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FEATURED Q&A

Are U.S. & Mexican Officials Partnering Well on Migration?



The U.S. Homeland Security Secretary said last month that the number of migrants arriving at the country's border with Mexico had fallen after the expiration of Title 42. Migrants in Mexico are pictured. // File Photo: Mexican Government.

Q U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said in June that the number of migrants arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border had dropped by as much as half in the wake of the expiration of Title 42 on May 11. The New York Times reported on July 3 that towns in northern Mexico have seen a decrease in the number of migrants arriving to cross the border, while cities in southern Mexico have experienced opposite migration trends. What can be made of these seemingly contradictory migration patterns? To what extent can the overall decrease in migrants at the U.S. border be attributed to increased cooperation between the Biden administration and Mexican immigration authorities, and what does that entail? What other factors explain the slowdown in migration?

A Adam Isacson, director for defense oversight at the Washington Office on Latin America: "The Biden administration is trying to channel post-Title 42 migration in a more orderly direction by using a controversial combination of carrots and sticks. The carrots include a dramatic expansion in asylum appointments at land-border ports of entry using Customs and Border Protection's smartphone app, and a humanitarian parole program admitting up to 30,000 people each month from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua and Venezuela. The sticks include expanded use of 'expedited removal,' forcing some asylum seekers to defend their cases within days of arrival, and a new rule that denies asylum to most migrants who arrive at the border without a prior appointment, and without first seeking asylum in other countries along the route. Mexico, too, is blocking more migrants in its territory and

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TODAY'S NEWS

POLITICAL

Guatemalan Candidate Blasts Raid on Party's Headquarters

Guatemalan presidential candidate Bernardo Arévalo denounced a raid Friday by agents of the attorney general's office on his Semilla party. The raid happened less than a month before the country's presidential runoff vote.

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ECONOMIC

Argentina to Unveil Measures to Devalue Peso

Argentina is to introduce tax and currency measures that will devalue its peso amid efforts to get the International Monetary Fund to release delayed loan disbursements.

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POLITICAL

Brazil's Lula Tightens Civilians' Access to Guns

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva on Friday signed a decree increasing restrictions on civilians' access to guns.

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Lula // File Photo: Brazilian Government.

POLITICAL NEWS

Brazil's Lula Tightens Civilians' Access to Guns

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva on Friday signed a decree increasing restrictions on civilians' access to guns in a reversal from the pro-gun policies of his predecessor, Jair Bolsonaro, the Associated Press reported. The decree lowers from four to two the number of guns that civilians can have for personal safety. It also reduces the amount of ammunition that civilians can possess for each gun, from 200 rounds to 50, and it implements a requirement that gun owners document their need to have the weapons. Additionally, it prohibits civilians from owning nine-millimeter pistols, reserving their use for police officers and members of the military, the AP reported. The measure also lowers the number of guns that civilians can use for hunting, from 30 to six, The Wall Street Journal reported. "It's one thing for the regular citizen to have a gun at home for his protection, as a guarantee, because some people think this is safety. Let them have it. But we cannot allow gun arsenals to be in the people's hands," Lula said at the signing ceremony for the decree, the AP reported. During his term in office, Bolsonaro loosened gun restrictions, and the number of guns in civilian hands more than tripled to 2.9 million, according to nonprofit group Instituto Sou de Paz.

Guatemala's Arévalo Blasts Raid on Party Headquarters

Guatemalan presidential candidate Bernardo Arévalo on Friday denounced a raid earlier that day by the attorney general's office on the headquarters of his Semilla party as illegal and said it was part of an effort to destroy the country's democracy, the Associated Press reported. In an audio recording sent to journalists, Arévalo called the raid "part of the political

persecution that the corrupt minority that knows it is losing power day by day is carrying out to try to intimidate us, to try to derail the electoral process ... to try to topple democracy." U.S. and E.U. officials also condemned the raid, which came less than a month before Arévalo is to compete in the country's Aug. 20 runoff election against former First Lady Sandra Torres. [Editor's note: See related [Q&A](#) in the July 14 Advisor.]

ECONOMIC NEWS

Argentina to Unveil Measures That Will Devalue Peso

Argentina is set to introduce tax and currency measures that will devalue its peso in connection with its \$44 billion loan agreement with the International Monetary Fund, the Financial Times reported today. Buenos Aires will also introduce a new preferential exchange rate for agricultural exports and levies on imports, the economy ministry said. The South American country and the IMF have been negotiating for the past three months as Argentina has failed to meet some of the terms of last year's debt restructuring deal. A lack of foreign exchange reserves and an insufficiently lowered fiscal deficit has delayed a \$4 billion disbursement, the fund said. Argentina blames its shortfall on a prolonged drought that decimated its crops and cost the country \$20 billion of exports this year. Without the funds, Argentina risks defaulting on previous, maturing IMF loans worth some \$3.4 billion by Aug. 1, Reuters reported. Argentina and the IMF said in a joint statement on Sunday that they had agreed for a staff-level agreement to review the \$44 billion loan. "The teams of the Economy Ministry and Central Bank of Argentina and the IMF staff have finished the core aspects of the technical work of the next review," the IMF said in a tweet. Economy Minister Sergio Massa said the fund was preparing to release a "very big package of disbursements in August and an additional one in November," the Financial Times reported.

NEWS BRIEFS

Mayor of Ecuadorean Port City of Manta Assassinated

Agustín Intriago, the mayor of the Ecuadorean port city of Manta, was assassinated Sunday during a public event, Bloomberg News reported. A woman was also killed during the attack and two assailants were wounded and are in custody at a hospital, the news service reported, citing Interior Minister Juan Zapata. Zapata did not elaborate on the motive. Intriago, 38, was recently re-elected to a term that began in May, the Associated Press reported.

Protesters, Police Clash in New Wave of Demonstrations in Peru

Protesters and police clashed in a new wave of demonstrations over the weekend in Lima, demanding Peruvian President Dina Boluarte's resignation and new elections, Agence France-Presse reported Sunday. Boluarte assumed power in December after former President Pedro Castillo was ousted and arrested, which triggered nationwide demonstrations. The response to protests by security forces has left almost 50 people dead since then, according to an estimate by Human Rights Watch. The latest unrest began on Wednesday.

Venezuela Will Continue Productive Oil Operations Amid Audits: PDVSA Head

Venezuela will not halt productive oil operations during contract audits that led to the arrest of several businesspeople and officials, oil minister and the president of the state-owned oil company PDVSA, Pedro Tellechea, said on Friday, Reuters reported. "Our goal is to explore, produce, refine and export every product we can," Tellechea told journalists in Caracas. "We are not willing to paralyze a productive process, which would slow down Venezuela's growth. On the contrary, we are here to encourage that growth," he added.

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issuing fewer transit visas, bottling people up in the country's south. In June, the result was what the administration had hoped for: a 42 percent drop from May in migrants arriving between the ports of entry, and a 27 percent increase in migrants arriving, usually with appointments, to be processed at the official crossings. Faced with these changed policies—and with record hot weather in the borderlands—many migrants and smugglers are pausing, taking a wait-and-see approach. But some signs indicate that numbers could creep up again. The migrant population in southern Mexico is large and appears to be growing. Honduras, the only country that reports migration flows through its territory in something close to real time, is likely to break its monthly record for migrants in transit in July; nearly half are Venezuelan. The push factors remain strong."

A **Kathleen Bush-Joseph, policy analyst at the U.S. Immigration Policy Program:** "While it remains to be seen whether lower arrival numbers at the U.S.-Mexico border will continue, the increased use of technology and cooperation with Mexico have thus far dramatically affected migration flows. Data shows that June was the lowest month of apprehensions since February 2021. A new border asylum rule incentivizes the use of a Customs and Border Protection (CBP) app called CBP One that allows migrants to schedule a legal arrival at a U.S. port of entry. Migrants have largely received the message that the app is the way to gain entrance, but demand continues to outstrip the number of daily slots available, and it can take weeks or months to secure an appointment. A total of 170,000 migrants have gotten slots since January. Another important factor affecting arrivals has been cooperation between the U.S. and Mexican governments that has resulted in the rapid returns of Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans and Venezuelans to Mexico, along with the creation of an immigration parole program

that allows some of those nationals to apply online to fly into the United States instead of traveling to the border. Unlawful crossings of those nationalities have dropped precipitously, but litigation could halt the parole program in the fall. A seasonal ebb in migration and smugglers adopting a wait-and-see approach to the new policies could also be slowing arrivals temporarily. Honduras has reported a sharp increase of migrant arrivals in recent weeks, so the situation could be fluid."

A **Leon Fresco, partner at Holland & Knight:** "The recent decrease in the number of migrants being encountered at the U.S.-Mexico border is entirely attributable to the success of the Biden administration's carrot-and-stick policy. With legal pathways for entry into the United States—including a new parole program, a new initiative giving people the ability to obtain an appointment in advance to apply for asylum at the ports of entry and the latest announcement to allocate slots from the refugee program to give to Western Hemisphere refugees—people seeking entry no longer have to take matters into their own hands and resort to entering illegally. By the same token, by introducing consequences such as asylum restrictions on those who enter illegally, the administration has finally and successfully shifted the calculus of those who previously entered illegally into the United States to achieve a system that incentivizes following the rules. Moreover, this has happened in a way that has not required the United States to sacrifice its values as a refuge for those who truly need its protection. The next step would be for Congress to codify the core tenets of this carrot-and-stick approach so that it is not subject to the uncertainty of litigation or changes in administrations."

The Advisor welcomes comments on its Q&A section. Readers can write editor Gene Kuleta.

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