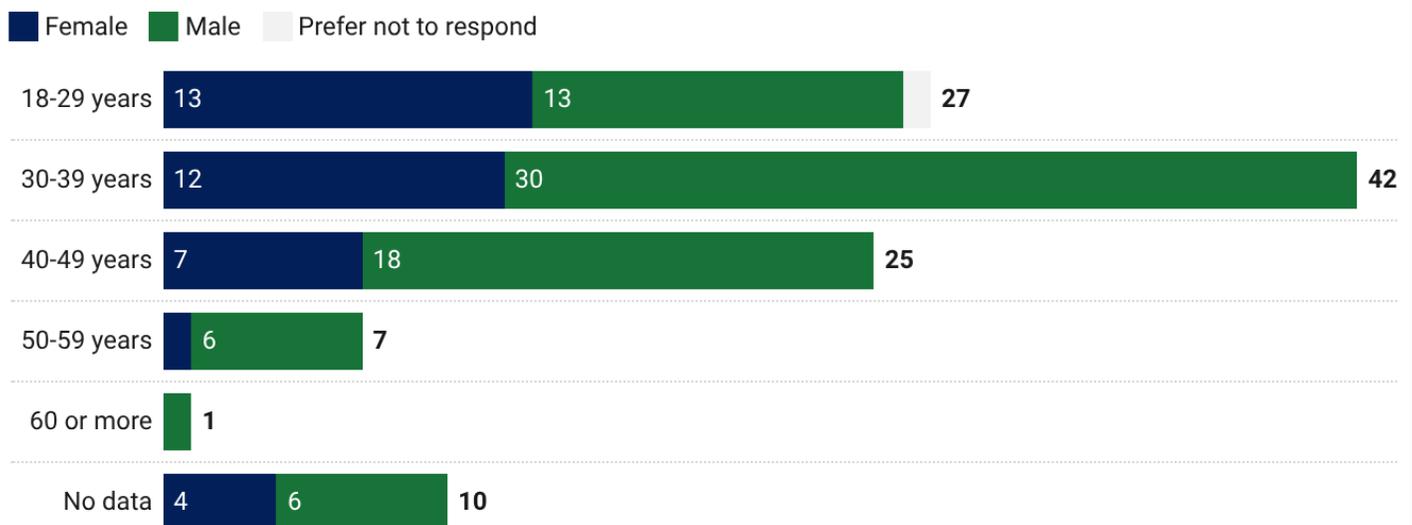
II. Methodology

The report is based on 112 interviews with individuals on the move, all over 18 years old, carried out along the US-Mexico border and in northern and southern Mexico from January 20 to December 16, 2025;² eight focus groups with humanitarian workers in northern Mexico; three in-depth interviews in shelters and migrant homes in Mexico; two visits in-loco to transfer centers for people deported from the US in Mexico; analysis of documentation related to deportations provided by the National Migration Institution (INM) and the Governorship Secretariat of Mexico, obtained through transparency requests; an analysis of the detention and deportation patterns based on information from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) obtained by the Deportation Data Project in the US; as well as an open source analysis about the changes on immigration policies in the U.S. and Mexico.

This report gives continuity and updates to the one published mid-2025, *Crushed Dreams: The First Impacts of the Trump Administration on Migrants*, delving into tendencies that have been consolidated and new ones that have arisen. The names of individuals mentioned in the document have been altered for security and confidentiality reasons.

Interviewed Population and Cases by Self-Reported Age and Gender

Cases accompanied and interviews conducted between January 20, 2025, and December 16, 2025



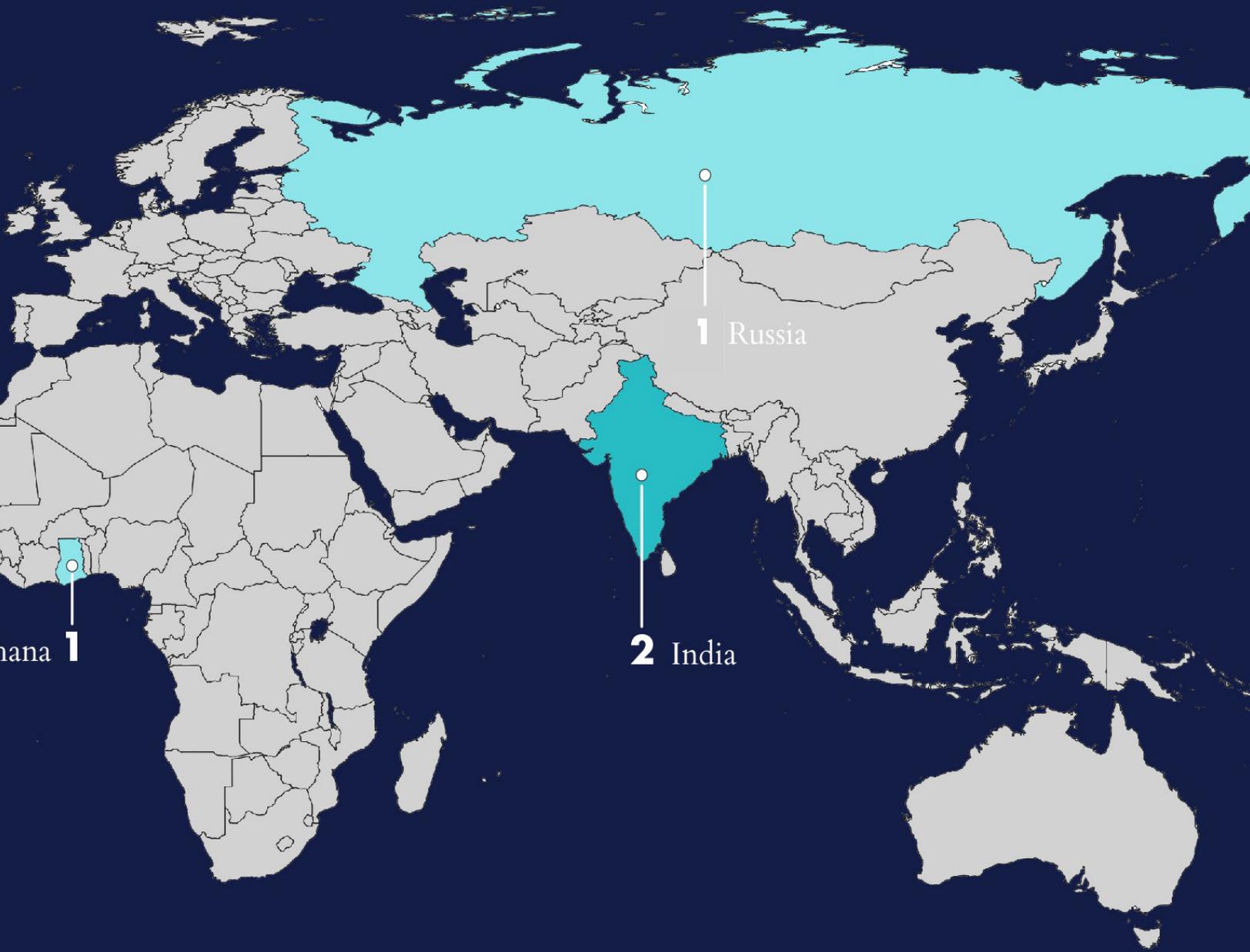
Created with Datawrapper

² The interviews with individuals took place in Agua Prieta and Nogales in Sonora; Saltillo and Torreón, Coahuila; Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua; and Tapachula, Chiapas.



World map of interviewed population



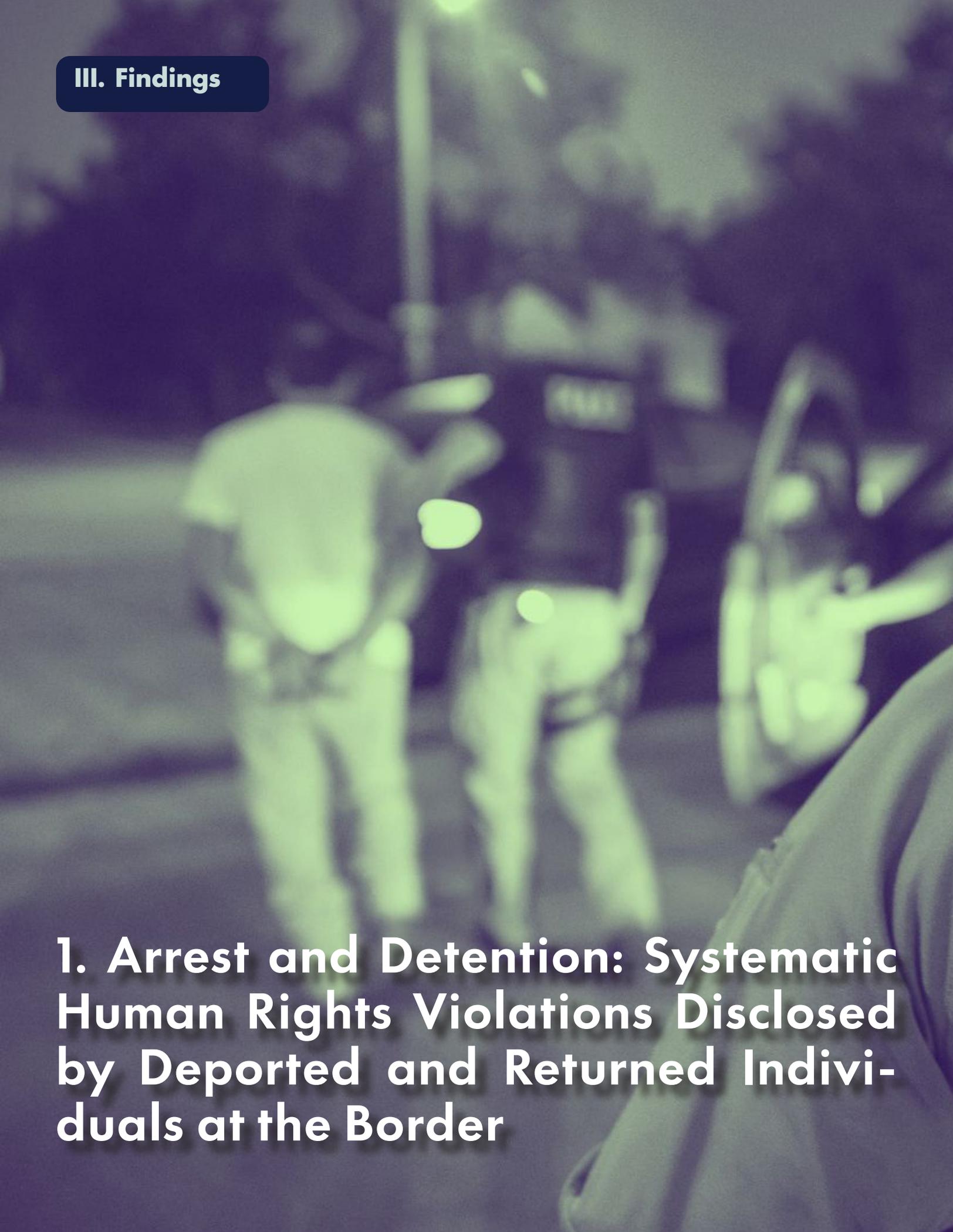


Panama

1

2 India

1 Russia

A blurred, low-angle photograph of a night scene at a border crossing. Several individuals are visible, some wearing reflective vests, illuminated by a bright light source. The background is dark and out of focus, showing what appears to be a vehicle and some structures.

III. Findings

1. Arrest and Detention: Systematic Human Rights Violations Disclosed by Deported and Returned Individuals at the Border



Photography: U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement on Flickr.

1.1 Arrests Motivated by Racial Profiling and Increased Collaboration between ICE and Local Agencies

Between January 20 and October 15, 2025, ICE³ carried out over 225,000 arrests, increasing from approximately 17,000 in February 2025 (the first full month of President Trump in the White House) to over 33,000 in September of the same year (the last full month with available data at the time of writing this report). This does not include arrests carried out by Customs and Border Protection (CBP).⁴ The near doubling of arrests in only six months is primarily due to an exponential growth of operations in public spaces, occurred mainly following a meeting between DHS Secretary Kristi Noem and the President's National Security Advisor, Stephen Miller, with senior ICE officials at the end of May 2025, where they demanded an average of 3,000 arrests per day.⁵

Testimonies of deported individuals at the US-Mexico border reflect how these arrests are increasingly based on racial profiling. For example, **Saúl**, a Mexican national, was detained in front of his house by immigration agents who were in the area “because of how he looked”. “It outrages me that [the arrest] was in front of my own house”, he said. **Edgar**, a Mexican national, was detained by a Phoenix police officer while he was driving, not having committed any infraction, but rather simply “because of my skin color and Mexican features,” he declared. Facing poor conditions in detention, Edgar decided to accept a ‘voluntary’ departure, leaving his wife and three children behind. Or **Juan**, also a Mexican national, who had ICE called on him by some “bounty hunters” in a gas station while he refueled, “because of how he looked.”



Photography: U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement on Flickr.

In a 6-3 ruling on September 8th, 2025, the Supreme Court of the United States temporarily approved stops and arrests based on racial profiling.⁶ In the majority opinion, Justice Kavanaugh affirmed that factors such as presence in a certain workplace — such as farms or carwashes — the type of work the person does, speaking Spanish or English with an accent, or seeming to be part of a particular ethnic group are sufficient reasons

3 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the agency that manages aspects of the immigration enforcement process, including identification and arrest, domestic transportation, detention, bail management, and supervised release, including the deportation of aliens.

4 U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is the agency focused on the control and management of maritime, land, and air ports of entry, combining border security, immigration, customs, and agriculture. <https://www.cbp.gov/about>.

5 Brittany Gibson y Stef W. Kight, *Scoop: Stephen Miller, Noem tell ICE to supercharge immigrant arrests* (May 28, 2025). Axios, <https://www.axios.com/2025/05/28/immigration-ice-deportations-stephen-miller>.

6 *Noem et al. v. Vasquez Perdomo et al.* 606 U.S. No. 25A169 (2025). <https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/24pdf/25a169>.

for an agent to ask a person about their immigration status, and, if warranted, arrest them.⁷

Testimonies also reflect an increase in arrests at immigration courts, as well as during routine check-ins with ICE, US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and other agencies following the end of the “sensitive locations” policy that previously prevented such arrests as a general rule. For example, César was detained during an appointment with “immigration” (likely USCIS) to process an “adjustment of status” in Colorado.

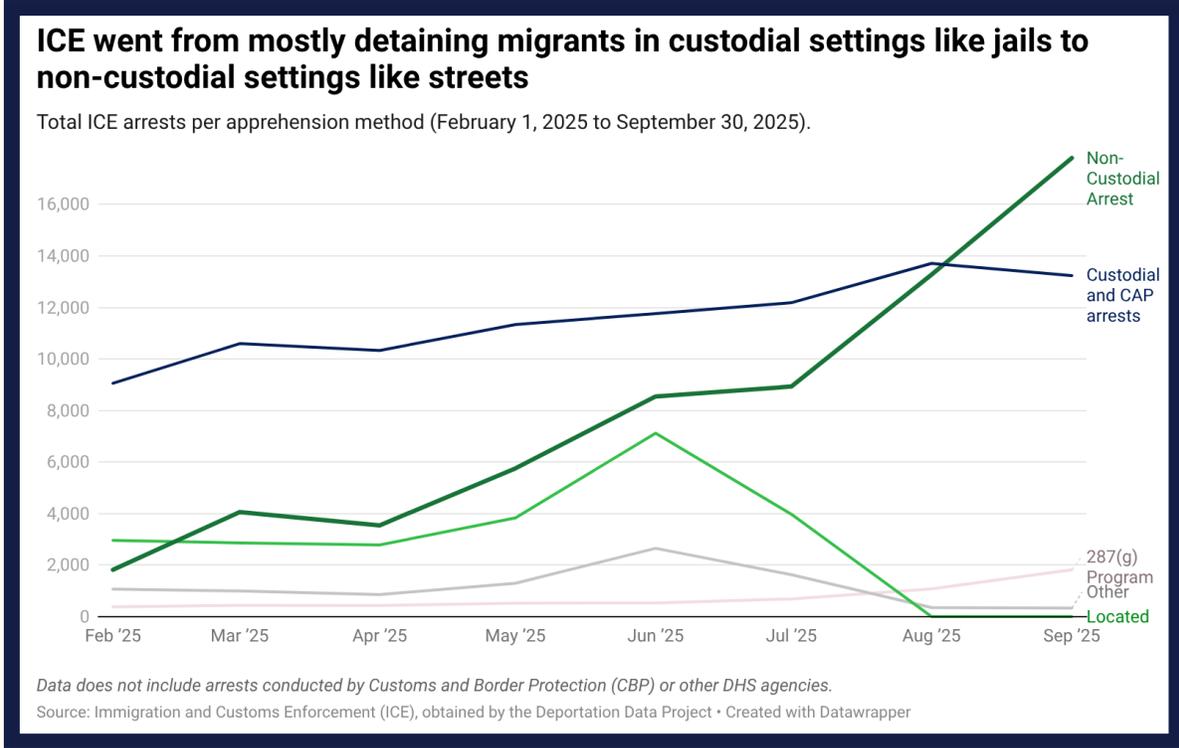
César entered the United States on a visa 25 years ago; is married to his wife, who is a war veteran; and states that he has followed all established immigration procedures. Nevertheless, as he states, he was detained during his appointment and subsequently deported. Similarly, Marlon, a Mexican national, was detained after a routine check-in with ICE in the state of Washington and deported to Mexico despite claiming to have a pending asylum case.

Failing to attend immigration court appointments, however, almost certainly results in an *in absentia*⁸ deportation order. Data provided by the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) shows that the percentage of in absentia deportation orders has increased from 9% in 2024 to over 13% in the final months of 2025.⁹

7 In a separate opinion in late December 2025 in *Trump v. Illinois*, Justice Kavanaugh attempted to clarify in a footnote that federal agents “should not conduct immigration stops or arrests within [the United States] based on race or ethnicity.” *Donald J. Trump et al. v. Illinois et al.* 607 U.S. No. 25A443 (2025), <https://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/26438519/25a443-order.pdf>.

8 Deportation orders issued when the person fails to appear for their immigration court hearing in the United States, either because they are unaware of the date of their hearing, unaware of the existence of deportation proceedings, or for other reasons.

9 Bartłomiej Skorupa, *What are the odds that an immigrant will be arrested in court?* (December 2025). Mobile Pathways, <https://www.mobilepathways.org/post/what-are-the-odds-arrested-in-court> (last accessed December 17, 2025).



ICE has likewise focused on strengthening collaboration with local and state enforcement agencies to increase the number of arrests and detentions. On one hand, the arrest of migrants in local, state, and federal prisons continues to be an important source of detainees, with an average of around 11,500 people arrested by ICE each month in correctional facilities between February and September 2025.¹⁰ For example, **Antonio**, a Mexican national, spent seven years in prison following an altercation with a police officer who shot him in the leg. Upon completing his sentence, ICE—in coordination with the facility where he was held—detained and subsequently deported him.

On the other hand, ICE has sought to expand the number of agreements with local and state enforcement agencies under Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which allows local and state agents to carry out immigration enforcement at various levels.¹¹ In January 2025, 135 enforcement agencies had signed a 287(g) agreement. By late January 2026, that number had grown to 1,350, of which 766 had signed a “task force” agreement—the most expansive model, which authorizes local agents to perform the same functions as ICE agents. Arrests under the 287(g) program grew from 381 in January to 1,821 in September 2025. It is expected that, as the new signed agreements continue to be implemented, the number of arrests under the 287(g) program will continue to increase.

Testimonies of deported and returned people to the border between Mexico and the US reflect the impact of the growing local and state cooperation with ICE.

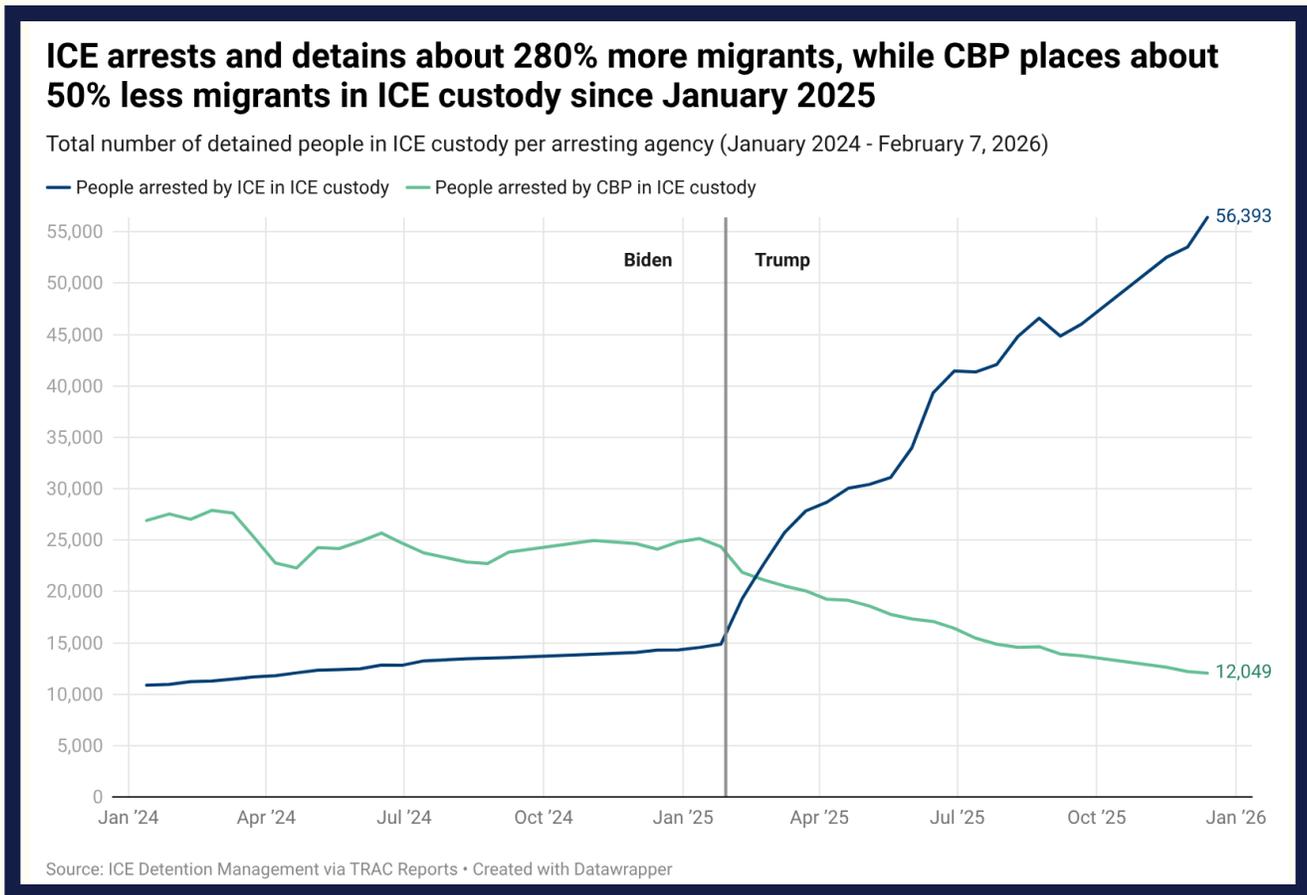
¹⁰ We consider “arrests in jail settings” to be arrests reported by ICE to the Deportation Data Project under the labels “Criminal Alien Program” (CAP) at the local, state, and federal levels, as well as under the label “arrests in custody.” It should be noted that arrests made under the CAP program drop dramatically in August 2025, while arrests in custody rise to volumes similar to those obtained under CAP in the same month of August 2025. ICE has not publicly announced the end of CAP, so we believe this is a change in the way data is reported.

¹¹ U.S. Code, Title VIII, § 1357(g), <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/8/1357>.

For example, 33% of the 278 Mexican nationals deported to Nogales, Sonora between May and July 2025 —interviewed by the Kino Border Initiative— reported having first been arrested by local or state enforcement agents.¹²

1.2 Immigration Detention: Overcrowded, Inhumane, and Deadly

The increase of arrests and the implementation of new policies that generally do not allow release on bail have caused an exponential growth of the detained migrant population. In January 2025, ICE arrested 38% of the total number of individuals under their custody compared to 62% of arrests carried out by CBP. By the end of January of 2026, ICE had conducted 84% of arrests, compared to 16% by CBP. In absolute terms, this means that ICE went from detaining approximately 14,882 out of 39,238 detained people in January 2025, to detaining around 59,644 out of 70,766 detainees in total at the end of January 2026. The detention of over 70,000 migrants sets a new historical record.

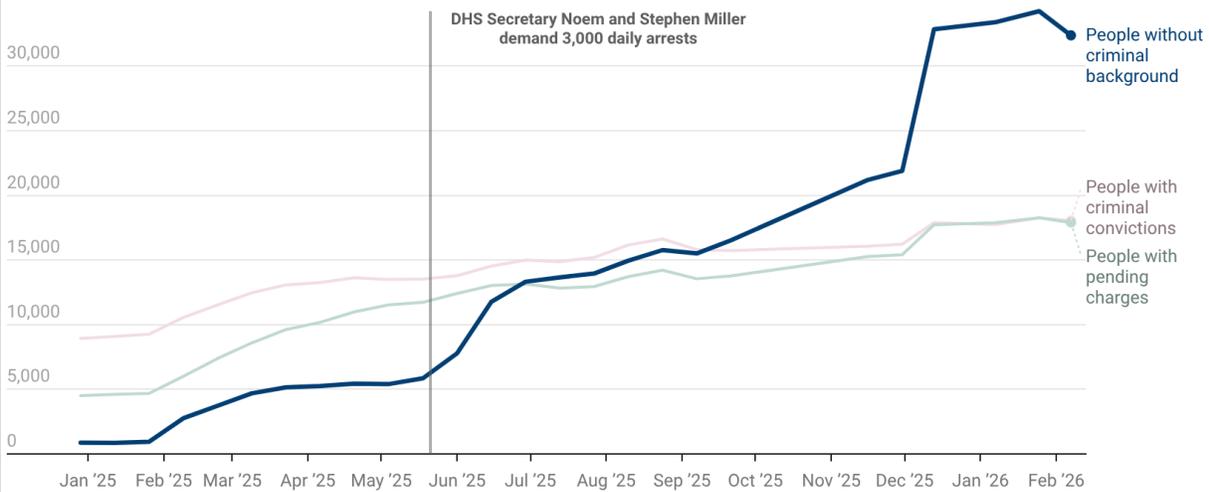


However, the majority of detained people are migrants with no criminal record other than civil violations related to immigration law. In January 2025, only 6% of individuals arrested by ICE did not have a criminal record besides immigration-related offenses. By the end of January 2026, that percentage had risen to 48%, or 34,239 individuals, becoming the largest population compared to those who did have criminal charges or a criminal sentence. This was due to the increased number of indiscriminate raids and detentions before mentioned. In fact, at the end of January 2026, three out of every four individuals arrested and detained by ICE did not have a firm criminal conviction, only pending charges or no criminal background at all.

12 Kino Border Initiative, “They didn’t let me say bye”: Revealing the human toll of deportations today (September 2025). <https://www.kinoborderinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Deportation-Report-2025.pdf>

ICE Is Mostly Detaining People with No Criminal Background

Total number of people arrested by ICE in ICE custody per criminal background (January 2025 - February 7, 2026)



Source: ICE Detention Management via TRAC Reports • Created with Datawrapper

The overcrowding in many detention centers and the lack of appropriate services have led to increasingly dangerous conditions for the integrity and lives of those detained. For example, **Arelis**, a native of Tabasco (Mexico), who said she left her home “fleeing domestic violence,” was arrested during a raid at her house and separated from her children. Arelis did not have the opportunity to call her children and stated that she was discriminated against during her time in detention. Whenever she asked for information about her sons, agents did not respond and eventually told her to “stop asking.” “The desperation and the feeling of injustice were so deep that I considered taking my own life”, Arelis stated. Similarly, **Wilmer**, a Mexican national, reported being detained for 30 days, during which he had no access to phone calls to contact an attorney or his family, in clear violation of the rights of detained individuals.

Likewise, **Carlos**, a deported Mexican national, declared that he had “no food or water in adequate condition”, and was being held in “inhumane circumstances [during detention].” **Francisco**, from Venezuela, also stated that he was given “disgusting, spoiled food.”

An investigation led by Senator Jon Ossoff from Georgia documented at least 85 reports of medical negligence and 82 reports of the denial of adequate water and



food between January 20th and August 5th, 2025.¹³

Between January and December 2025, official numbers reflect the deaths of 27 individuals in detention centers: eight from Mexico, three from Honduras, one from Guatemala, one from El Salvador, one from Colombia, one from the Dominican Republic, one from Haiti, one from Cuba, and one from Canada. This data also includes individuals from other continents: three from China, two from Vietnam, one from the Philippines, one from Jordan, one from Ethiopia, and one from Ukraine.

After verifying these reports through media outlets, at least four more people were identified who had not been listed by ICE at the time of writing this report and who died during raids and/or at the time of their detention; at least one of the deaths occurred in Puerto Rico,¹⁴ a territory of the United States, where acts of criminalization and persecution have been replicated against migrants.¹⁵ The people who passed away during these incidents were three Mexicans, one Dominican national, and one Guatemalan national.

The recording of migrant death data under ICE custody is, at most, incomplete. In at least sixteen out of the twenty-seven cases, the cause of death was either not provided or listed as undetermined. Three more were attributed to apparent suicide, two resulted from homicide, and the rest were related to chronic or degenerative illnesses. Regarding age distribution, the largest number of deaths was concentrated among individuals between 30 and 59 years old, followed by individuals older than 60.

Facing these alarming facts, in which 11 Mexican individuals lost their lives due to immigration detention-related causes on U.S. soil, the government of Mexico has made public at least two diplomatic notes, issued in response to the deaths of two people in Dallas¹⁶ and California.¹⁷



13 Senator Jon Ossoff, *Medical neglect and denial of adequate food or water in U.S. immigration detention* (October 2025). https://www.ossoff.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/25.10.24_Sen.-Ossoff-Medical-Neglect-Denial-of-Adequate-Food-or-Water-in-U.S.-Immigration-Detention.pdf.

14 Primera Hora, *Truenan contra el ICE por muerte de inmigrante dominicano durante operativo en Toa Baja*, Published on May 14, 2025, Accessed at: <https://www.primerahora.com/noticias/puerto-rico/notas/truenan-contra-el-ice-por-muerte-de-inmigrante-dominicano-durante-operativo-en-toa-baja/>.

15 The operations orchestrated by US immigration authorities are not limited to the US mainland, but also extend to territories under their jurisdiction, such as Puerto Rico, where they carry out actions and narratives against migration, regardless of whether the individuals involved have documentation. Furthermore, due to the raids that have been carried out in Puerto Rico, the migrants most affected have been the Dominican community. Even in San Juan, ICE agents terrorized an entire neighborhood: Barrio Obrero.

16 Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores de México, Press Release No. 178 (September 30, 2025), <https://www.gob.mx/sre/prensa/sre-lamenta-fallecimiento-de-connacional-en-dallas?idiom=es>.

17 Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores de México, Press Release No. 172 (September 23, 2025), <https://www.gob.mx/sre/prensa/acciones-consulares-ante-el-fallecimiento-de-persona-mexicana-bajo-custodia-de-ice-en-california?idiom=es>.

Between April and November 2025, the Mexican government also issued at least seven other statements through the Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs), specifically related to consular assistance and the rejection of immigration policies that limit the protection and support of Mexican nationals in the U.S. The position of the Mexican government has been public and consistent.

Despite the need to reinforce supervision mechanisms in immigration detention, the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has dismantled the main oversight and complaint mechanisms.¹⁸ This constitutes a policy of attrition against detained migrants, aimed at pressuring them into “voluntary” departure, even when their immigration cases are still pending or when they have well-founded reasons to request asylum and other forms of international protection.¹⁹

On the other hand, deaths during raids are the result of injuries due to escape, falls, and even gunshot wounds. In response to these operations, community members in US localities have mobilized to protect migrants and monitor immigration enforcement agents. During the first week of January 2026, in Minneapolis, Minnesota, Renee Good, an American citizen, died inside her car due to fatal gunshot wounds caused by an ICE agent sustained during a residential raid. Combined with the public murder perpetrated by authorities,²⁰ the severity of the situation escalates when such actions are supported by US high-ranking government officials, who invoke claims of *domestic terrorism* to justify the use of fire weapons against an American civilian. Weeks later, another American civilian, Alex Pretti, would also be killed by CBP agents in Minneapolis.

In this context, in July 2025, the United States Congress passed an exceptional budget bill to, among other measures, grant additional funding to the mass deportation campaign.²¹ ICE received \$45 billion to expand immigration detention—including of families—and about \$30 billion to carry out arrests and deportations, to be allocated between 2025 and September of 2029. This amount surpasses the combined ICE budgets during Trump’s first administration and Biden’s administration, with approximately \$65.4 billion allocated between fiscal years 2017 and 2024 compared to almost \$75 billion budgeted for the next four years now. This exceptional allocation does not include the regular annual budget that will be established for ICE and other immigration agencies every fiscal year.

The unprecedented increase in resources for the arrest, detention, and deportation of migrants in the United States foretells a continuing and worsening of many of the previously described trends, particularly the great risks for the security and life of individuals and their families.

18 José Olivares, *Gutting of key US watchdog could pave way for grave immigration abuses, experts warn* (November 30, 2025). The Guardian, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/nov/30/us-watchdog-human-rights-department-homeland-security>.

19 For example, a complaint filed by civil society and border organizations alleged that agents at the Camp East Montana detention center in El Paso, TX, took detainees to the U.S.-Mexico border to “jump the wall” and self-deport. See ACLU, *ICE letter re: Fort Bliss* (December 8, 2025), <https://www.aclu.org/documents/ice-letter-re-fort-bliss>.

20 Leire Ventas, *Qué se sabe de Renee Nicole Good, la mujer a la que un agente de ICE mató a disparos durante una operación contra la migración irregular en Mineápolis* (January 8, 2026). BBC News Mundo. <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/articles/c2lg0421n5vo>.

21 H.R.1. An act to provide for reconciliation pursuant to title II of H. Con. Res. 14. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/1/text>.

2. Return and Deportation: New Faces and Emerging Human Rights Violations in the Context of Mass Deportation Threats

A photograph of a person from behind, wearing a white t-shirt with the word "SVERIGE" printed in large, bold, black letters across the back. The person has dark hair and is looking towards a blurred background that appears to be an outdoor setting with some structures. The overall image has a blue and purple color cast.

SVERIGE

2.1. Individuals with Decades of Residence in the U.S., Mostly Without Criminal Convictions or Serious Crimes, Are Being Returned to Mexico

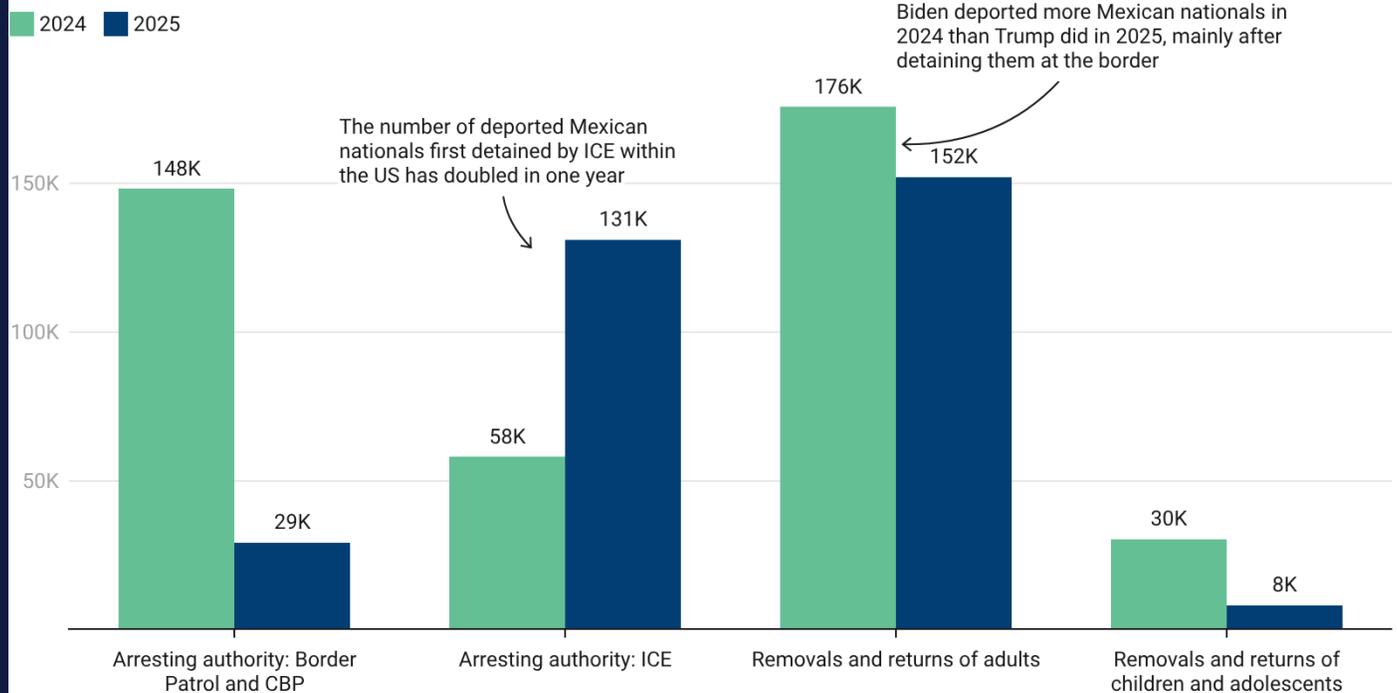
Mexican nationals

According to data from the Migration Policy Unit (UPM, for its acronym in Spanish) of the Mexican Government,²² the U.S. removed or forcibly returned 160,192 Mexican nationals between January and December 2025, the most recent month with available data as of the writing of this report. 7,997 of them were children and teenagers, with the majority detained by Border Patrol (75%) in the border states of Texas, California, Arizona, and New Mexico. The data reflects a significant increase in the number of underage children detained by ICE (20.1%, compared to 2.8% during the same period in 2024). Approximately 68% of all minors returned to Mexico were unaccompanied children and adolescents, the majority between the ages of 12 and 17.

In contrast, during the same period of January to December 2024, the United States carried out 205,232 deportations and returns of Mexican nationals, including 30,320 children and teenagers. The number of deportations of Mexican nationals from the US decreased by 22% between 2024 and 2025. This reflects, to a greater extent, the grade of intensity of deportations and returns from the border in the final year of Biden's administration, rather than a decrease in the intensity of immigration enforcement in the US.

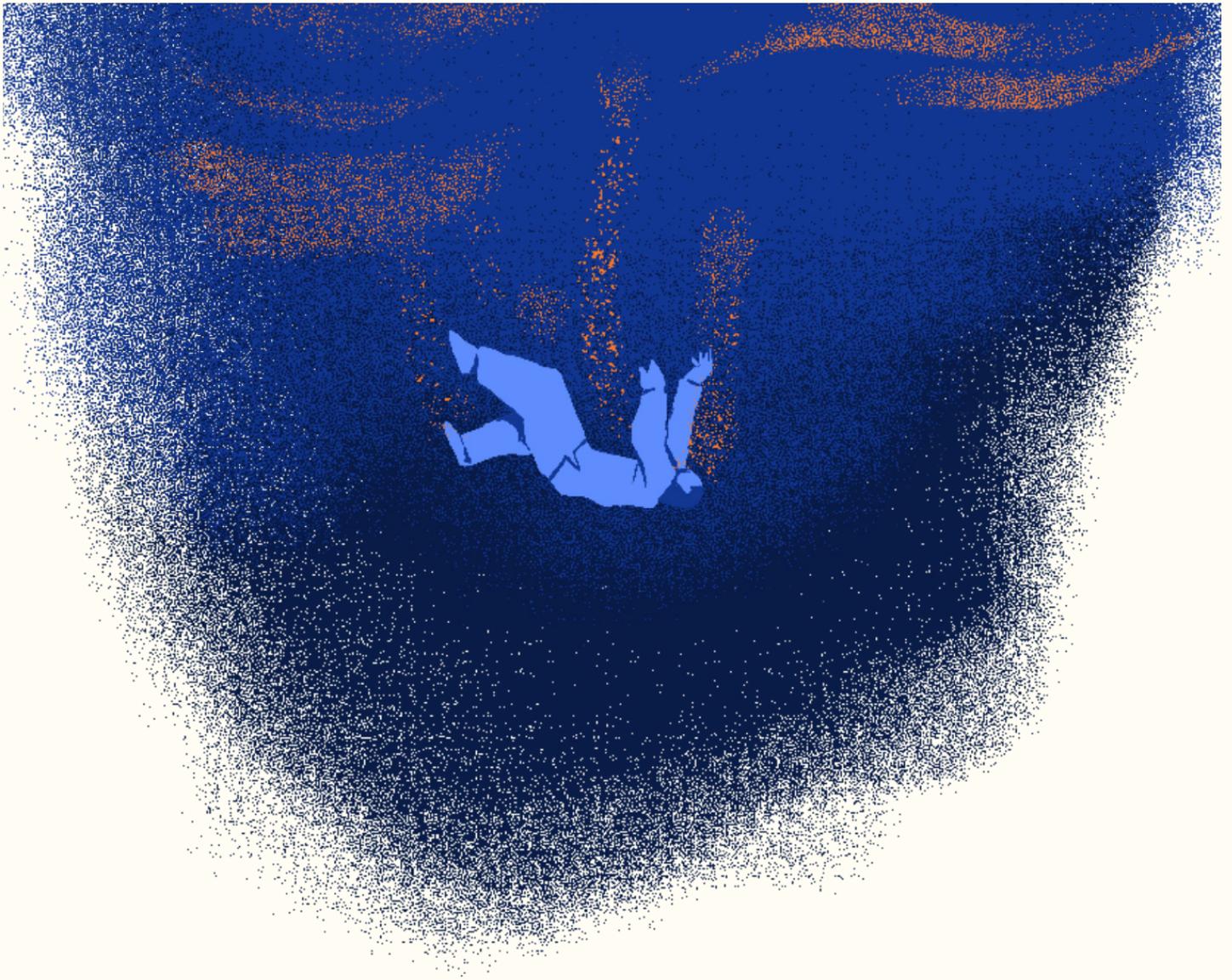
Biden deported more Mexican nationals in 2024 than Trump in 2025; yet Trump deported double the Mexican nationals detained within the U.S. by ICE in 2025

Total returns and removals of Mexican nationals from the United States to Mexico by detention authority and age group (2024 vs. 2025)

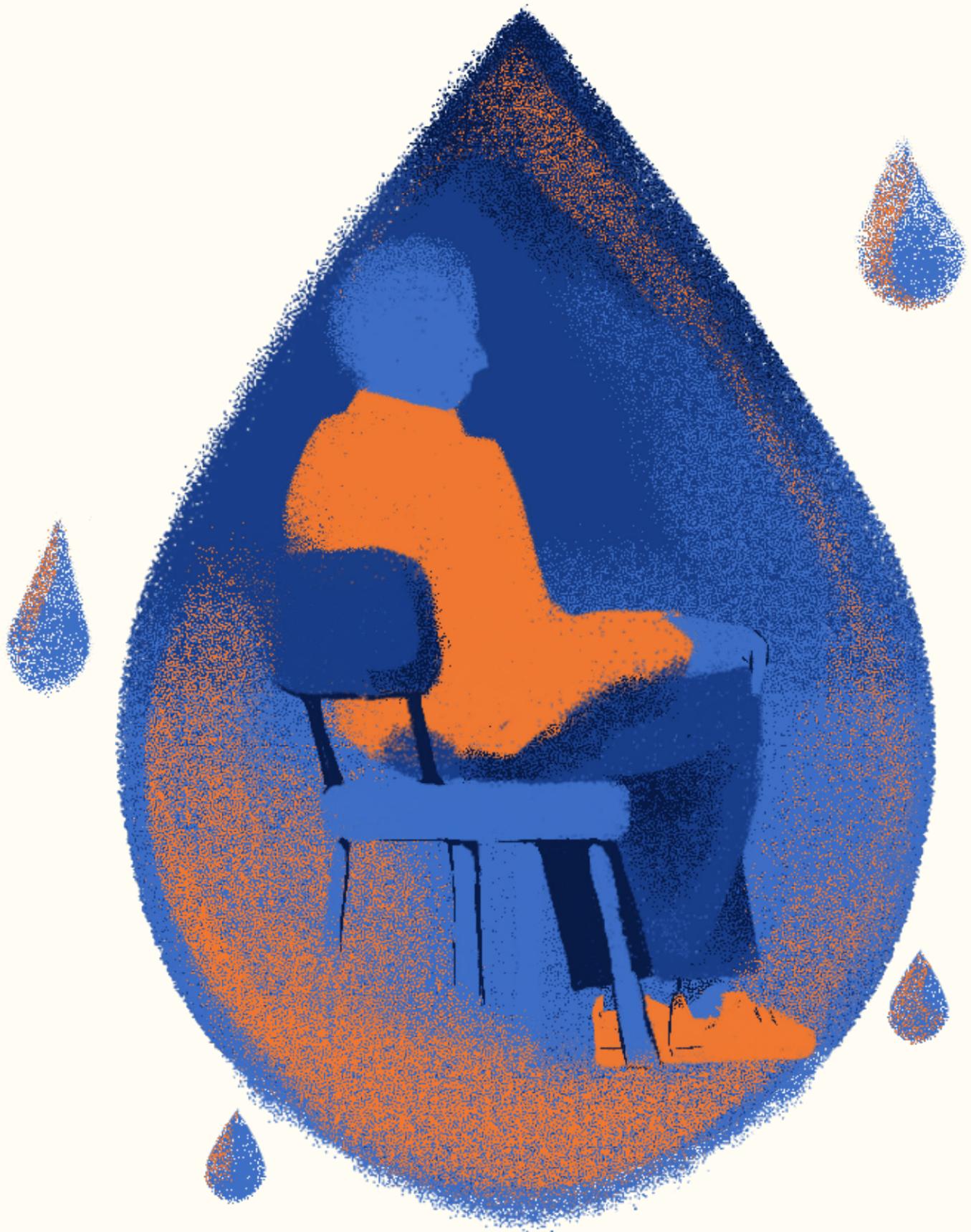


US Marshals have been excluded as an arresting authority due to their low level of statistical relevance.

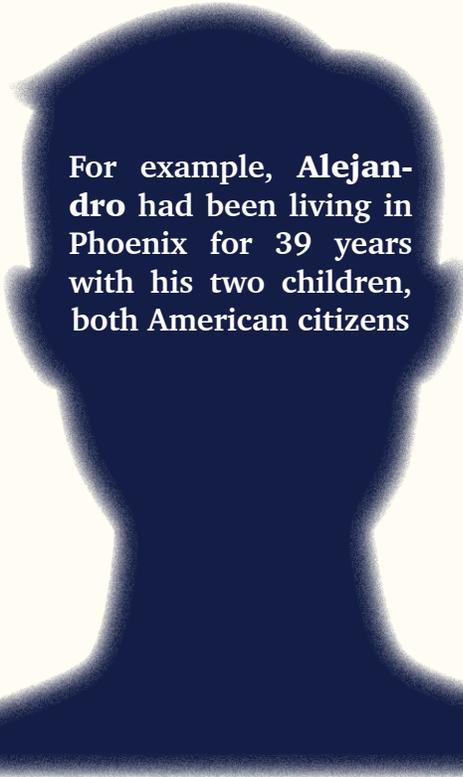
Source: Unidad de Política Migratoria, Mexican Government • Created with Datawrapper



22 Migration Policy Unit, Registration and Identity of Persons, Statistics on Mobility and Migration in Mexico (updated through December 2025), http://www.politicamigratoria.gob.mx/es/PoliticaMigratoria/tablero_estadistica (last accessed February 20, 2026).



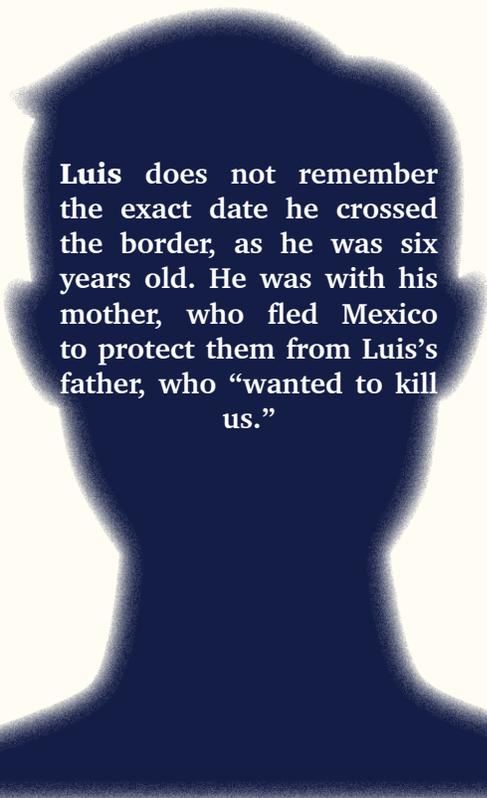
We observe, however, a significant change in the profile of deported and returned Mexican individuals. While in 2024 the Border Patrol detained 67% of Mexican individuals who were deported and returned to Mexico, in 2025, 77% of Mexicans deported and returned were detained by ICE. This reflects a significant increase in immigration enforcement in the interior of the United States, coupled with a notable decrease in border crossings. For this reason, it is not surprising that, while in 2024, 70% of returned Mexican nationals had been living in the United States for less than a month—likely reflecting people who crossed the border to seek asylum—, in 2025, this percentage dropped to 35%, alongside 29% of people who reported living in the United States for 1 to 10 years, and 17% for 11 years or more.



For example, **Alejandro** had been living in Phoenix for 39 years with his two children, both American citizens



Saul had been living in the US for 15 years, owning a house and raising a family of five children.



Luis does not remember the exact date he crossed the border, as he was six years old. He was with his mother, who fled Mexico to protect them from Luis's father, who "wanted to kill us."

Luis had arguments with his step-father and received minor charges, which led to his deportation in 2025, at age 43, 38 years after establishing a life in the United States. "That's where my family, my heritage, everything stayed behind", said **Juan Carlos**, who lived in the United States for over 20 years.

If we analyze the criminal record of all Mexican individuals deported by ICE from January 20 to July 31, 2025, according to ICE data provided to the Deportation Data Project, we find that one out of three did not have any criminal background in the U.S. In fact, almost one out of every two Mexican individuals returned (49.7%) did not have a final criminal sentence in the United States.

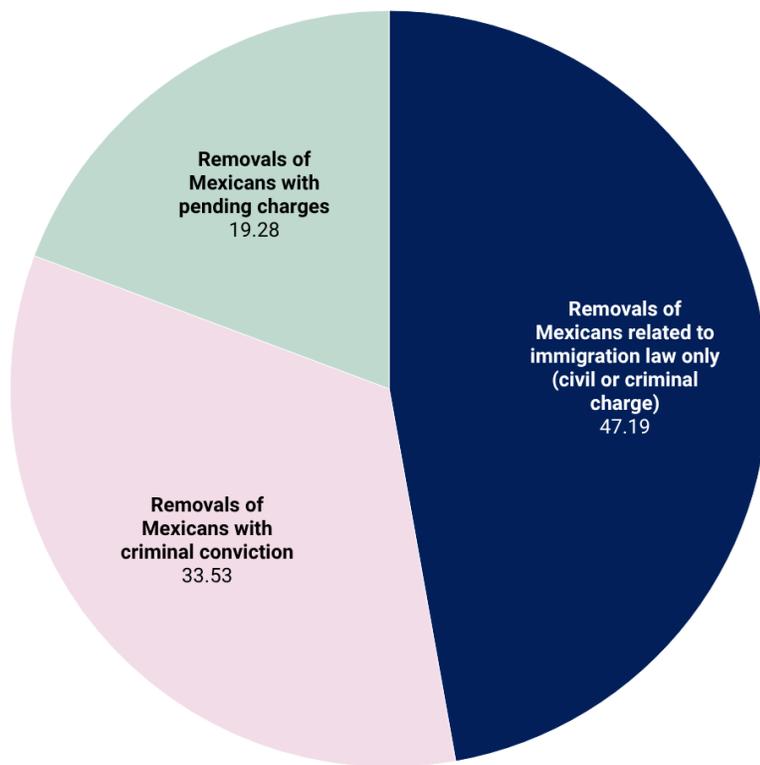
Among those with final criminal sentences, one out of three had sentences related to immigration "crimes," such as "illegal" entry or re-entry (88.76% of all people with

immigration-related sentences). This means that almost half of the total number of Mexican returnee individuals (47.2%) between January 20th and July 31st, 2025, were deported for reasons related to immigration violations, be it with criminal sentences or not. One of them was **Antonio**, who crossed into the United States in search of a job when he was 15 years old. Antonio had a stable job in Phoenix and had no criminal record. ICE arrested him outside of his work place, kept him detained for over a year, and finally deported him in August for illegal re-entry, 23 years after his first entry to the US.

Almost half of the Mexican nationals removed by ICE to Mexico were removed solely due to immigration-related charges (civil or criminal)

Total ICE removals of Mexican nationals to Mexico from January 20, 2025, to July 31, 2025

■ Removals of Mexicans related to immigration law only (civil or criminal charge)
 ■ Removals of Mexicans with criminal conviction
 ■ Removals of Mexicans with pending charges



Removals do not include CBP returns/removals to Mexico, which may include significantly higher numbers of people without pending charges or convictions.

Source: ICE data disclosed to the Deportation Data Project • Created with Datawrapper

Out of the total number of returns of Mexican people in the analyzed period (from January 20 to July 21, 2025) only one in ten was related to final criminal sentences for crimes of a violent, coercive, or sexual nature, while only 4% was related to sentences for crimes related to belonging to organized crime or weapons and drug trafficking.

Therefore, we can conclude that most deportations and returns to Mexico made by ICE were either of a civil nature or for non-violent crimes that do not represent a significant risk for public safety. It is important to highlight that the data does not include returns carried out by CBP, where it has been observed that the number of people returned with no criminal record in the United States is even larger.²³

Therefore, these are not “the worst of the worst,” but a large number of people whose

only “crime” was to cross the border without authorization in seek of protection and opportunities and for whom the United States immigration law continues to offer no significant opportunities for regularization, family reunification, or safe immigration.

23 Austin Kocher, *Will Trump's Immigration Enforcement Policies Target Dangerous Criminals? - A Close Look at the Data* (February 3, 2025), <https://austinkocher.substack.com/p/will-trumps-immigration-enforcement>.

Nationals of Other Countries Deported to Mexico

Similarly, data obtained by the Institute for Women in Migration (IMUMI) indicates that the United States also carried out 10,928 deportations of non-Mexican individuals to Mexico between January 20th and November 15th, 2025. Most of the deported individuals were nationals of Venezuela, Cuba, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

One of the most relevant challenges, however, has been obtaining reliable and unified data regarding the number of third-country nationals deported to Mexico, as well as their profiles and specific needs. Both the governments of the United States and Mexico present partial or untruthful information. Recurrently, in transparency requests, the INM tends to delay their responses, or refers them to departments with little response capacity, which ends up obstructing the right to access information and, generally, being able to have enough information to attend to the returnee population.

When questioned about the number of third-country nationals deported to Mexico between January 20 and October 15, 2025, their breakdown in age group, sex, nationality, reception port, and transfers affected by the INM, INM's response has been ambiguous:

...in the exercise of the powers conferred upon this Institute to oversee the entry and exit of individuals within national territory, to review their documentation, and to decide on the admission, stay, and departure of foreign nationals from the country, as established in Articles 20, sections II and III, and 42 of the Immigration Law (Ley de Migración), the immigration authority has identified foreign nationals who arrived in national territory through the border with the United States of America (USA), without making any prior determination regarding the legal reasons for their departure from U.S. territory, as this does not fall within the jurisdiction of the Mexican immigration authorities.

Oficio No. INM/DGCOR/DSER/041/2025
Regional Supervision and Evaluation Directorate
National Institute of Migration

The response reveals the implementation of strategies that are not coordinated with the United States and the inefficient use of economic, human, and material resources, as there are no performance indicators, at least not publicly available ones. Similarly, in order to comply with Article 8, Section X of the General Law on Transparency and Access to Public Information, the INM offers “broken down information” on people detected in quick counts at the northern border during the requested period, identifying only 9,715 people returning to Baja California, Coahuila, Tamaulipas, Sonora, and Chihuahua, omitting at least 40 people under the heading “Other nationalities.” For its part, the Ministry of the Interior, through its head, Rosa Icela Rodríguez, has reported that the INM has carried out more than 98,000 transfers of Mexican nationals to their communities of origin. The Institute, for its part, has been opaque in its responses to requests for transparency.²⁴

24 Rosa Icela Rodríguez, Press Release 103, SEGOB, <https://www.gob.mx/segob/prensa/se-mantiene-programa-mexico-te-abraza-para-recibir-a-los-connacionales-que-vienen-de-ee-uu?idiom=es>, accessed on December 18, 2025.

Public information reveals inconsistencies in the reception of third-country nationals, as the available data are scarce and unclear regarding their countries of origin. Even so, Mexico continues to be the country that receives the highest number of deported people of other nationalities from the United States, both in absolute and relative terms, worldwide. According to our analysis of data provided by ICE to the Deportation Data Project, 46.2% of ICE deportations carried out between January 20 and July 31, 2025, involving individuals removed to countries other than their own were to Mexico.

Information provided by the General Directorate for Coordination of Representative Offices of the National Institute of Migration and the Ministry of the Interior in response to information request 340020300071715 through the National Transparency Platform:

Individuals	860	1,049	2,865	3,334	1,607	9,715
State	Baja California	Coahuila	Tamaulipas	Sonora	Chihuahua	Total number of individuals

Individuals	926	2,401	574	2,895	2,206	520	153	40
Country of origin	Honduras	Guatemala	El Salvador	Venezuela	Cuba	Nicaragua	Haiti	Other

7,373

2,342

Male

Female

9,059

656

Adults

Minors

2.2. Returns are Primarily Carried Out at the Border, but with Changing Patterns

The deportation of foreign nationals to Mexico shows alarming patterns that can lead to enforced disappearances, as discussed in the following section. Meanwhile, the patterns of return of Mexican citizens from the United States to Mexico also show worrying trends.

Faced with the threat of mass deportations, the Mexican government announced and launched the repatriation strategy Mexico te Abraza, through the Ministry of the Interior, involving the participation of at least 34²⁵ public agencies. Part of the program consisted of setting up service centers in at least six states in the north of the country (Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Tamaulipas) in order to process returned Mexicans, provide facilities for obtaining identification documents, enroll returned individuals in social benefit programs, and provide financial support of MXN 2,000.00 to cover the cost of bus fare to return to their communities of origin.

Between January and July 2025, approximately four out of ten Mexicans deported to Mexico by ICE were sent to a city where the Mexico Te Abraza program did not exist, according to our analysis of available data from ICE and the ICE Flight Monitor at Human Rights First. According to information provided by the Mexican Ministry of the Interior, between January and June 2025, at least 24,082 people were received at a center participating in the program (including 1,229 women). It is noteworthy that the Mexican authorities do not have a specific breakdown of the beneficiaries, stating that the 236,818 services provided included 1,128 support services to families, without identifying their composition or their particular needs. To date, there is no information on the follow-up of the population benefiting from the strategy, nor on its effectiveness. As of December 18, Mexico has assisted 145,537 Mexican citizens, without providing any clarity or breakdown of these figures.²⁶



Photography: Cielita Ávila / DHIA.

Similarly, according to our analysis of deportations of Mexican nationals by ICE, 339 were returned through remote ports of entry such as Santa Teresa in New Mexico or through ports where there are no cities or adequate services on the Mexican side, such as Antelope Wells in New Mexico, with no Mexican city on the other side; Naco, in Arizona/Sonora; Lukeville in Arizona, which borders the small town of Sonoyta in Sonora; and Progreso and Rio Grande City in Texas, with small Mexican farming villages on the other side.

Returning individuals to areas where official support does not exist carries serious risks. On the one hand, returnees are more exposed to exploitation or violence from organized crime in remote areas where criminal structures are present, especially if there are territorial disputes.²⁷

²⁵ Rosa Icela Rodríguez, Press Release 103, SEGOB, <https://www.gob.mx/segob/prensa/se-mantiene-programa-mexico-te-abraza-para-recibir-a-los-nacionales-que-vienen-de-ee-uu?idiom=es>, accessed on December 18, 2025.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Oscar Contreras-Velasco, *When elephants fight, it's the grass that suffers: organized crime violence and risks for migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border* (December 4, 2025). Social Forces, <https://doi.org/10.1093/sf/soaf202>.



Tijuana, Baja California
México te Abraza Center

Mexicali, Baja California
México te Abraza Center

Nogales, Sonora
México te Abraza Center

Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua
México te Abraza Center

Ojinaga, Chihuahua
Point of Repatriation

Nueva Rosita, Coahuila
México te Abraza Center

Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas
México te Abraza Center

El Carmen, Nuevo Laredo
México te Abraza Center

Antelope Wells, New Mexico
Point of Deportation

Naco, Arizona
Point of Deportation

Lukeville, Arizona
Point of Deportation



Ciudad Acuña,
Coahuila

Piedras Negras, Coahuila
Point of Repatriation

Matamoros, Tamaulipas
México te Abraza Center

o, Tamaulipas
Center

Leon

Reynosa, Tamaulipas
México te Abraza Center

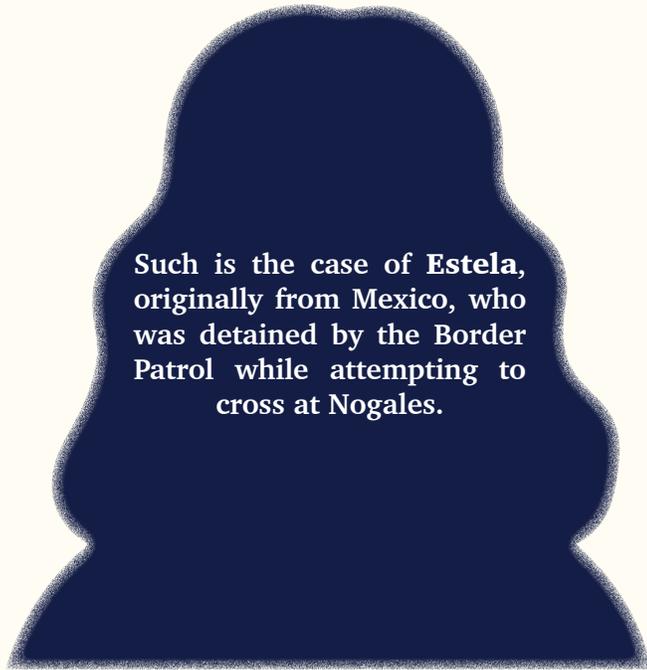
Rio Grande City
Texas
Point of Deportation

24 082 people
helped at **9** México te abraza
centers between January and
September of 2025

Villahermosa
Point of Repatriation

Tapachula
Point of Repatriation

On the other hand, the return of Mexicans to cities where the Mexico Te Abraza program does not exist prevents them from accessing the minimum services it offers, making it difficult to exercise their rights —especially if they do not have documentation—.



Such is the case of Estela, originally from Mexico, who was detained by the Border Patrol while attempting to cross at Nogales.

At a detention center, all her belongings were taken from her, and she was later transferred to another center in Eloy, Arizona. She was ultimately deported to Mexico without her voter ID card, passport, or birth certificate. At the time of her interview, she was unaware that she had the option of receiving support from an organization or reporting the retention of her documents.

In general, most deportations of Mexican nationals have occurred along the U.S.–Mexico border. According to our analysis of information from Mexico's Migration Policy Unit, 81% of deportations of Mexican nationals to Mexico in 2025 occurred at the land border, mainly through Matamoros (21.5%), Ciudad Juárez (13.2%), and Nogales (12.6%).

However, in the summer of 2025, there was a significant increase in return flights to Villahermosa (5,033 returns in August, five times more than in the pre-

vious month) and Tapachula (2,116 returns, also five times more than in the previous month) in southern Mexico. Despite the opening of Mexico Te Abraza centers there during the summer, flights declined again in September and October, according to ICE Flight Monitor data.

It can be concluded that the Mexican government is adapting the Mexico Te Abraza program to the changing patterns of returns and deportations dictated by the United States, but apparently without prior coordination with the northern country and with a temporary delay that leaves thousands of Mexicans in limbo. This calls into question the strategy in the negotiations between the two countries, as well as the well-being and safety of those deported.

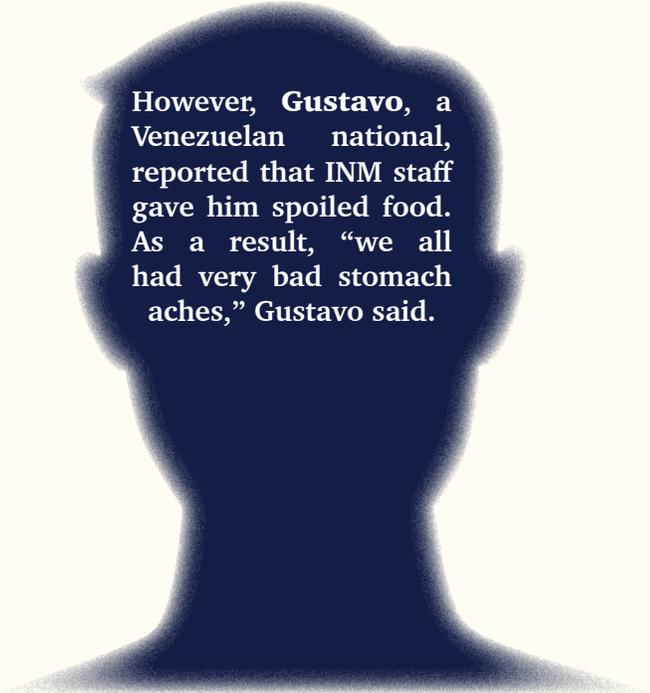
2.3 Human Rights Violations During Returns and Deportations to Mexico

Despite the lack of government transparency,²⁸ our monitoring and analysis of available data show numerous human rights violations during returns and deportations, as well as special protection needs following them. Among these, the following stand out:

28 The Mexican UPM does not provide regular data on third-country nationals deported to Mexico and does not include returns to unofficial repatriation points, while ICE and CBP have not updated their databases on returns and removals since December 2024. Thanks to transparency requests made by the Deportation Data Project, we can know the number of removals and returns carried out by ICE from January 20, 2025, to July 31, 2025, the latest verifiable database available at the time of writing this report.

a. Incidents of Short-Term Enforced Disappearance in the Context of Deportation

CBP and ICE deport non-Mexican nationals to Mexico, transferring them directly to the INM at the U.S.-Mexico border. After being processed, the INM transports them by bus to the south of the country, mainly to Villahermosa, Tabasco, moving them away from the border and preventing further crossings. During the land journey, the INM is responsible for the custody of the individuals.



However, **Gustavo**, a Venezuelan national, reported that INM staff gave him spoiled food. As a result, “we all had very bad stomach aches,” Gustavo said.

Monitoring the Migrant Detention Center in Janos (Chihuahua) about the processing of third-country nationals deported by the United States

In August and September 2025, the Jesuit Refugee Service in Mexico (JRS-MX) had the opportunity to monitor conditions at the Janos Migration Center, near Ciudad Juárez, in Chihuahua, where it was able to inform people of their rights in Mexico and provide them with emergency psychosocial assistance with support from the Border Refugee Assistance Fund, an initiative of the Diocese of El Paso and the Hope Border Institute.

In August 2025, there were thirteen people at the station: nine men from Cuba, two men and one woman from Ecuador, and one man from Honduras. All but the people from Ecuador had been deported the day before the visit. Most said that **“it was not clear where the role of the US immigration agents ended and that of the Mexican authorities began.”** In addition, all of them reported not knowing where they were going to be transferred or what documentation they needed to apply for re-entry into the United States or to rebuild their lives in Mexico, while those from Cuba expressed fear of returning to their country, where they had not been for 30 years.

In September 2025, the group comprised 18 men from Cuba, Venezuela, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Haiti, and Nicaragua, and seven women from Venezuela, Cuba, and Guatemala. All had been deported the previous day. Two men were visually impaired, while another person had a motor disability resulting from an arm amputation. In general, the individuals were in a state of shock, as many had been living in the United States for 20 or 30 years, meaning that deportation destroyed their life plans and, once again, they did not know where they would be transferred to next; it was even discovered that the information that immigration authorities in both countries had given them was false. The JRS-MX team had to provide emergency psychological assistance to four people who had been recently detained.

On both occasions, we verified extremely high temperatures in the migration station (but not in the officers' offices). In addition, the infrastructure has prison-like characteristics and lacks recreational areas. However, the space appeared clean and the INM seemed to provide access to health and communication services for these people. It cannot be concluded whether this access was granted due to the presence of organizations that were observing. In general, people did not know what their rights were in Mexico, they were extremely disoriented and showed visible signs of serious psychological and emotional distress due to the disruption of their life plans in the United States. During one of the visits, it was found that agents failed to adequately inform detainees about the scope of the proceedings and the documents they were signing.



Photography: JRS Mexico.

The journey usually takes three to four days, and during the trip, people report that their cell phones and other electronic devices—if they have been returned to them, which is not always the case, as described below—are confiscated. In some cases, the INM allows access to phone calls once people arrive in its custody. Other times, they do not. In that case, people can remain incommunicado for days, unable to tell their families or lawyers that they have been deported or where they are. For example, **Marcos**, a Mexican national, spent 30 days incommunicado between his arrest in Maine, his detention by ICE, and his return to Villahermosa (Tabasco), at which point he was able to contact his family. “At the Albergue Amparito shelter in Villahermosa, we receive 30 to 40 calls a week from families who don't know where their relatives are,” said Josué, one of the shelter's coordinators. In these cases, the United States and Mexico are carrying out short-term forced disappearances.



Photography: Cielá Ávila / DHIA.

b. Deportation of Persons in Situations of Vulnerability and the Separation of Families

The United States is expelling and deporting people to Mexico in conditions of extreme vulnerability. This includes pregnant women, people with acute medical conditions, and vulnerable elderly individuals. We detail some relevant cases here.

ICE deported **Clara** to Ciudad Juarez, a Venezuelan woman who was 8 months pregnant, after being transferred in a plane to two different detention centers. Clara was detained in the streets of Rochester (New York), where agents verified that she had an in absentia deportation order on her asylum case because Clara was never able to find out the date of her hearing. During the arrest, Clara was separated from her two children, both under ten years old, who stayed with her partner. As a result of the first flight to the detention center in the state of New York, Clara felt several aches and was taken to the center's doctor, who, according to ICE, authorized a second flight to another detention center in El Paso. During her time in detention, Clara tried to reunite with her children and do the procedures for her children to be with her when she was deported. However, Clara mentioned that ICE agents told her that her children were going to be under State's custody and that she would “never see them again.” During the deportation through the land border, ICE left Clara and other women in a patrol car for half an hour. “I felt like I was asphyxiating”, said Clara. She gave birth to her baby in Ciudad Juarez, separated from her two minor children, who were in the United States. In July 2025, ICE officially enacted a new directive that would significantly decrease the protections to secure family unity during deportation processes.²⁹

29 Women's Refugee Commission, *The 2025 ICE Detained Parents Directive vs. the 2022 ICE Parental Interests Directive* (July 2025), https://iftp-production.s3.amazonaws.com/media/documents/2025.07.24_Womens_Refugee_Commission_-_2025_ICE_Detained_Parents_Directive.pdf.

Clara's journey

United States

Denver, Colorado

- First place of residence with family after entrance to the country under asylum.

El Paso, Texas

- First crossing point under asylum.
- Second place of detention.
- Deported at 8 months pregnant.

Ciudad Juárez

- Third place of residence in a shelter after deportation.
- Childbirth in México.
- Recovered custody of children at the bridge and brought them to México.

Mexico

Panamá - Ciudad Juárez

- Train ride aiming to arrive at the border for entry to the United States.

Ciudad Juárez

- Homebound aiming to return to Mexico.
- Temporary residence.

	Detention Center
	Place of Residence
	Trip
	Flight
	Train Ride



Rochester, New York

- Second place of residence.
- Detention outside a market.
- 8 months pregnant.
- Separated from her 2 children.



New York - Texas

- Transferred on a flight from one detention center in New York to another in Texas after reporting health issues due to pregnancy.



Ciudad Juárez - Panamá

• Departing journey after deportation and return journey after deportation to return to South America. • First arrival to Panamá.

Venezuela - Panamá

- Departing journey, first trip out of Venezuela aiming to Panamá to start the trip towards the border at Ciudad Juárez.

Panamá



Venezuela

Paso Canoas, Panamá

- First place of arrival on departing journey.
- Temporary place of residence on the homebound journey.

The Case of Matias and Omar: Dreamers arrested with violence, one with acute clinical affections, deported and kidnapped in Mexico, and still considering returning to the United States

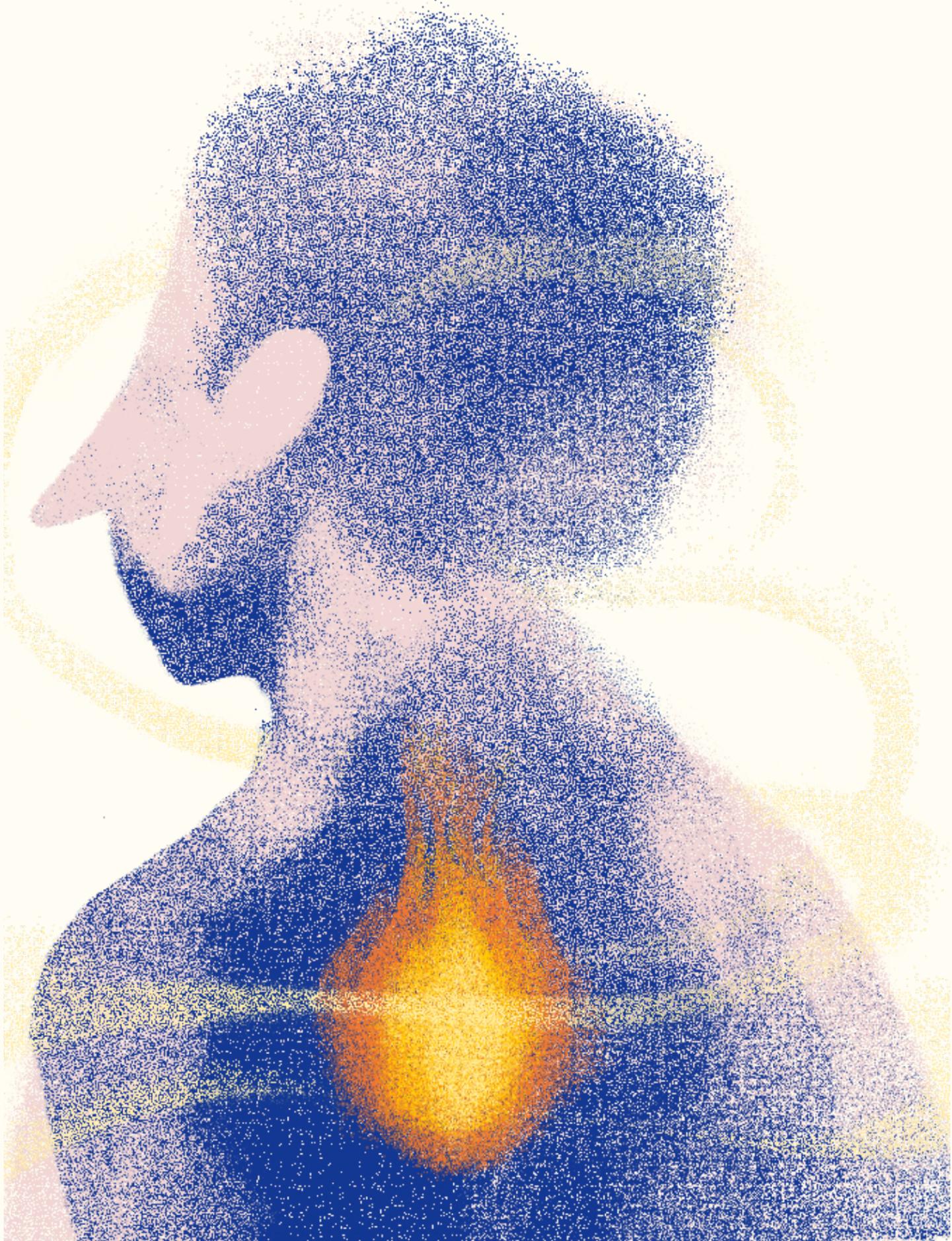
Matías, 32, originally from Sinaloa (Mexico), arrived in the United States as a young child and was detained during a raid at his workplace in Colorado Springs, with excessive use of force:

After the arrest, I was extremely distressed, because it was done with force, with many agents, and because for me it meant losing everything, since I had lived practically my entire life in the United States: I went to school there, my family was there, my property, everything. Since I have heart problems, I suffered a heart attack during my time in detention and had to undergo emergency surgery because my life was in danger. Once I was discharged from the hospital, they returned me to the detention center, where I stayed for approximately three months until I was able to “recover,” and then they deported me.

Along with Matías, forty other people were detained in the ICE raid, all taken into custody and transferred to a detention center. Omar, a 32-year-old native of Zacatecas, also arrived in the United States as a child; he was deported with Matías through Nogales, as Matías' health was apparently “good enough” to make the trip. Once in Mexican territory, they decided to travel to Ciudad Juárez to try to return to the United States. However, once there, they were victims of a serious crime:

When we arrived at the bus station, we were approached by a man who told us to get into a taxi to take us to several stash houses where we were held captive. They beat us repeatedly and demanded money from our families in exchange for our freedom. In my case, my family was forced to pay 350,000 [Mexican] pesos because they tortured me and sent videos of it to my partner and my mother..

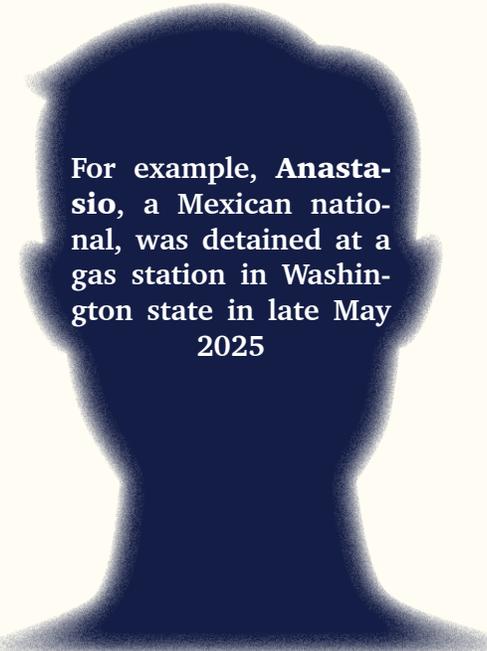
At least 44% of those interviewed for this monitoring identified violence as the trigger for their initial migration, followed by 37% who did so for economic reasons. In this regard, it is difficult for those who are forcibly returned to their community of origin or to a third country to undergo an effective integration process, where the events that led to their displacement might not have been resolved. On the contrary, during their transit through Mexico, the interviewed population has been the target of various crimes: at least 17 reported being victims of kidnapping, 17 were victims of robbery, 16 of extortion by organized crime and even the authorities, seven more reported beatings and at least one more reported torture.



Similarly, the United States is deporting highly vulnerable elderly individuals, primarily from Cuba. Among them is Esteban, a Cuban national deported from Ciudad Juárez in September 2025, who suffers from diabetes and acute blindness. According to testimonies from humanitarian workers, some of these Cuban nationals report having entered the United States through Operation Peter Pan, orchestrated by the Carter administration between 1960 and 1962. "Many of these people [Cubans deported to Mexico] have some kind of criminal record, such as repeated traffic fines, or have deportation orders in absentia issued in the 1980s and 1990s; others were detained outside the [immigration] courts. Many had residence permits and legal status," said Josué, a worker at the Albergue Amparito migrant shelter who accompanies numerous deported Cuban nationals. Due to legislative changes in Cuba, lack of resources, or very poor health, many of these Cuban nationals have decided to stay in Tabasco in southern Mexico. As a result, organizations like the Albergue Amparito have had to extend the length of stay, with one person having spent 187 days at the shelter by the end of 2025.

C. Confiscation or Retention of Essential Personal Belongings and Identification Documents Following Deportation.

Humanitarian workers participating in the monitoring of cases reported an increase in the retention of belongings and documentation from deported and returned persons by U.S. immigration authorities. This included the non-return of passports and identification documents, money, and cell phones. As a result, many people find themselves in Mexico unable to identify who they are or what their nationality is, unable to contact their loved ones, and without even enough money to cover their initial expenses after deportation.



For example, **Anastasio**, a Mexican national, was detained at a gas station in Washington state in late May 2025

After being deported from Nogales, ICE did not return one of his credit cards or any of the cash he had on him when he was arrested. "The costalito [bag in which ICE or CBP places the belongings of deported or returned persons] sometimes only has a label with their names [of the deported or returned persons] and nothing else," said a humanitarian worker in southern Mexico.

Similarly, we have documented cases of people being deported or returned without the necessary documentation. For example, **Maribel**, a Venezuelan national, was deported to Mexico without any documentation of her deportation. Maribel therefore does not know if she is subject to any entry ban or under what statute she has been deported. Humanitarian workers in southern Mexico also noted

this change in pattern. "Under the Biden administration, people who were deported at least had their CFI [credible fear interview] sheet and the fine imposed [a penalty that bars them from entering the United States for a certain number of years]; after January 20, 2025, people are deported without any documents," said a humanitarian worker in southern Mexico.

The withholding of belongings and documentation, including deportation documentation, "is a strategy designed to cause harm," said one humanitarian worker.

3. "Reverse Migration" Flow: Pathways Toward Danger

Faced with increasing raids, prolonged immigration detention and inhumane conditions, as well as violations of due process in the United States, some migrant families are deciding to leave the country, even when they still have asylum cases or other immigration proceedings pending that grant them legal status. For example, the Ramirez family, who live in Dallas, are looking for ways to migrate to Canada despite having a pending asylum case in the U.S. Leaving the United States without completing the necessary procedures to close pending asylum cases can result in deportation orders in absentia, which can have consequences in the future if individuals decide to return to the United States.

The US administration transformed the CBP One app into CBP Home, through which people who leave the country “voluntarily” can report their departure and obtain a check for \$1,000 (an amount that the US government claims to have increased at the end of 2025). To date, the U.S. government has not released any official, verifiable, or comparable information on the number of people who have used CBP Home. In our monitoring, we have only found anecdotal cases of people who have used CBP Home, mostly from Central and South America. These are generally people who have their own financial means and do not seek help from migrant shelters or other organizations. We couldn’t verify whether they received the money promised by the United States.



Photography: Ciela Ávila / DHIA.

With regard to deported Mexicans, it is worth noting a new trend upon their return: the impossibility of returning to their communities of origin due to fear of persecution. Only two of the sixteen people interviewed planned to return to their community of origin. The other Mexican nationals expressed the need to go to other parts of the country to ensure their safety, while three indicated their willingness to try to return to the United States as soon as possible, because that is where they left their entire lives. As a result, a greater number of people may be exposed to facilitators of movement or criminal networks that profit from irregular migration.

However, for people like **Marlon**, none of these three options is conceivable. Marlon, a Mexican national, fled organized crime violence in Mexico and applied for asylum in the United States. After being arrested and deported following a routine appointment with ICE, and fearing to remain in Mexico, Marlon is considering going to another country in search of safety.

The lack of protection in Mexico, where some people experienced abuse during their migration journeys, has led some families and individuals deported from the United States to head South (“voluntarily” or forcibly). For example, some Salvadoran nationals are receiving support from their consulate in Villahermosa to process their return to their country of origin after being deported. Other Central American nationals are being deported directly by the Mexican government, either by land or by plane (Mexico did not carry out any air deportations to Central America after May 2025, according to ICE Flight Monitor data, although it does continue to deport some people on commercial flights).³⁰

30 Human Rights First, *ICE Flight Monitor: November 2025 Monthly Report* (December 11, 2025), <https://humanrightsfirst.org/library/ice-flight-monitor-november-2025-monthly-report/>.

This practice can result in chain deportations of people who are afraid to return to their countries of origin, as was the case with a Guatemalan national who was deported by the United States to Mexico and ultimately deported by Mexico to Guatemala.³¹

Venezuelan, Cuban, and Nicaraguan nationals deported to Mexico identified in this monitoring also face difficulties. Many of their respective embassies and consulates in Mexico are ineffective, leaving many in legal limbo, sometimes without passports or safe-conduct passes to return home. Other mechanisms, such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Regional Program for Assisted Voluntary Return, have been affected by cuts in aid from the United States and other countries. The IOM lost more than \$1 billion in 2025 from its major donors (including the US), representing 30% of its total budget.³² The voluntary return assistance program is operating asymmetrically in Mexico: some organizations report that none of their cases have been accepted, while others have managed to get several people to qualify for it.

As a result, many individuals —whether deported or not— must return to their countries of origin or other destinations by their own means, risking the same abuses by immigration authorities and criminal groups that they already experienced on their way North, and even facing death.³³ Faced with this situation, civil society and Church organizations are confronted with a new ethical dilemma: whether and how to accompany migrants who wish to return to their communities of origin or other countries, facing the possibility that the person may suffer further harm during the return process.

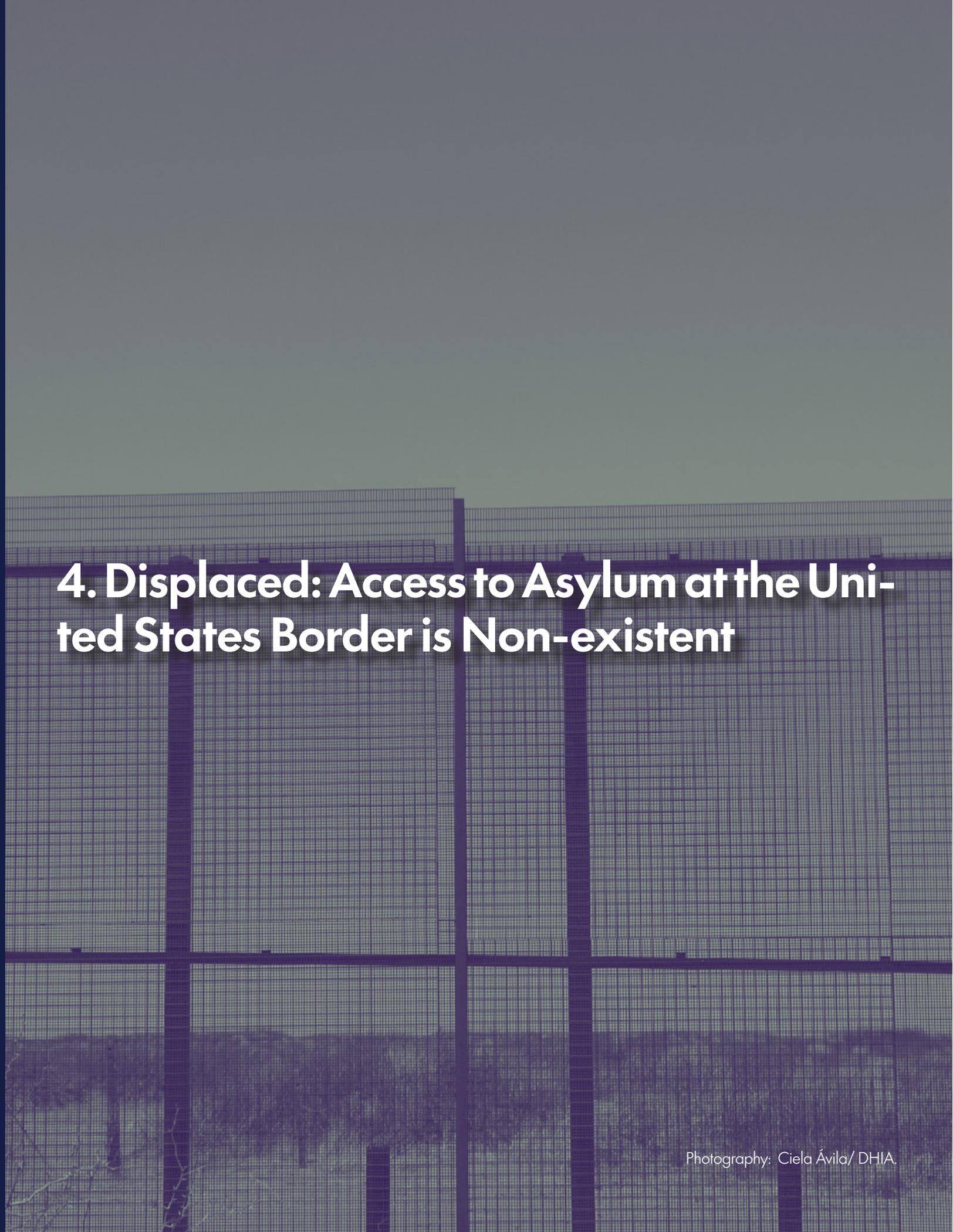
It is generally difficult to estimate how many people have made the journey south from the United States and Mexico. Some people decide to stay in a Central American country such as Costa Rica. Others seek to continue on to South America. Government data remains insufficient to determine the exact number of people following one route or the other. However, according to UNHCR monitoring data in Panama, 18,038 people crossed the Central American country to South America, mainly Venezuelans (95%). Of the total number of people interviewed by UNHCR (840), almost one in four acknowledged that they would face risks if they returned to their country of origin, while three in five had experienced some form of violence and abuse along the way.³⁴

31 Kyle Cheney, *Administration returns improperly deported Guatemalan* (June 4, 2025). Politico, <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/06/04/administration-returns-deported-guatemalan-00388840>.

32 Organización Internacional para las Migraciones (OIM), *Actualización sobre las operaciones de la OIM en medio de cortes presupuestarios* (March 18, 2025). <https://www.iom.int/news/update-iom-operations-amid-budget-cuts>.

33 Univision, *Niña colombiana muere en naufragio en el Caribe de Panamá: segunda víctima de la “migración inversa”* (November 10, 2025), <https://www.univision.com/noticias/inmigracion/una-nina-colombiana-muere-al-naufragar-en-el-caribe-la-embarcacion-en-que-viajaba-en-migracion-reversa>.

34 ACNUR, *Panama: Reverse flow monitoring Q3 2025* (October 27, 2025), <https://data.unhcr.org/es/documents/details/119348>.



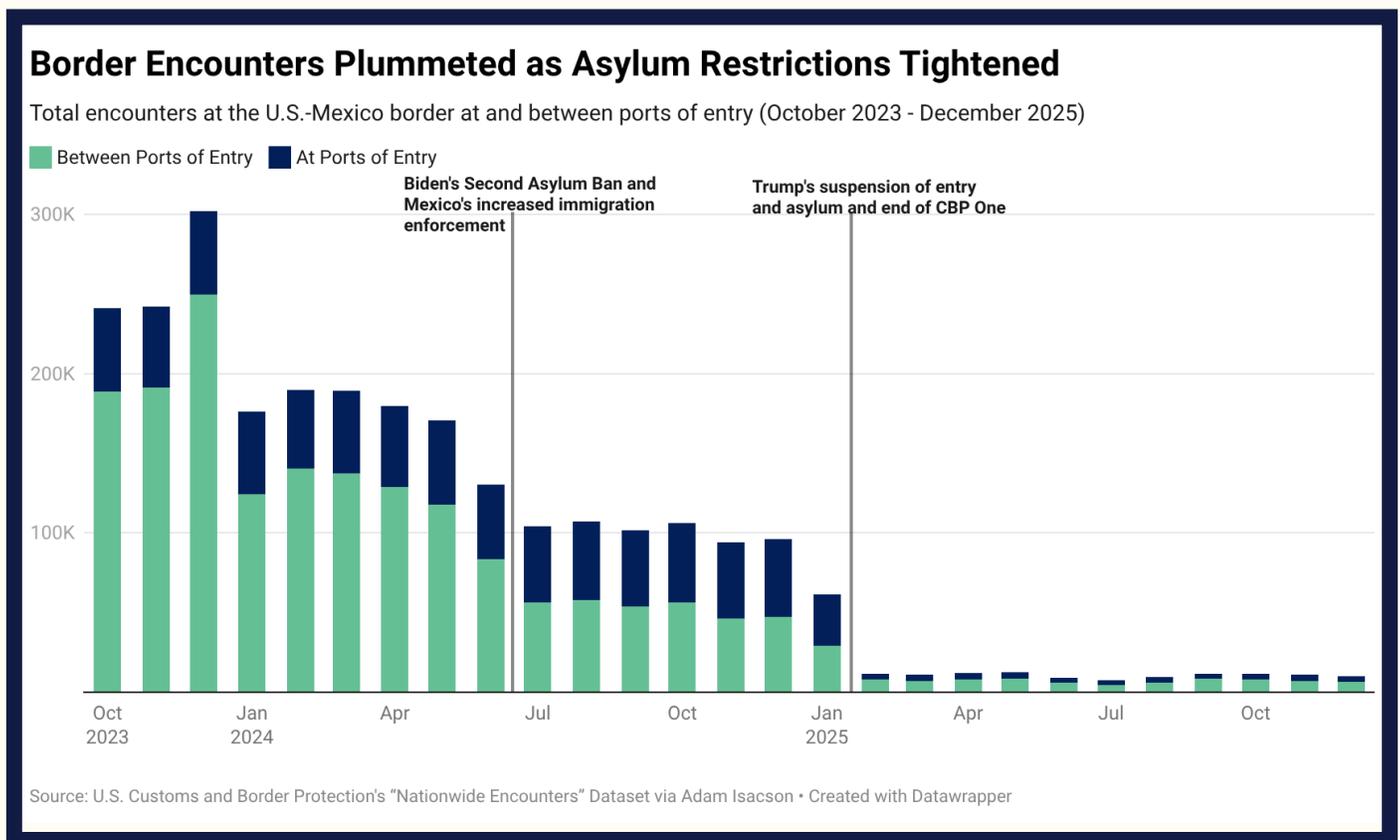
4. Displaced: Access to Asylum at the United States Border is Non-existent

Photography: Cielita Ávila/ DHIA.

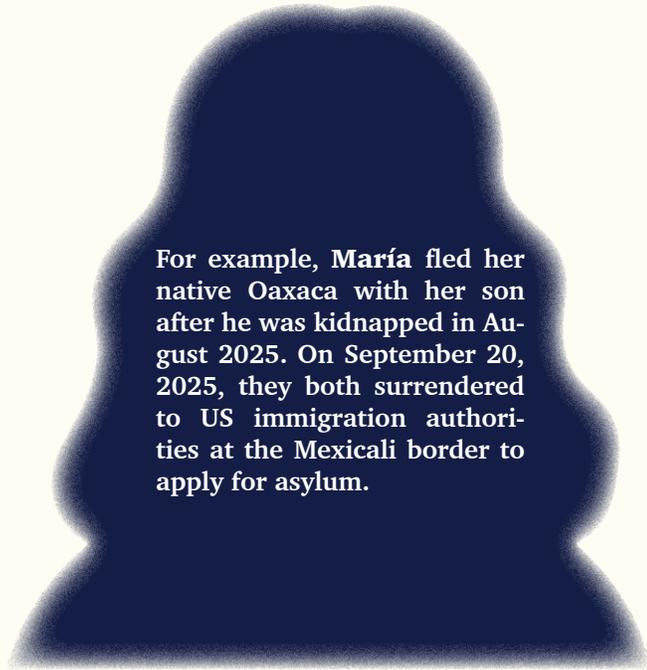
In January 2025, President Trump ordered the end of CBP One and the cancellation of more than 30,000 appointments to appear at a port of entry and begin asylum proceedings after being processed. “At that moment, I felt like my world was falling apart,” said Esperanza, a Cuban national who was trying to get a CBP One appointment in Mexico with her nine-year-old son. On the same day, President Trump declared an “invasion” at the U.S.-Mexico border, restricting entry to anyone without a visa and suspending the possibility of applying for asylum and any other international protection. He also issued an “emergency declaration” on the U.S.-Mexico border that facilitated the deployment of military forces and, by the end of 2025, had resulted in nearly 10,000 armed forces personnel deployed to the border for surveillance and logistical support.³⁵

One year later, there is still no access to asylum at the US-Mexico border. As for other forms of international protection, an August 1, 2025 ruling by the District of Columbia Court in *RAICES v. Noem* ordered the restoration of processes to review cases of individuals seeking withholding of removal and protection under the Convention Against Torture. However, the court argued that the suspension of access to asylum could remain in effect, as the administration would likely prevail in its argument that it had the power to suspend it.³⁶

Our monitoring reveals that, on the one hand, most people in need of international protection are not attempting to cross the border, partly due to Mexico's increased migration control in recent years. This is demonstrated by the reduction in the number of border encounters at and between ports of entry in the United States.

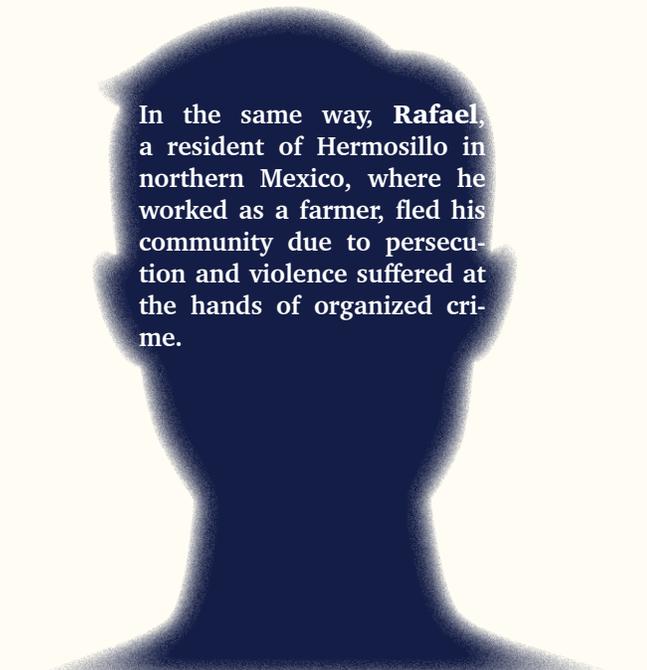


But, on the other hand, those who do try to cross the border are being systematically rejected, expelled, or deported without being able to submit their applications for international protection. This also includes the rejection and expulsion of Mexican nationals who need international protection, which violates Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—among other conventions—on the right to leave one's country in order to seek asylum, in accordance with Article 14.



For example, **María** fled her native Oaxaca with her son after he was kidnapped in August 2025. On September 20, 2025, they both surrendered to US immigration authorities at the Mexicali border to apply for asylum.

María was separated from her son during detention because he was of legal age. “[The agents] told me to stop asking [about my son],” **María** said. She was never able to present her case for asylum or international protection, claiming that she was brought before a judge only to plead guilty to crossing the border without authorization. **María** was returned to Mexico in October 2025 without her son, who remained in detention in the United States at the time of the interview.



In the same way, **Rafael**, a resident of Hermosillo in northern Mexico, where he worked as a farmer, fled his community due to persecution and violence suffered at the hands of organized crime.

On his journey towards the U.S. border, **Rafael** was robbed by Mexican immigration agents, who shot at him and checked his phone before finally letting him go. **Rafael** succeeded in arriving on the U.S. soil at the border wall in Piedras Negras, where he tried to request protection. However, after arriving at the wall, a Border Patrol agent told him to “go back [to Mexico]”. **Rafael** went to the city of Saltillo and he does not know where to go now.

Edilson, a Honduran national, tried to apply for asylum by presenting himself at a port of entry in Piedras Negras in August 2025. However, he states that he was unable to apply for asylum or any other type of protection and was deported back to Mexico about 24 hours after turning himself in.

35 Darryl Coote, *Trump awards 13 service members with new Mexican Border Defense Medal* (December 16, 2025). UPI, https://www.upi.com/Top_News/US/2025/12/16/Trump-Mexican-Border-Defense-Medal/9071765863480/; U.S. Northern Command, DoW support to U.S. border security, <https://www.northcom.mil/BorderSecurity/#securing-borders> (last accessed December 18, 2025).

36 *Refugee and Immigrant Center for Education and Legal Services (RAICES), et al. v. Kristi Noem, et al.* No. 25-5243, <https://litigationtracker.justiceactioncenter.org/cases/raices-v-noem-court-appeals-asylum-ban/order-re-stay-pdf>.



5. Stranded: Challenges in Comprehensive Care and Lack of Official Data

5.1. Exercising Rights in a Context of Government Inaction

Amidst the challenges of collecting information, processing it, and ultimately evaluating the policies implemented in the region, there are people who remain in Mexico after the end of CBP One, as well as those who are deported and cannot return to their countries or communities of origin. There are also people who, after living in the United States for decades and being forced to leave, wish to remain in Mexico until it is possible to return to their lives.

Gabriella, originally from Honduras, left San Pedro Sula due to political, economic, and educational reasons, as well as risks associated with gender-based violence and violence in general. She lived in the United States for 30 years, leaving in April 2025 via Corpus Christi on the recommendation of a “lawyer” to apply for a visa, she claims, while her children remain in the country, including one who is ill. She has decided to remain in Mexico until she can re-enter, even if it is irregularly, as her fear of staying in Mexico influences her decision.

The possibility of remaining in Mexico after deportation, in the country that initially expelled many of these people, will depend on various protection factors. Mexican nationals with family networks or a recent past who migrated for economic reasons may have a greater chance of returning to their community in Mexico, without ignoring the fact that the conditions that caused them to leave may have intensified or improved. On the other hand, if the factor leading to expulsion is due to criminal acts or harassment by criminal structures, this option is unlikely to be considered.

Nonetheless, those who find themselves in Mexico voluntarily, involuntarily, temporarily, or permanently will face difficulties in integrating and effectively exercising their rights if the host community is unsafe or lacks public services. A humanitarian worker in Saltillo reported that it is not common for families to prioritize their children's education, as they mainly seek to first meet needs related to housing, work, and health. Once families have stabilized, they look for options to regularize their children's education. This occurs mainly in Saltillo, followed by Piedras Negras. In those cases, migrant shelters like Casa del Migrante in Saltillo have linked up with an educational center that provides facilities for migrants and refugees, including materials, exemptions from the use of uniforms, placement in various school grades, and late enrollment. Yet, the relationship with the local community remains challenging, as the considerations given to certain families have generated unrest, requiring work with both populations –locals and recently arrived migrants– on issues of integration.

In Ciudad Juárez, integration is linked to a public safety issue: crimes against migrants. Between January and December 2025, 256 people in a context of mobility were freed from captivity, having been kidnapped or deprived of their liberty in private homes. During the same period in 2024, 762 victims of crime were identified through media monitoring and bulletins, including 53 children and adolescents. One of the most alarming events was the discovery of 147 people inside a social housing unit, 12 of whom were identified as adolescents. Official figures provided by the Chihuahua State Attorney General's Office indicate that only 180 people were affected by both kidnappings and trafficking. The obvious question is how to compensate for the damage, both for the local and migrant populations, in a way that allows for community integration processes and, in turn, generates protective factors.

Access to decent housing is also uncertain: high living costs and a lack of regulation on housing rents, which, although derived from a private lease agreement, are subject to a tax omission to regulate payment for services. Faced with this situation, people who have decided to settle in a Mexican town have resorted to renting between different family groups in order to afford housing. On the other hand, they face food shortages, which, again, is a public issue, as being a vulnerable population, they could access different programs that allow them to meet their most basic needs, such as food. However, due to a lack of documentation, the population faces greater obstacles to access such programs in some instances.



Accompanying Stranded People in Ciudad Juárez

Access to food often becomes a concern for people in situations of mobility who live their daily lives in Ciudad Juárez, influencing basic decisions such as where to live, what work to do, or how to get around the city.

In this context, during the month of July of 2025, support was provided to 110 families through the *Pan y Esperanza* (Bread and Hope) program, which offered a monetary exchange for the free purchase of food at a supermarket. This approach allowed each family to choose products according to their food needs, recognizing the diversity of contexts and cultures experienced by families in mobility. The free choice of products strengthened the right to adequate food, as it allows families to decide what and how to eat.



Photography: Jazmín Harvey / DHIA.

In some cases, families used the funds to strengthen small businesses related to the sale or preparation of food. This expanded their ability to sustain themselves beyond the immediate moment and was linked to the right to generate livelihoods in dignified conditions.

The difficulties in guaranteeing food are closely linked to the conditions in which many people live in the city. The lack of documents limits access to formal employment, while immigration restrictions, discrimination, and other risks reduce the possibilities of having a stable income, added to the high cost of rent.

After accompanying them to the supermarket, each family continued on their way by different means, from ride-hailing cars and motorcycles to carrying the food parcels on their shoulders.

These journeys reflect the daily effort involved in guaranteeing the right to food, even in precarious contexts. In this way, the delivery of food parcels is understood not only as the provision of food, but also as a rights-based support action. By placing people's decision-making capacity at the center, this type of support helps sustain daily life and move through the city with greater dignity.



Photography: Jazmín Harvey / DHIA.



Photography: Jazmín Harvey / DHIA.

5.2. Obstacles for Regularization Lead to Systematic Exclusion

Given the sudden change in US immigration policies this past year and the Mexican government's lack of transparency regarding deportations and the care of Mexican nationals and other nationalities, migrant organizations, shelters, and centers have found it necessary to strengthen their dialogue and coordination with others, both inside and outside the country, as well as to verify the information provided by different government entities. This must be done in order to monitor migration flows and the practices of the authorities in dealing with migrant populations. Third-country deported nationals are quickly transferred to southern Mexico, where civil society actors have limited operational capacity, which complicates the identification and care of vulnerable cases.

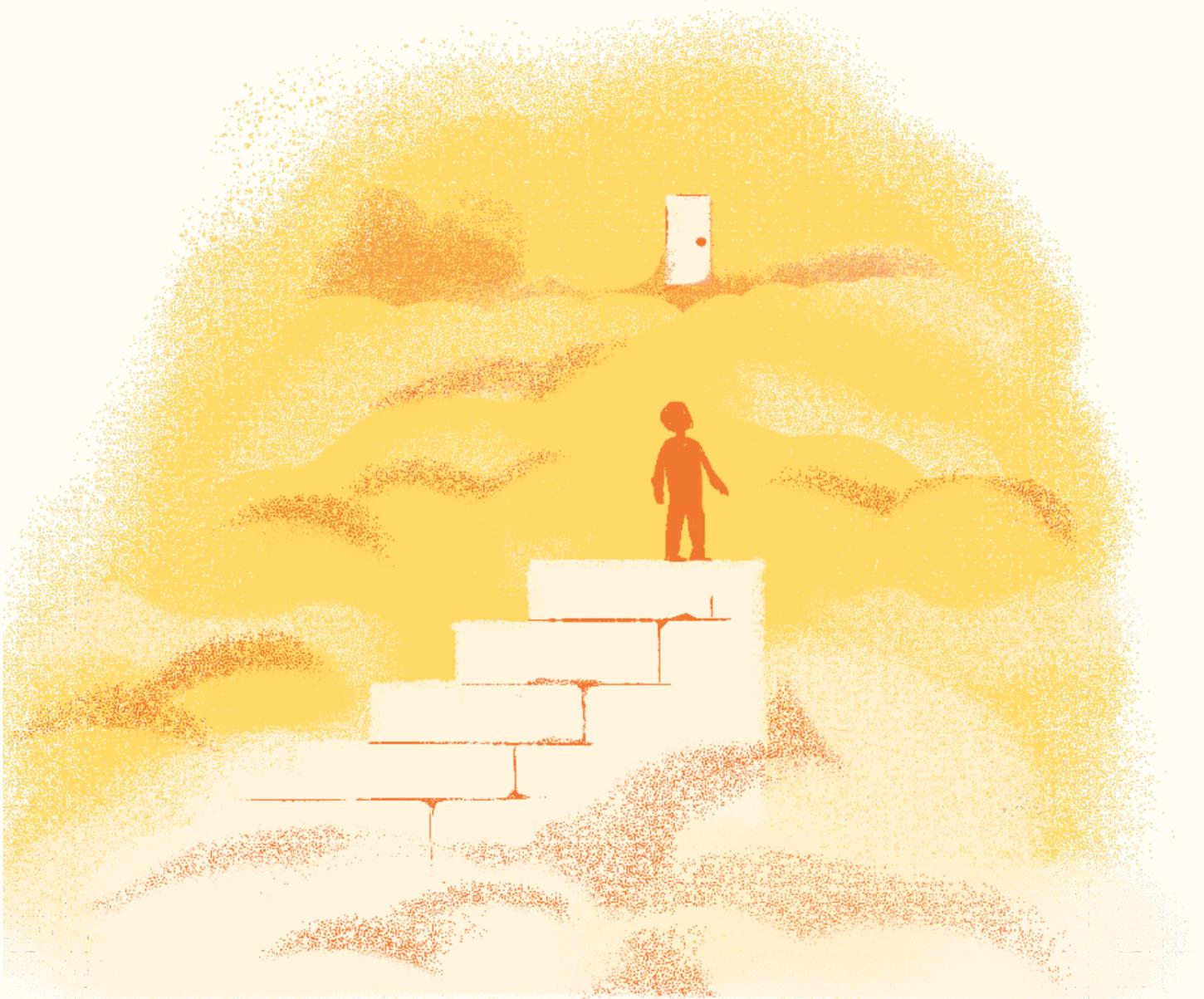
Due to the cancellation of asylum at the border by the Trump's administration, the number of people who request asylum in Mexico has increased this year. However, both COMAR and INM have systematically obstructed issuing Visitor Cards for Humanitarian Reasons, an extremely important document that allows the population's integration. Its denial has led to prolonged accompaniments by humanitarian workers, who are forced to insist and wear out legal recourses in search of the issuance of said document.

Now more than ever, Mexican towns are seen as destination cities. Monitoring carried out by Derechos Humanos Integrales en Acción (DHIA) has identified that many people in situations of mobility who settled in Ciudad Juárez initially expected to cross "to the other side" and now, due to migration policies, consider the border a viable alternative (at least for the time being). This is largely because immigration uncertainty has become an alarming reality that no longer offers hope to people. Another important factor is the new meaning given to the "limbo" in which they found themselves at one point, unable to return to their place of origin or cross into the United States, which today welcomes them as people of destination.

Settling in Ciudad Juárez involves various difficulties, mainly related to access to documentation, limiting social, labor, and educational integration. This situation is replicated to a greater or lesser extent in different Mexican localities. As part of binational migration control strategies, Mexican authorities have tightened access to migration procedures, creating multiple administrative obstacles that make it difficult for people in the context of mobility to begin or complete their regularization processes in a timely manner. On the northern border, these barriers manifest themselves in the limited availability of appointments, constant changes in service criteria, and a high degree of discretion with regard to regulations.

In a context where access to rights is becoming selective, many people have chosen to begin immigration regularization processes in border cities with the aim of accessing formal employment, health services, and social security. However, this decision is often made out of vulnerability, even though it is known that the processes can take two years or more, resulting in conditional integration, in which the exercise of rights depends on the progress of bureaucratic procedures.

Immigration regularization in Mexico is often a long and deeply exhausting process, where violations of due process have become an unwritten norm. Existing mechanisms and assumptions only address the needs of certain population profiles, leaving out a large sector of people who do not fit into recognized categories. This highlights an institutional logic that conditions the right to regularization and renders invisible other forms of roots that migrants build in Mexico. Immigration regularization cannot be understood solely as an administrative procedure, but rather as a social process that reproduces hierarchies, exclusions, and differentiated forms of access to rights, particularly at the border, where human mobility is structural.



A woman with long dark hair and glasses, wearing a blue and orange vest, stands on the left side of the frame, speaking to a group of people. Two people are seated at a white table in front of her, looking down at papers or books. The table is cluttered with various items, including papers, a blue folder, and colorful markers. In the background, a large television is mounted on a wooden shelf. To the right, a red door with a glass panel is visible. The room has a tiled floor and a green wall in the background.

6. Accompaniers: Challenges for Migrant Shelters and Organizations

Faced with this chaotic and devastating situation for the migrant population, the needs and vulnerabilities of people on the move have become markedly more diverse. On the one hand, there are people facing deportation after having lived most of their lives in the United States, detained in inhumane conditions with a painful uncertainty about their future, often denied the opportunity to continue their lives in Mexico and/or their communities of origin due to the conditions there. On the other hand, there are those who return “voluntarily,” coerced by the Trump administration's policy of immigration terror, as well as foreigners who, having waited in Mexico to apply for asylum in the United States, even for years, are forced to return or attempt to regularize their status in Mexico in order to lead a minimally stable life. Therefore, a psychosocial approach and person-centered care are fundamental for organizations and actors that serve these individuals and families in contexts of mobility, in order to highlight their voices, respect their decisions, and understand the emotional and behavioral implications of their circumstances.

The outlook is discouraging, with heightened violence, constant violations of due process in regularization procedures, and unclear immigration policies. However, every day, there are actors who resist the onslaught and, with the defense of dignity as their banner, reinvent the dynamics of accompaniment. For example, migrant shelters and centers for migrants along Mexico's northern and southern borders, participants in this report, have restructured the assistance provided in light of changes in migration flows, with integration into the local community being one of the main conclusions reached after a series of collective reflections.

While the migrant population that has remained in Mexico for some time considers its options and stabilizes the possibility of returning, settling down, or continuing with previously set goals, migrant shelters and centers continue to offer humanitarian aid, now focused on protection and integration, creating spaces for guidance, educational reintegration, and care for accompanied children and adolescents.

In addition, although the number of new arrivals has been declining to date, shelters and centers continue to address health issues, provide legal advice, and offer spiritual support, with the caveat that the support provided tends to be more prolonged given the long stays of the population. Precarious conditions have persisted over time, but hope through safe spaces manages to counter hostile environments, directly impacting the exercise of human rights for each and every person to whom this report is dedicated.



Experiences and Best Practices of Community Integration

During 2025, the border town of Piedras Negras, which was generally a place of waiting and transit to the U.S., drastically became a destination for hundreds of people: during the first quarter, several applications for refugee status were filed, people began to look for jobs and housing, and subsequently, issues of educational integration for children and adolescents began to be addressed by the only lawyer of Casa del Migrante de Saltillo who continues to provide legal assistance, following severe financial restrictions on the humanitarian sector in March of that year. It is striking to see the rapid growth in local integration, so much so that currently, support is even being provided to people seeking to naturalize as Mexican citizens in that locality. In some ways, and in coordination with the

different shelters in Piedras Negras, the priority continues to be the protection of people in transit, and step by step, at the same time, the integration of those who have chosen to stay.

In 2025, support efforts increased to promote the local integration of families who had lost hope in the opportunity once represented by CBP One. With the support of CAME in Agua Prieta, a small border town, they are moving forward by building ties within the community, securing formal employment, and ensuring food security, care, and access to education for their children. For these families and humanitarian workers, uncertainty has been transformed into creativity and faith as they continue building a home along the road that has now become their destination.

At the Jesús Torres 24/7 Migrant Center in Torreón, they have observed a change in the population, which is no longer “pursuing the American dream,” turning the town into a mandatory destination. They have adapted their services to the current people on the move they welcome, both foreign and domestic, by offering stays of more than three days and be-



Photography: Joselo / Archive CDMS.

coming a long-term shelter, which was never part of their plan.

The need for various medical treatments after accidents and crimes such as kidnappings and extortion, as well as severe emotional and physical exhaustion, has led them to treat each migrant guest individually, offering them the time they need, without neglecting safety and self-care regulations and protocols.

In view of this, the center has forged closer ties with health and education authorities and the INM, becoming one of the few places with the proper conditions to house migrants in the area. Therefore, the INM coordinates with the shelter to send migrants who are trying to return to their country of origin. Similarly, the local education authorities have been receptive to the reintegration of refugee children into the education system. In terms of health, another space for medical care for the population was secured, thus distributing the workload of the Red Cross and the General Hospital.

In the same way, the shelter has reinforced relationships with civil protection, which supports in the transferring of vulnerable people to them, avoiding the possibility of migrants being left to their luck and become victims of adverse situations in Torreón.

The positioning of the CDM Jesús Torres 24/7 through local media and social networks has had an impact on donations, allowing for the planning and implementation of a program called **Despensa Solidaria (Solidarity Pantry)**, which consists of offering a basic pantry, personal hygiene items, cleaning supplies, diapers, etc. In terms of integration, migrant families who are stranded in the city are invited to all events held at the Center, such as celebrations and activities.

Likewise, neighborhood relations are based on joint initiatives to keep spaces clean and ensure behavior is appropriate for the neighborhood.



Photography: Joselo / Archive CDMS.

At the end of each month, a Mass is held at the Center's facilities and broadcasted on Facebook, thanking all benefactors and donors for the supplies they send. At the end of the year, the Center offers them a small gift as a token of appreciation

Faced with changing migration flows and trends in Ciudad Juárez, the Jesuit Refugee Service - Mexico sought to modify its care model to address the new reality that 2025 presented, paying special attention to migrants who were planning to settle down on the border.

First, a new service area was established, called Community Outreach, whose objective is to build local networks where people in transit and social actors from the local community can meet, with the intention of creating spaces for encounter and strengthening the community reception initiatives that already exist in the Juárez community.

On the other hand, psychosocial care processes shifted from brief support to medium-term psychosocial assistance and psycho-educational activities for the recreation of life projects. Likewise, the criteria for delivering humanitarian aid were modified to make the number of deliveries and benefits more flexible, with the intention of safeguarding the basic needs of families with vulnerable members and encouraging minimum conditions for a dignified life. This mainly benefitted people and families who had recently arrived in the city or people living in rented houses outside shelters.

For people living in shelters and in overcrowded conditions, a new model of care was introduced, which included strengthening families' capacities to integrate children and adolescents into school, training in skills that enable self-employment, and offering viable conditions for regularization in Mexico beyond administrative processes by moving to judicial processes.



Photography: JRS México.

Agua Prieta, Sonora

Exodus - Migrant Aid Center



- Assistance with formal employment



- Integration of children into local educational systems



- Assistance with the organization food security programs

Sonora

Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua Jesuit Refugee Service



- “Vinculación Comunitaria” program connected local agents with people on mobility in need



- New long term psychosocial process in response to longer stays in the border and new forms of violence

Chihuahua

Piedras Negras, Coahuila Migrant Home - Saltillo



- Assistance searching forms of housing



- Assistance with searching employment



- Educational integration of children



- Turning into a destination (Notable increase in applications for refugee status in Mexico)

Coahuila

Torreon, Coahuila Migrant Center - Jesús Torres



- Adaptation of policies of short terms stays into longer ones in response to the end of CBP One



- Priorization of long term psychosocial processes



- Institutional partnership for health services



- Institutional partnership for employment search



- Consolidation of “Despensa Solidaria” program with media outreach in the locality

IV. Recommendations

The violation of due process, family separation, the violation of the right to seek asylum at the border, the impacts of mass arrest/deportation policies on the physical, mental, and emotional health of migrants and their families, as well as the challenges to guaranteeing the right to decent housing, work, education, and health documented in this report require substantial changes in our policies and practices in the short, medium, and long term. Such changes must include the following at least:

To the United States

1. To the Congress of the United States
 - a. Approve legislation that protects sensitive locations such as churches, schools, hospitals, and immigration courts; which reinforces standards and mechanisms of ICE supervision and other agencies involved in immigration enforcement; which guarantees that detainees can carry out custody procedures for their children with all legal guarantees; and which approves a path to citizenship for people who have been living and contributing in the United States, keeping families together.
 - b. Include language in appropriations bills that:
 - I. Requires DHS to provide monthly reports of the number of “Kavanaugh” arrests and deportations/returns (both by ICE-ERO and CBP) by nationality, sex, age, and place of the first arrest.
 - II. Requires the State Department and DHS to elaborate public quarterly reports that detail the implementation of agreements to deport nationals to countries that are not their own, showcasing how the government of the United States works to protect the security, integrity, and rights of people deported there.
 - c. Maintain regular supervision sessions that help shed light on the impact of arrest policies and indiscriminate detentions against migrant people, especially in vulnerable groups, as well as mass deportation policies against families of mixed status and migrant families in general.
2. To the Administration of the United States:
 - a. Establish family unity and integrity as a priority of immigration policy, ending the detention of families, children, teenagers, and pregnant women, allowing people to look for their release on bail to avoid excessive and unnecessary time in detention centers, and reinforcing protection for custody arrangements of children and people under one’s care, if the person is detained.
 - b. Re-establish and reinforce existing supervision mechanisms before January 20th, 2025, including the Civil Rights and Civil Liberties (CRCL) office, the Office of the Immigration Detention Ombudsman (OIDO), and the Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman (CIS).

- c. Re-establish a priority list for arrests and detention, focusing on individuals who present a serious threat to community safety and ending the practice of collateral arrest, arrests by racial profiling, and arrests in “sensitive” locations, like churches, schools, hospitals, and courts.
- d. Stop the deportations of people to countries where they are not from, especially as they continue to be used as a pressure mechanism to force people in detention to accept deportation orders or opt for “voluntary departure.”
- e. Establish dialogue with migrant-led, faith, business, and civil society communities to find productive political ways forward, which help the United States and the successive generations of migrants who have helped build this country.

To Mexico

1. Analyze, adapt, and approve in the Senate the General Law to Comprehensively Prevent, Assist, and Repair the Internal Forced Displacement in Mexico, a legislative initiative frozen since 2020. Facing the current context of forced deportations of Mexican nationals, it is urgent to generate conditions in communities of origin that allow the return.
2. To the National Migration Institute, continue with the expedition of Visitor Cards for Humanitarian Reasons without delay and under due process.
3. To the Government of Mexico, assess the strategy of *Mexico te Abraza*, reconsidering the location of reception points in the inside and south of the country, as well as making transparent the exercise of public resources that have been invested so far.
4. To the Government of Mexico, limit the number of deported people of other nationalities from the United States, as well as reinforcing the protection mechanisms to prevent chain deportations to countries of origin or other countries where people can experience risks to their life, security, or integrity.
5. To the Government of Mexico, implement a special protection and regularization program that allows to bring legal certainty to those who have entered Mexico and whose characteristics of permanence are inapplicable to those enumerated for the effect of the Immigration Law, as well as people of other nationalities who have been deported from the United States to Mexico.
6. To the Mexican Refugee Commission (COMAR), strengthen, in accordance with its budgetary availability, the staff of the Offices in their different locations in order to address the backlog in procedures for applying for refugee status, as well as applications for family reunification.

To International Organizations

1. To the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), organize on-site visits to Mexico and other countries in the region to document violations of due process and other human rights experienced by returned and deported people from the U.S., as well as to verify compliance by receiving states with their obligations to these individuals under the conventions and treaties signed and over which the IACHR has jurisdiction.
2. To the International Organization for Migration (IOM), publish the criteria for access to the Regional Program for Assisted Voluntary Return in order to provide clarity on the procedures and possibility of access to the mechanism by applicants and the organizations and migrant shelters that accompany them.

To the Catholic Church

1. Promote the active listening and accompanying of people recently affected by immigration policies, as well as for those accompanying them in migrant shelters, organizations, and other Catholic spaces.
2. Coordinate the action of episcopal conferences in the Americas, promoting joint statements on migration and creating regional plans to accompany migrants who have been forcibly displaced and deported.
3. Provide training to clergy, seminarians, and members of the Church in general on Catholic social teaching in the area of migration to foster communities of encounter, welcome, and solidarity.
4. Encourage community integration actions in the ecclesial community, becoming a Church that “reaches out,” allowing for the recovery of spaces for the promotion and protection of highly vulnerable populations while addressing the root causes of migration.



Changes in Immigration Policy in the United States and Mexico in 2025

Policy	Trump: January - Mid May 2025	Trump: Mid May - November 2025
Asylum at ports of entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declaration of “invasion:” suspension of entry and access to asylum in all parts of the border to all persons who are part of the invasion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Litigation in RAICES v. Noem has reestablished access to protections under the Convention Against Torture (CAT) and of withholding of removal at ports of entry at the border, but not of asylum, whose access is still suspended.
Asylum between ports of entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Declaration of “invasion:” suspension of entry and access to asylum in all parts of the border to all persons who are part of the invasion. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Litigation in RAICES v. Noem has reestablished access to protections under the Convention Against Torture (CAT) and of withholding of removal between ports of entry at the border, but not of asylum, whose access is still suspended.
Border enforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reactivation of border wall construction and intention to build a wall along the entire U.S.-Mexico border. Order to review the use of force policies of DHS personnel and members of the Armed Forces against migrants at the southern border, “to ensure that the use of force policies prioritize the safety and security of DHS personnel and of members of the Armed Forces.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DHS waived multiple federal laws to accelerate border wall construction in San Diego, Yuma, Tucson, El Paso, Rio Grande Valley, and San Diego. Installation of more than 43,000 rolls of razor wire along the border. Creation of “National Defense Areas” (NDAs) as militarized enforcement zones along the southern border, including El Paso, Brownsville, Columbus, Yuma, Imperial Valley and Tecate.

Policy	Trump: January - Mid May 2025	Trump: Mid May - November 2025
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There hasn't been any known, public and official update of the use of force policies at the southern border yet.
Border militarization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deployment of more than 9,000 U.S. military agents by mid-March 2025 for surveillance, construction of physical barriers, and logistical support to immigration enforcement agents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 10,000 U.S. military agents are deployed at the southern border under the Joint Task Force Southern Border command at the end of 2025. Deployment of Stryker armored vehicles and MQ-9 Predator drones for border surveillance and patrolling.
Border Processing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expedited removal proceedings for all persons crossing at and between ports of entry without U.S. government authorization. Reinstatement of the Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP or "Remain in Mexico"). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People encountered or apprehended at the border continued to be placed in expedited removal or summarily pushed back. Litigation in Immigrant Defenders Law Center (ImmDef) v. Noem allowed the implementation of "Remain in Mexico," except for current and future clients of ImmDef. However, we have not observed a widespread implementation of the program at the border.
Apprehension and detention at the border	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Indefinite detention for all single adults. Detention of mostly Venezuelan nationals at the Naval Operations Center at Guantanamo Bay. Consideration of the use of military bases for immigration detention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening of the first new detention center in a military base in El Paso (TX): Camp East Montana in Fort Bliss, with a projected capacity for 5,000 people. The Department of Justice moved to terminate the Flores Settlement Agreement, seeking to terminate basic protections for unaccompanied children in detention after crossing the border and sparking litigation.

Policy	Trump: January - Mid May 2025	Trump: Mid May - November 2025
Arrests and detention in the interior of the U.S.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rescission of the guidance to conduct arrests in or near “sensitive locations or protected areas”, allowing immigration arrests in places of worship, schools, hospitals, and courthouses – among others – and instructing agents to apply a “healthy dose of common sense” to determine when to do so. Resumption of family detention.. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ICE intensified large-scale and indiscriminate enforcement in major cities after May 2025, relying on the support of CBP and other agencies. Deployment of the National Guard to support DHS in large-scale immigration enforcement operations. Troops were deployed to Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington D.C., Memphis, and briefly in Portland. The Supreme Court found in December 2025 that the administration’s arguments did not hold ground to justify sending National Guard troops to Chicago to support immigration enforcement operations. Nationwide arrests in immigration courthouses become a common practice. Expansion of mandatory detention by denying bond hearings for most undocumented migrants, resulting in prolonged detention and sparking litigation.
Agreement to remove third-country nationals to Mexico	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removals of nationals from Cuba, Nicaragua, Haiti, Venezuela and northern Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras) to Mexico under an agreement not made public. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuation of removals of third-country nationals of the same nationalities as reported earlier in the year, with some reports of some other nationalities. It is unclear if ICE deported them to Mexico or if CBP pushed them back.

Policy	Trump: January - Mid May 2025	Trump: Mid May - November 2025
<p>Agreements to remove/ detain persons to third countries other than Mexico</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surrender of 252 Venezuelan nationals to a maximum security prison in El Salvador, where they were abused and tortured, under the invocation of the Alien Enemies Act. They were later transferred to Venezuela. Deportations of nationals from Asia, Africa and the Middle East, to Panama and Costa Rica, in February 2025. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreements with 20 countries by December 2025 to deport nationals to countries that are not their own, deport individuals so they are transferred to other countries, send asylum seekers to third countries (including Honduras, Paraguay, Ecuador, Belize and Uganda) or send migrants to foreign prisons.
<p>Safe migration pathways and legal status</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Order to terminate “categorical parole programs”, including the Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela and Haiti (CNHV) parole program, family reunification programs and the Central American Minors (CAM) parole, among others. Termination of parole status for persons who entered under parole programs during the Biden administration, including the CNHV program, which sparked litigation. Termination and non-renewal of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Venezuela, Haiti, Afghanistan, Cameroon and others, sparking litigation. Elimination of the Safe Mobility Offices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DHS sought to terminate and not extent or redesignate countries whose TPS expired in 2025, sparking complex litigation for multiple countries. President Trump fully or partially banned travel and entry to nationals of 39 countries, mostly African and Muslim-majority ones. In the Americas, it included a partial travel ban to students and visitors from Venezuela and Cuba and a full ban on nationals from Haiti, among others.

Policy	Trump: January - Mid May 2025	Trump: Mid May - November 2025
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Root causes of migration and foreign aid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freezing of all foreign aid. End of the Biden-Harris administration's Root Causes Strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The House approved the Trump administration plan to rescind \$9 billion in previously allocated funds, including roughly \$7 billion in foreign aid. USAID ended major operations in mid-2025.

Appendix II

Information provided by the General Directorate for Coordination of Representative Offices of the National Institute of Migration and the Ministry of the Interior in response to information request 340020300071715 through the National Transparency Platform:

Anexo 1
Solicitud de Acceso a la Información folio 340020300073725

"2. Solicito copia de todos y cada uno de los documentos físicos y/o digitales que den razón del número de personas deportadas por Estados Unidos hacia México, a partir del 20 de enero de 2025 y hasta el 15 de octubre. Incluir y desglosar cada uno de los siguientes, por grupo de edad y sexo: a) Nacionalidad de las personas deportadas, exceptuando la mexicana. b) Puerto de entrada en el que se han recibido personas extranjeras. c) Número de traslados realizados a partir de la recepción en puerto de entrada, incluyendo el lugar de partida, lugar de destino y medio de transporte utilizado."

Se comparte la información desglosada por nacionalidad, mayores o menores de edad y sexo, precisando que esta Unidad Administrativa refiere el número presumible de personas extranjeras que el INM detectó en campo obtenido de conteos rápidos cercanos a la frontera norte y que llegaron al territorio nacional por dicha frontera, aclarando que no se trata de personas "rescatadas ni puestas a disposición del INM", del 20 de enero de 2025 al 15 de octubre de 2025. (Fecha señalada en la solicitud).

	860	1,049	2,865	3,334	1,607			9,715			7,373	2,342	9,715
ESTADO	Baja California	Coahuila	Tamaulipas	Sonora	Chihuahua	TOTAL					Hombres	Mujeres	TOTAL
	926	2,401	574	2,895	2,206	520	153	40	9,715		9,059	656	9,715
NACIONALIDAD	Honduras	Guatemala	El Salvador	Venezuela	Cuba	Nicaragua	Haití	Otras Nacs.	TOTAL		Mayores de Edad	Menores de Edad	TOTAL

La información puede variar de acuerdo al proceso de validación de los datos, por lo que pueden diferir de las publicadas en otros informes de gobierno debido a dicho proceso.



