

Mexican truck drivers block ports of entry to US over Trump's mass revocation of B-1 visas

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Hundreds of Mexican cross-border truck drivers blockaded the commercial ports of entry on the Mexican side of the Mexicali, Mexico-Calexico East (California) and San Luis Río Colorado, Mexico-Yuma, Arizona border from Thursday to midday Sunday. Truckers blocked the crossings to protest the mass revocation of their B-1 visas by US immigration authorities. The visas have allowed truckers to take cargo into the US.

The action, organized by the drivers themselves through a WhatsApp group of 1,024 operators—the maximum capacity of the platform—spread within days and threatened to spread to the crossing between Nogales, Arizona and Nogales, Mexico, and the busiest San Diego-Tijuana border crossing.

The blockade was sparked when, on September 2, at least 17 drivers from Mexicali—the capital city of Baja California—had their visas revoked. That was only the latest episode in a campaign of arbitrary enforcement which has been escalating for a year and which employers or state officials have done nothing to halt.

The National Chamber of Freight Transport (La Cámara Nacional del Autotransporte de Carga or CANACAR) estimates more than 25,000 visas have been revoked from commercial drivers along Mexico's northern border, including potentially 4,000 in Baja California. CANACAR estimates that some 21 percent of the binational B-1 truckers—about 19,000 drivers—have been affected. Sixty percent of those impacted are from Mexicali and 40 percent from Tijuana and Tecate, the freight industry chamber of commerce estimates.

Approximately 300 drivers blocked the Calexico-Mexicali crossing and another 60 at Yuma-San Luis Río Colorado in Mexico. They used their semi-trucks, some with trailers attached, to physically block access, and set up tents directly outside the port of entry. Drivers protested in 105 degree heat, and they said the blockade was necessary even though they were sacrificing money and jobs.

Large banners posted on the trucks stating their grievances and demands that called for an end to abuses and harassment from ICE and CBP as well as clear and accurate information. One banner declared “Our work is not a crime, it is the engine that drives two nations.”

“We are being treated like criminals”

Federal authorities in the US, including US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the US Department of Transportation (DOT), are accusing the primarily Mexican truck drivers of violating cabotage laws, or “cabotaje” in Spanish.

Cabotage is the hauling of cargo between two points inside the United States by a foreign-registered carrier, a practice that is legally reserved exclusively for US companies and workers. But the drivers’ proclaim that the accusations are arbitrary and unsubstantiated, and that no evidence has ever been presented to them or the public.

Drivers describe being accused of cabotage for making necessary pitstops, such as stopping at Walmart locations, or for taking several days to return to Mexico. One worker had his visa revoked because his trip took four days—even though his load was never dropped off at its final destination.

Workers say their trips can legitimately take up to nine days, given the normal logistics of an international delivery. Their trailer and vehicle data is monitored around the clock by the companies, so that any deviation or delay cannot be misconstrued by ICE or CBP as “cabotaje.”

Conrado Maron Valencia, a trucker with 11 years of binational experience, described the atmosphere this has created. He said the United States used to be the “land of opportunity.” Now, he said, it is the “land of oppression.”

The drivers describe being interrogated by ICE agents at the crossings, harassed over their papers, documents, licenses and permits, subjected to extreme inspections. They say this has caused psychological trauma across the workforce. Allen Verdugo, one of the spokesmen of the workers, called it a “cacería de brujas”—a witch hunt. “Nos tratan como delincuentes,” he told the press—they treat us like criminals.

Worse, the drivers report that workers who have had their visas revoked have been forced by ICE to confess and sign statements admitting to cabotage they did not commit—under threat not only of losing their own visas, but of having their families’ visas revoked, and of facing arrest and detention. One worker described a coworker being tackled and arrested by ICE at the border crossing, and was forced to confess under these threats.

Drivers also report that ICE has begun testing truckers for English-language proficiency—a requirement that had never been enforced until this past year under the Trump administration’s escalated attacks.

The drivers say their democratic and human rights have been violated. Many of those at the blockade still hold valid visas, but are so terrified of losing them that they felt compelled to shut the crossing down. Others have already lost their visas and their jobs and indicate the ways in which their families are on the verge of destitution. The drivers say the companies are hostile to the blockade, and that many of those present are risking termination.

Conrado Maron Valencia described to news agency Canal 66, “We have kids in school, sick family members” that depend on the truckers. He also described an incident where a coworker had his truck confiscated by ICE. Allen Verdugo also reported that even the drivers who still have their B-1 visas have suffered economically. And an increasing number are avoiding jobs that require crossing the port of entry out of fear of revocation.

Drivers confront the state and their “representatives”

CANACAR is the employers’ association that manages the business and legal affairs of the Mexican freight industry, including negotiating with US immigration authorities. The drivers have waited in vain for roughly a year for CANACAR to resolve the visa issue.

The drivers have begun to draw the conclusion that the employers association does not represent them. At the Mexicali crossing, the local CANACAR president and a representative of the business council were confronted and heckled. When the CANACAR official explained that they had been in meetings with ICE and CBP when the 17 revocations occurred, a worker shouted back: “Exactamente, ustedes están con ICE y CBP”— exactly, you are with ICE and CBP.

The consulates have further compounded the frustration. On Thursday, consular representatives from Calexico came to the blockade, asked for the names and numbers of the drivers present, and spoke to seven workers whose visas had been revoked. On Friday, consular officials returned and interviewed 15 affected workers, telling the other 300 to wait for a call back. On Saturday morning, officials from the consulate called to tell the truckers a meeting with the Mexican interior ministry would take place that same day. A meeting did take place—but the workers were not invited.

Simultaneously, the state government of Baja California convened a meeting with the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs (SRE), the National Customs Agency of Mexico (ANAM), and the National Guard (GN) to extend the hours of operation at the Otay Mesa commercial crossing in order to mitigate economic losses from the closures at Calexico/Mexicali and Yuma/SLRC.

The drivers demanded their own meeting with the Ministry of the Interior, which handles immigration affairs, to present their grievances and demand clarification of what constitutes cabotage.

They presented evidence that they did not commit cabotage and that their visas were revoked unfairly.

Neither the trucking companies, CANACAR, the Movement of National Regeneration (Morena) party nor the unions had anything to do with organizing the blockade. It is developing at the initiative of rank-and-file drivers themselves, the majority of whom work directly for large trucking companies.

CANACAR officials have urged them to pursue negotiations rather than expand the demonstrations to Tijuana. “My hope is that it does not extend to Tijuana,” Alfonso Millán Chávez, a CANACAR representative said of the protests. “The idea is that we be cautious with this issue.”

Drivers agreed to temporarily halt the blockade Sunday with a first meeting planned Monday, September 7 at the office of the General Secretariat of the Government (SGG) in which the transporters and officials from the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs participating.

However, the drivers warned, “If we don’t see that things have progressed and that visas continue to be withdrawn left and right, we will take action again ... and next time it will be a little more organized and much bigger, including Tijuana, Tecate, Mexicali, San Luis and Nogales.”

The Mexican government to which the truckers have appealed is directly complicit in the attacks on immigrants. The government headed by Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum is not defending migrants against Trump but is imposing the repression on Mexico’s side of the border that Trump is demanding.

Sheinbaum assured Trump in a December 2024 phone call that the migrant caravans would “not reach the northern border,” and her administration boasted that it had already cut the number of migrants reaching the US-Mexico border by 76 percent.

In February 2025, under threat of punishing tariffs, Sheinbaum struck a deal with Trump to deploy an additional 10,000 National Guard troops to key border cities. And in August 2025 she ordered the arrest of Luis Rey García Villagrán, a prominent immigrant-rights activist and longtime organizer of migrant caravans, on framed-up “human trafficking” charges. Sheinbaum herself pronounced a verdict before any trial: “He is not an activist.”

As the WSWWS wrote, the arrest “marks a major escalation in the assault on democratic rights by the Mexican government in collaboration with Trump.”

The answer is not to appeal to the government, the unions or any political party. Instead, drivers must organize their struggle independently and broaden their struggle by appealing directly to manufacturing and logistics workers on both sides of the border to oppose the crackdown on immigrant workers.



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