



# Immigrant Caravans



“Immigrant Caravans” are Central Americans seeking asylum  
Part of three ongoing immigration waves in Central and South America:

1. Venezuelans to Columbia & other neighboring countries
2. Nicaraguans to Costa Rica
3. El Salvadorans/Hondurans/Guatemalans to US and Mexico

## **The caravan and its origins**

Caravan numbers between 3,000 and 7,000 people (with about 2,000 of them being youth and children). The numbers vary. They are travelling in a large group to protect themselves from the endemic violence that awaits them during their transit through Mexico. The most recent example of a caravan of this kind, resulted in only several hundred participants, reaching the US-Mexico border at the San Ysidro port of entry near San Diego/Tijuana on Sunday, April 29, 2018.

## **Causes of immigration**

Honduras: poverty rate 60.0 % in 2016 according to World Bank

Caravan organized near the city of San Pedro Sula, Honduras which was ranked in 2017 as the city in Honduras with the highest homicide rate in a country with one of the highest homicide rates in the world.

## **Projected Arrival**

It is likely, given its current size and pace (between 30 and 50 kilometers per day, depending on terrain, weather conditions, mode of transportation, and the health of its participants) that the caravan will arrive at points at the US-Mexico border sometime between Thanksgiving and Christmas, or sooner (if the caravan becomes motorized on buses).

Those that arrive at the US border will likely apply for asylum which is a legal act governed by both US law and the internationally agreed upon United Nations Refugee Accord. UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), has assisted in the filing of over 2,000 claims of refugee or asylum by participants in the caravan in Mexico.

## **Claim that there may be Terrorists in Caravan**

President implied that Middle Eastern “terrorists” were imbedded in caravan (10.22.2018)  
Press Secretary Sanders implied that 10 suspected or known terrorists are apprehended daily at US-Mexico border. Vice President Pence said that 10 suspected or known terrorists from the Middle East are apprehended daily and that it was “inconceivable that there are no people of Middle Eastern descent in a crowd of more than 7,000 people advancing toward our border.”

Secretary of Homeland Security, Kirstjen Nielsen, said in June that, “On average my department now blocks 10 known or suspected terrorists a day from traveling to or attempting to enter the US.” That includes all ports of entry--airports, maritime ports, Canadian and Mexican borders. Almost all have been apprehended at airports. Trump’s own State Department in July 2017 found “no credible information that any member of a terrorist group has traveled through

Mexico to gain access to the US.” [Source: A caravan of phony claims from the Trump administration Washington Post, Salvador Rizzo 10.25.2018]

It appears that President Trump targeted this group of asylum-seekers as part of an **electoral strategy** prior to the mid-term elections, and used it as a pretext for the decision to send more than 5,000 US troops to the border to address the “national emergency”.

**Please consider making calls to our Senators and Congressmen:**

- We are opposed to the **vilification** of Central American women and their children who are fleeing violence from countries with the highest murder rate in the world to seek asylum in the U.S.
- Surely women and children fleeing violence do not pose a threat to a country of over 300 million!
- Further -- the US needs to treat all asylum seekers according to the United Nations Refugee Accord and U.S. law.
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**Please contact our members of Congress and demand that this practice end NOW. We need to also demand that asylum-seekers have the rights accorded to them by US law (Refugee Act of 1980) and under international agreements (Articles 31 and 33 of the [Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees](#)).**

- Representative Don Bacon 202-225-4155 & 402-938-0300
- Rep. Fortenberry 202-225-4806 (some parts of Sarpy County)
- Sen. Fischer 202-224-6551 & 402-441-4600
- Sen. Sasse 202-224-4224 & 402-476-1400

**Donations to support Central Americans fleeing poverty and violence**

Catholic Relief Services staff are travelling with the Central Americans and providing support and medical care as needed. Donations can be made to Catholic Relief Services (<https://www.crs.org/>). Ask that your donation be a directed gift to the people of the Caravan Caritas Latin America.

**Our next OTOC Immigration and Refugee Action Team meeting is Monday, November 26<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm at Augustana Lutheran Church, 3647 Lafayette Ave.**

11.13.18