

Mexico's efforts to secure southern border falling short

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Mexico launched the Comprehensive Plan for the Southern Border (CPSB) in 2014 in an attempt to manage increased migration flows from Central America. But two years after the plan's implementation, it has yet to accomplish its goals of securing Mexico's southern border, according to an issue brief from Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy.

"Mexico's Not-So-Comprehensive Southern Border Plan" offers insights into the evolution of the CPSB, the future of the program and recommendations for the Mexican and United States governments. The brief was authored by Luis Arriola Vega, a summer visiting scholar at the Baker Institute's Mexico Center and researcher at El Colegio de la Frontera Sur in Mexico.

Arriola Vega said Mexico's southern border is increasingly becoming part of the U.S.-Mexico bilateral agenda, due to broader regional concerns over illegal activities with a transnational scope, such as drugs and human trafficking and arms and human smuggling. In particular, migration flows from Central America are on the rise, and most of the migrants passing through Mexico are destined for the U.S., he said.

"Like similar policy initiatives previously implemented in Mexico, the CPSB is fading into oblivion, but not without leaving negative consequences on Mexico's migration policy," Arriola Vega wrote. "Even though the program did delay for some time the flow of migrants and potential asylum applicants to Mexico, a process that was already

underway prior to 2014, the problem has not been solved. The latest numbers show that people continue to arrive and, in consequence, show up at the U.S. border too. In the summer of 2015, reports emerged again about the upsurge of migrants reaching the U.S.-Mexico border, a concern echoed once more toward the end of the year. Recent news reports have stated that the number of migrants seeking asylum in the United States is on the rise again."

As the situation worsens in the so-called "Northern Triangle" nations of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, considered one of the most violent regions of the world, the U.S. and Mexico will have to closely monitor conditions on the ground, not only on the Guatemala-Mexico border but in the Northern Triangle itself, Arriola Vega said.

"To make things right, all concerned parties need to shift the current focus of the CPSB as well as their respective immigration and border agendas," Arriola Vega wrote. "Mexico and the United States have to continue exerting pressure on Central American governments to do something internally to stem the flow of migrants.

"At the same time, they must coordinate efforts to help these countries to improve internal, local-level economic and public-safety conditions. In addition, Mexico should enforce measures that protect migrants transiting through the country and ensure that its enforcement policies are more compassionate in their approach to migrants instead of the current securitized conditions that victimizes migrants and enables those who would abuse them. Policy should respond to the particular plight of 'humanitarian [migrants](#)' and the conditions that expel them from their communities."

Arriola Vega said that on the U.S. side, some of the resources within the Merida Initiative—the security cooperation agreement between the U.S. and Mexico to fight organized crime and associated violence while

furthering human rights and the rule of law—would be better used for social programs to overcome the problems that are forcing Central Americans, particularly the young, to escape.

More information: [bakerinstitute.org/media/files ...
80516-MEX_Border.pdf](https://bakerinstitute.org/media/files/80516-MEX_Border.pdf)

Provided by Rice University

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