

Migrant Caravans in Mexico

April 2020

Early Iterations of Modern Migrant Caravans



2005 - Caravan of Mothers of Missing Migrants



2010 - Viacrucis Migrant Religious Processions



2017 - First Viacrucis to leave for the US-MX border

Demographics

- ❖ Migrants are primarily from Northern Triangle countries
- ❖ Caravans have ranged from hundreds to thousands of migrants
- ❖ Caravans include men, women, children & LGBTQ+ members

Organization

- ❖ Communication occurs via word-of-mouth and social media
- ❖ Designated leaders direct smaller groups to a common destination
- ❖ Caravans travel on highways (by foot and vehicle) and on trains

Interactions

- ❖ INM and National Guard stop, detain, and deport caravan members
- ❖ Local communities' responses vary widely
- ❖ Civil society groups provide humanitarian assistance including food, lodging, and healthcare



Caravan Routes & Sizes

Caravan	Peak Size	End Point
Apr. 2018	1,200+	Tijuana
Oct. 2018	7,200+	Tijuana
Jan. 2019	7,800+	Piedras Negras
Oct. 2019	3,000+	Ixtepec
Jan. 2020	4,600+	Ciudad Hidalgo + El Ceibo

Mexican Government Responses

Humanitarian

- ❖ April 2018 - Provided food and shelter, and promised healthcare and education
- ❖ Jan. 2019 - Distributed humanitarian visas (depicted below)

Humanitarian Visas Distributed by INM



Punitive

- ❖ Oct. 2019 - Blocked northern transit beyond Oaxaca
- ❖ Jan. 2020 - MX National Guard repelled, detained, and deported incoming caravan at MX-GT border

Mexican Deportations of Central American Migrants



Policy Recommendations

Short Term

Refine Humanitarian Visas

- ❖ Prioritize visas according to vulnerability
- ❖ Distribute visas at consulates to avoid bottlenecks at the border

Medium Term

Codify Caravan Protocol

- ❖ Include in 2011 Migratory Act to standardize INM procedures

Restructure CONOFAM

- ❖ Reinvest in cross-agency coordination that includes input from civil society organizations

Long Term

Improve Public Perception

- ❖ Include caravans in Mexico's anti-xenophobia campaign

Remove Transit Barriers

- ❖ Create a visa free movement zone with neighboring nations