

Fifty-five immigrants killed, over 100 injured in Mexico truck crash

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The horrific crash of a truck packed with migrants in southern Mexico has laid bare the human cost of the anti-immigrant policies pursued by the Biden administration with the collaboration of the administration of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) in Mexico.

The death toll in the accident, which occurred on a highway in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas between Corzo and Tuxtla, rose to 55 on Friday, after a 16-year-old girl being treated at a local medical center succumbed to her injuries. Reports indicate that a number of children and adolescents are among the dead and the more than 100 who were injured. According to preliminary counts, 83 men and 22 women were hospitalized in various facilities.

Videos and photographs from the accident site present a hellish scene. Some of the at least 161 migrants packed into the truck's trailer were thrown from the vehicle, while others were left dead inside the wreckage or were seen making a torturous attempt to extricate themselves from the mass of bodies inside the damaged trailer.

The screams and wailing of family members desperately trying to revive those killed in the crash could be heard on videos recorded at the accident site. Rows of bodies were covered in white sheets, while others, their heads bleeding, protruded from the wreckage.

One man was heard in tears imploring a dying friend, "Remember what you promised your mother. Hold on!"

Residents of the working class neighborhood of El Refugio near the highway rushed to the scene to aid the survivors as best they could. They accused police of standing by and doing nothing.

The majority of those traveling in the truck were from

Guatemala, while others were from Mexico, Honduras, Ecuador and the Dominican Republic. A number of the dead have yet to be identified.

The cause of the accident has been determined to be the truck speeding into a sharp curve and crashing against the wall of a pedestrian overpass, throwing the vehicle onto its side. It may have lacked functioning brakes, and the weight of the human bodies packed into the trailer was potentially a contributing factor. The driver of the vehicle fled the scene.

United Nations Secretary General António Guterres issued a statement on social media saying he was "horrified" by the mass death toll and declared that "Every person searching for a better life deserves safety & dignity." He gave no indication, however, as to what forces are denying immigrants this right, supposedly guaranteed under international law, to "safety and dignity."

In a press conference Friday, Mexico's President López Obrador (AMLO) said that the tragedy had to be seen within the context of the world's "monstrous economic and social inequality." He went on to urge the US government to address the "root causes," increasing aid to Central American countries to ameliorate conditions driving migrations, and to initiate a program of "temporary work visas" to allow entry of some refugees and immigrants.

The head of the Mexican National Guard, Luis Rodríguez Bucio, stressed to the media that the truck had not passed through any checkpoints manned by this military force to stop the flow of immigrants northwards.

The reactions of both AMLO and the National Guard chief were crafted to cover up their responsibility for the mass death through their enforcement of draconian anti-immigrant policies demanded by Washington to

prevent migrants and refugees from reaching the southern border of the United States.

This repression has seen the detention in Mexico of over 228,000 migrants so far in 2021, according to Mexico's National Institute of Migration (INM). It has forced migrants to pursue ever more dangerous means of crossing Mexico, while leaving them at the prey of criminal cartels working in tandem with Mexico's security forces.

The mass deaths in southern Mexico come on the heels of the Biden administration's reinstatement of the Trump-era's Migrant Protection Protocol (MPP) or "Remain in Mexico" program, forcing all those seeking asylum on the US southern border to languish in makeshift camps in Mexico, awaiting the slow progression of their applications in US immigration courts.

The program, combined with the utilization of Title 42, a supposed health measure allowing authorities to turn back all migrants on the spurious grounds that they pose a threat of spreading COVID-19 in a country that already has the highest number of cases in the world, is aimed at suppressing immigration and intimidating those managing to reach the US border.

A report released this week by Mexico's National Commission on Human Rights (CNDH) found that fully half of those sent back across the border under Washington's MPP program had been victimized by crimes, including kidnappings, robberies, extortion, murders and sexual violence. In most cases, the victims made no reports to police for fear that they would only suffer further violence at the hands of authorities.

While bemoaning the effects of the MPP program, the Mexican government headed by the supposed "leftist" AMLO is fully complicit in it, agreeing to accept the return of the mostly Central American migrants denied their rights under international law as asylum seekers.

The crocodile tears shed by the likes of AMLO, Central American heads of states and US officials over the mass death caused by the crash in Chiapas cannot hide the fact that they are all complicit in the repressive regime designed to impede the flow of migrants to the US border that created the conditions for this tragedy.

The abject refusal of the US government and its servile clients in Mexico and Central America to provide immigrants a safe and humane means of

reaching the United States and making their case for asylum, as guaranteed under international law, has created mass death and untold human suffering.

Workers in the United States must defend working people from Central and South America, Haiti and Mexico itself, who are risking their lives in an attempt to reach the US. This means rejecting the anti-immigrant poison spread by the capitalist parties, the media and the unions and upholding the democratic right of immigrant workers to live and work in the country of their choice.



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