
7,000 Honduran Child Migrants Deported from US and Mexico

16/12/2015



Immigration authorities in the U.S. and Mexico deported a total of 6,986 underage Honduran migrants in the first 11 months of this year, as the number of unaccompanied minors apprehended on the U.S.-Mexico border continues to soar.

According to a report from the Tegucigalpa-based humanitarian nongovernmental organization Casa Alianza, acquired by Spanish news agency EFE, about 62 percent of the nearly 7,000 deported Honduran children were boys and about 38 percent were girls, while the month with the highest deportation rate was July, with a total of 876 undocumented minors sent back to Honduras.

But despite the staggering numbers, deportations of Honduran youth are down over 22 percent compared to the same period last year. In the first 11 months of 2014, some 9,000 underage Honduran migrants were deported from Mexico and the United States.

A Mexican immigration officer holds a Central American boy by the arm as he and his mother are deported. | Photo: AFP

The new statistics come as U.S. authorities report that some 10,000 child migrants were apprehended at the U.S.-Mexico border between October and November, RT reported, a 106 percent increase from the same two month period in 2014.

Once deported child migrants are returned to their home country, serious concerns for their well-being and human rights remain, given the root causes underlying child migration, including violence and poverty.

UNICEF has stressed the need to ensure a smooth return to Honduras for deported children, while the Washington Office on Latin America has warned that appropriate protection measures are not in place for children who may face uncertain violence.

Deportations have hit record levels under Obama, who also came under heavy fire for using immediate migrant detention as the solution to the massive influx in 2013 and 2014 of tens of thousands of undocumented children, mostly from Central America and many unaccompanied.

But Mexico's role in deporting Central American migrants is also rapidly expanding. Amid the child migrant crisis, Mexico launched its Southern Border Plan in July 2014 to crackdown on undocumented Central American migrants crossing the historically porous southern border of the country en route to the U.S. In just six months in 2015, Mexico deported some 24,000 undocumented Hondurans.

A Mexican immigration officer holds a Central American boy by the arm as he and his mother are deported. I Photo: AFP

The U.S. has also launched the Central American Minors Refugee/Parole Program, a new immigration program intended to encourage legal immigration in favor of undocumented arrivals in order to help children reunite with their parents in the U.S. But the whole process can take up to one year, and so far Honduran children have not benefited from the immigration program, Honduras' Departamento 19 reported on Monday.

The proposed 2016 U.S. budget includes US\$142 million for Mexico, including funds earmarked for tightening Mexico's southern border control to curb Central American migration. The US\$1 billion Alliance for Prosperity plan focused on Central America's northern triangle has also been touted as a strategy to tackle skyrocketing levels of child migration from Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras.

Root causes of massive migration from Honduras include violence, crime, lack of opportunities, massive internal displacement partly caused by gang violence, and a lack of government attention to the migration crisis and its root causes, according to Casa Alianza.

Mexico and the U.S. have deported more than 63,000 undocumented Honduran migrants in 2015.

A Mexican immigration officer holds a Central American boy by the arm as he and his mother are deported. I Photo: AFP

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