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## **41 Million Mexicans Unable To Satisfy Basic Nutritional Requirements**

*by Steven Ranieri*

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On Oct. 15, the government's National Nutrition Commission and the National Solidarity Program (PRONASOL) reported that 41 million Mexicans, nearly 50% of the population, are unable to meet basic nutritional requirements. Of the total, 17 million live in conditions of extreme poverty. Causes cited for the increasing incidence of malnutrition are population growth, deteriorating economic conditions, and the isolation of rural communities from market centers. In the 1980s, per capita GDP declined by 14%. Between 1981 and 1987, the population increased from 71.4 million to 81.2 million, and the number of Mexicans living in poverty rose from 32.1 million to 41.3 million. While impoverished communities and households are found throughout Mexico, poverty conditions are concentrated in isolated mountain areas. Indigenous persons, migrant workers, and agricultural laborers were identified as the most marginalized groups in rural areas. Mexico's high mortality rate for children under six years of age is attributed in large part to severe malnutrition. At present, an estimated 25% of Mexico City inhabitants are categorized as extremely poor. (Sources: El Financiero, 10/15/91; Spanish news service EFE, 10/16/91)

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