

Nearly 1/3 of migrants through Mexico to US experience significant violence during journey

August 21 2019



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Almost one-third of people migrating to the US via Mexico experience physical, psychological, and/or sexual violence along the way, according

to a study published August 21, 2019 in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE* by René Leyva-Flores and Cesar Infante from the National Institute of Public Health (Mexico), Juan Pablo Gutierrez from the National Autonomous University of Mexico, and colleagues.

In recent years, multiple studies have shown that traditional migration routes have become more dangerous around the world. As part of a research collaboration with the [migrant](#) shelter group Casas del migrante, the authors and Casas del migrante staff surveyed 12,023 migrants in transit through Mexico to the US between 2009 and 2015. They collected information from these migrants, who stayed at one of five Casas del migrante shelters in Mexico, about any [violence](#) they'd experienced en route as well as gathering demographic data. 58 of the migrants also participated in longer interviews, and the authors performed statistical and descriptive analyses on their transcripts.

The researchers found that almost 30 percent of the surveyed migrants had experienced some form of violence. More specifically, 24 percent reported [physical violence](#), 19 percent reported psychological violence, and approximately 2 percent reported [sexual violence](#). Transgender, transsexual and transvestite migrants experienced a significantly greater burden of overall violence compared to men and women, and both this group and women experienced a significantly greater burden of sexual violence compared to men. Violence was experienced more frequently by migrants from Central American countries (30.6 percent) and other countries (40.0 percent) than by Mexican migrants (20.5 percent).

The researchers note that many violent incidents are not reported because victims in Central America and Mexico may have normalized violence and because many migrants don't trust authorities enough to reveal their experiences. Nonetheless, this study underscores that migrants are subjected to high levels of violence while journeying to the US, with gender and nationality significantly affecting the amount and

type of violence migrants face. The authors stress that protective measures are urgently needed to ensure migrants' human rights.

Dr. Infante notes: "Migrants are subjected to a high level of violence while in transit to the US. Those traveling under irregular migratory conditions are targets of even greater violence, a condition exacerbated by gender inequality. Protective measures regarding access to health care and legal services are urgently needed to ensure the human rights of these populations."

More information: Leyva-Flores R, Infante C, Gutierrez JP, Quintino-Perez F, Gómez-Saldivar M, Torres-Robles C (2019) Migrants in transit through Mexico to the US: Experiences with violence and related factors, 2009-2015. *PLoS ONE* 14(8): e0220775.
doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0220775

Provided by Public Library of Science

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