

# Mexico arrests alleged leader of migrant caravan

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Police from the Chiapas State Guard arrested a Honduran migrant on Saturday in the town of Mapastepec, on Mexico's southern Pacific coast, accusing him of being one of the organizers of the migrant caravan "Fe y Esperanza con Dios" (Faith and Hope with God). Officers seized the man, identified only as Jason "N," while the group was resting and drove him away in a patrol car.

Members of the caravan tried to stop the detention, pointing out that the police showed no arrest warrant. "They are accusing him of being a guide of the caravan, but he is not a guide. They took him without any justification," one migrant told *La Jornada*. "He is just another migrant who has even helped the women and children. He has been walking with us since San Pedro Sula, Honduras, and after so much sacrifice they do this."

The Chiapas authorities, controlled by Governor Eduardo Ramírez Aguilar of the nominally "left" ruling Morena party, later claimed that Jason had a "Red Notice" in Honduras, without naming any crime, and handed him to immigration authorities for delivery to the Honduran government.

The caravan left San Pedro Sula on September 20, crossed into Mexico on September 24, and grew to more than 600 people in Tapachula as Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Ecuadorians, Venezuelans, Cubans and Haitians stranded for months joined it. It is the second caravan in six weeks. On August 20, a different caravan named "Dreams Without Borders" set out from Tapachula, Mexico's main border city with Guatemala, with hundreds of workers seeking jobs and papers allowing them to travel inside Mexico. It broke up in early September in Arriaga, after more than 250 kilometers on foot, when the National Migration Institute (INM) handed out 30-day provisional permits.

The arrest on the road, under a pretext no one has bothered to substantiate, has the sole purpose of terrorizing the migrant workers. The government of President Claudia Sheinbaum, which presents itself as "humanitarian," democratic and a defender of Mexican sovereignty, is using the state machinery built up by Morena against the most vulnerable workers on the continent, at the command of the fascistic administration in Washington.

## "Zero chance"

The arrest came days after the White House ordered Mexico to intervene. On October 1, Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin declared:

I have been very clear with my counterpart in Mexico: if they allow them to continue to come north, when they get to their northern border, our southern border, we're not allowing them to enter . . . Zero chance.

Mullin added that what happens in the coming months depends on Mexico, and that caravan members must seek asylum there under the "first country" arrangement with Washington. Border tsar Tom Homan threatened to deport them to third countries. Meanwhile, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) threatened the caravan with a video of bone-crushing tackles by former NFL safety Brian Dawkins under the slogan "Our time has come," followed by an image declaring "the border is closed." Both Dawkins and the NFL have protested the video, filing a formal demand that it be taken down.

Border Patrol recorded 8,870 apprehensions at the US-Mexico border in August, a historically low figure, 94 percent below the monthly average under Biden. The Trump administration takes the credit, but the real bottleneck is in southern Mexico. According to *La Jornada*, some 20 caravans have tried to leave the southern border since Sheinbaum took office in October 2024. Every one was broken up in the southern states of Chiapas and Oaxaca.

## Morena's record

In June 2019, under threat of Trump tariffs, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador sent the newly created National Guard

to the Guatemalan border and accepted the “Remain in Mexico” program. In March 2023, 40 migrants died locked inside a burning INM detention center in Ciudad Juárez.

On October 1, 2024, the day Sheinbaum was sworn in, soldiers opened fire on a truck near Huixtla, Chiapas, killing six migrants. In February 2025, under tariff threats by Trump, Mexico sent 10,000 troops to the northern border.

Then, Sheinbaum ordered the arrest of Luis Rey García Villagrán, director of the migrant defense group Centro de Dignificación Humana, on the eve of another caravan. Sheinbaum delivered her verdict before any trial: “He is not an activist ... he is linked to human trafficking.” A federal judge released him six days later for lack of evidence. García Villagrán remains active in Tapachula, and last month filed injunctions on behalf of the Honduran caravan. He calls the city “a migrant prison imposed and consented to by the Mexican state... there is no work, no education, no hospitals, nothing.”

A warning must be made: the murderous and terrorizing treatment of the repressive apparatus against migrants sets the stage for its deployment against the working class as a whole.

### **The desperate conditions migrants are escaping**

The fall in crossings does not mean conditions have improved in Latin America. Workers keep setting out because life at home and in neighboring countries has become impossible.

Most of the current caravan is Honduran. According to Honduras’s National Statistics Institute, 61.1 percent of households lived below the poverty line in 2026, up from 60.1 percent a year earlier, while extreme poverty rose from 38.3 to 39.7 percent. Local estimates put informality at close to 78 percent of the workforce.

That government is headed by Nasry Asfura, the Trump-endorsed candidate of the National Party, who took office in January. On September 28, the latest fuel hike set off road blockades and burning barricades in Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula and Choloma, led by bus, taxi and school transport drivers.

“Everything is very expensive: the oil, the fuel, the food,” a school bus driver told *El Heraldo*. Weekly protests have also targeted reforms widely seen as preparing the privatization of the state electric company.

In Guatemala, transport workers and Indigenous communities spent much of September blocking highways against soaring fuel and food prices.

The El Niño climate event, aggravated by global warming, has made things far worse. This is the driest year on record in Tegucigalpa, where water arrives once every 12 days. In August the government placed nearly 80 percent of the country on alert, and harvests of maize and beans have been lost. Asfura admitted that “this crisis will last until March or April of next

year.”

These conditions are the result of more than a century of imperialist oppression at the service of American banks and corporations. Today, they are worsening rapidly amid a further political offensive by Washington. The US invasion of Venezuela in January and the imposition of a protectorate over its oil, together with the installation of a string of far-right governments, from Javier Milei in Argentina and José Antonio Kast in Chile, to Daniel Noboa in Ecuador, Nayib Bukele in El Salvador and Asfura in Honduras, have brought cuts to social programs and intensified exploitation. Nearly half of the region’s workers are in the informal economy, where extortion and gang violence feed on poverty.

Migrants have begun calling their march “Pan y Esperanza” (Bread and Hope) in thanks to the Mexican workers and residents who have fed them along the road.

The scene recalls October 2018, when a caravan left the same city of San Pedro Sula, swelled to 7,000 people and was greeted across southern Mexico by residents carrying food and water. Facing Trump’s threats and police attacks, the marchers chanted, “Migrants are not criminals, we are international workers!”

The *World Socialist Web Site* wrote at the time that workers must “recognize in this caravan a friendly regiment of class allies,” and explained:

The working class is proving *de facto* by marching across national barriers that the *de jure* division of the world into nation-states under capitalism is incompatible with the aspirations and material needs of billions of workers.

Eight years later, that assessment has been confirmed. The Sheinbaum government, like the right-wing regimes to its south, acts as the hatchet of US imperialism and its local billionaire partners. Meanwhile, workers internationally are entering into struggle in defense of jobs and against the cost of living, dictatorship and war, as the blockades in Honduras and Guatemala show. The defense of migrants must be central to these struggles.

Workers in Mexico, Central America and the United States must answer the persecution of the caravans by uniting as one international class against the capitalist system that uproots them and blocks them from rebuilding their lives where they choose.



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