

Mexican government cracks down on immigrants to consummate deal with Trump

Alex González**18 June 2019**

The US and Mexican governments struck a bargain about ten days ago to stop US tariffs on Mexican goods in exchange for a Mexican crackdown on Central American immigrants. The dirty deal by the fascistic Trump and the supposed “leftist” Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) has since led to mass arrests, the expedited deployment of the National Guard, and the reported killing of an immigrant girl by Mexican police.

The number of migrant detentions has skyrocketed over the past week. On Saturday, about 800 immigrants who had been crammed into two double-trailer freight trucks were arrested by Mexican federal police in the southern state of Veracruz. Another 800 immigrants were arrested the following day in the state of Chiapas. The National Migration Institute stated that 1,000 combat-ready soldiers have been deployed along southern roads and highways to detect and detain immigrants. Meanwhile, the Mexican Marines have started regular patrols of the Suchiate River that separates Mexico and Guatemala.

The deployments are part of the 6,000 National Guard troops that will be stationed near Guatemala in the aftermath of the Trump-AMLO deal. Mexican officials have also stated that additional soldiers from the 60,000-member National Guard will be deployed across the country. AMLO and his party, the Movement for National Regeneration (Morena), proposed and approved the National Guard deployment earlier this year under the pretense that it would “never be used to repress the people.”

The stepped-up persecution of immigrants claimed the life of a 12-year-old girl from El Salvador on Friday. Emma Claritza was traveling in a van with five other migrants when they were reportedly attacked. She received a gunshot to the head, while two Salvadoran

men, aged 26 and 55, were injured and were taken to the hospital. The shooting took place near an immigration checkpoint. Local residents reported that it was federal police who were chasing the van, although government officials claim that the vehicle was attacked by organized crime.

Through the increasing use of the armed forces to dispatch asylum seekers, military brass have been elevated to decision-making levels of government. Last week, AMLO announced the formation of a five-member commission to implement the new immigration plan. Along with foreign minister Marcelo Ebrard, the team features General Vicente Antonio Hernández Sánchez, commander of the Tapachula military zone near the border with Guatemala, as well as Francisco Garduño, director of the country’s penitentiary system. The high-ranking general and country’s prison director have been charged with fine-tuning a massive deportation machine that has targeted the forceful removal of 24,800 immigrants per month.

General Hernández traveled to the south of Mexico last week to personally supervise the accelerated deployment of 6,000 members of the National Guard to the border with Guatemala. This showed the eagerness of the Mexican ruling class to please Trump’s fascistic advisors, since the stationing of troops at Mexico’s southern border was originally set to take place by September.

On Friday, AMLO carried out another cabinet shakeup by firing the country’s top immigration official, Tonatiuh Guillén, for appearing to be insufficiently harsh on asylum seekers. Last December, Guillén stated that he wanted to remove the “policing” aspect of immigration. “I asked him [to quit], it was for the best,” stated AMLO. “We have 45 days and we have to show results. The immigration issue is a top

priority.”

The inclusion of a prison director in AMLO’s immigration commission is also highly significant. The Mexican government has estimated that about 50,000 migrants will be sent by the US within the coming months under the deal reached last Friday with Washington. According to government statistics, over 11,000 immigrants have been transferred from the US to Mexico while their cases play out in court. In April, this number was just 1,300.

Contrary to the plans by the military to terrorize and indefinitely jail women and children, however, the Mexican working class overwhelmingly views migrants favorably, and is hostile to the Mexican government acting as a puppet of US imperialism.

This is why AMLO has shamelessly continued to exploit his “human rights” rhetoric with statements that have no relation to reality. “We always treat every human being well, no matter in which part of the world, or universe, they were born in,” he told a rally over the weekend.

The US and Mexican governments are set to have another meeting in 36 days to discuss if the Mexican military has been sufficiently brutal against unarmed women and children in the eyes of the Trump administration. If Trump’s fascistic advisors are displeased, Washington may dictate further measures to their willing accomplices, who are desperate to avoid the threat of tariffs from their main trading partner.

This may include naming Mexico a “Safe Third Country,” meaning that any future asylum cases from Central America will be taken by Mexico and will have no legal claim in the US. Without having to change a single law, the ruling class will have repudiated one of the main pillars of international law, dating back to the horrors of successive countries denying entry to Jewish refugees fleeing the Holocaust.

Every faction of the Mexican ruling class is tied to US imperialism and is committed to erecting a repressive apparatus to safeguard capitalist rule. The deportation machine that is used to target impoverished women and children today will be turned on workers who engage in protests and strikes over low wages and poor conditions tomorrow. To fight against militarization and to defend the rights of immigrants, it is critical that the working class intervene independently with its own political program. Above

all, this means taking up the fight for international socialism and joining the International Committee of the Fourth International (ICFI).



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