

9-5-1990

On Central American Migrants To Mexico & U.S.

Deborah Tyroler

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen>

Recommended Citation

Tyroler, Deborah. "On Central American Migrants To Mexico & U.S." (1990). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/noticen/4345>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Latin America Digital Beat (LADB) at UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in NotiCen by an authorized administrator of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact amywinter@unm.edu.

On Central American Migrants To Mexico & U.S.

by Deborah Tyroler

Category/Department: General

Published: Wednesday, September 5, 1990

Recent figures prepared by the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) indicate that thus far in 1990, Mexican immigration authorities have deported 85,000 foreign nationals, the majority of whom were Central Americans. By year-end, Mexican officials expect a total of 170,000 deportations, double the 1989 figure. INS director in Mexico, Michael Trominski, commented that Mexico has become the principal way-station for undocumented persons attempting to enter the US. The Border Association of Central American Refugees has confirmed that large numbers of Central Americans continue to flee their homes, with an average 4,000 lacking visas arriving in the US per month. Association director Ninfa Kruege claims that few of the "illegal immigrants" are detained. At present, 800 refugees are awaiting deportation from the US, while only two have been granted permission to remain in the country. Victor Osorio, president of the Non-governmental Refugee Assistance Organizations Coordinator (CONONGAR), said that most Central Americans enter Mexico via Chiapas state, and the main crossing point from Guatemala is Tapachula. The Mexican government maintains 23 checkpoints on the southern border. Mexican immigration official Jose Alberto De Leon Gramajo said that deportations in August this year included 1,000 Salvadorans, 300 Guatemalans, 300 Hondurans, 100 Nicaraguans, and five Costa Ricans. A series of economic activities has sprung up to both serve and exploit undocumented persons attempting to enter Mexico. On the one hand are providers of lodging, and bus and train services to customs checkpoints. Guatemalan and Mexican immigration officers and police exact bribes. "Coyotes" demand payments of diverse kinds to lead refugees across the border. According to Osorio, these and related problems will be exacerbated under new legislation which includes applying sanctions on persons providing assistance to foreigners attempting to enter the US. Osorio called the law "a veiled threat" to refugee rights organizations, since it may result in repression targeting both refugees and persons who act in their defense. In the early 1980s thousands of Guatemalans fled civil war and death squads into southern Mexico. UN High Commissioner for Refugees office director, Chil Mirtenbaun, said that the majority of Guatemalan refugees are indigenous persons from Huehuetenango and San Marcos departments. Refugee defense attorney Alfonso Braun told Notimex that a total of 40,000 Guatemalan refugees in Chiapas state have been granted political asylum. Another 200,000 reside in Mexico without legal status. Braun said that the Guatemalans resident in 120 camps located in remote areas. Living conditions in the camps are abysmal. He added that poverty has forced women as young as 13 years of age to practice prostitution in order to obtain food. (Basic data from Notimex, 09/02/90)

-- End --