

The Atlantic publishes “Photos from the Mexico-Guatemala Border”, ignores elephant in the room

July 24, 2019, by Grahame Russell

<https://mailchi.mp/rightsaction/letter-to-the-atlantic-responding-to-photos-from-the-mexico-guatemala-border-by-alan-taylor-june-26-2019>

Dear friends at The Atlantic,

This photo-essay (“Photos from the Mexico-Guatemala Border”, <https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2019/06/photos-from-the-mexico-guatemala-border/592633/>) is one more compelling report on the hardship and plight of the (as yet) never ending exodus of people forced to flee Central America, mainly from Honduras and Guatemala. It is one more report that fails to address how U.S. and Canadian public and private sector policies are part of the problem.

The U.S. government and military, Canada, the EU, the World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank, and a long list of multi-national companies maintain full economic, political and military relations with anti-democratic, repressive, corrupt and exploitative governments in Honduras and Guatemala. This “international community” is directly enabling and benefitting from the very reasons why tens of thousands – if not more – are forced to flee Honduras and Guatemala, year after year.

While people are fleeing government repression, corruption and impunity and generalized violence that are widespread in both countries, they are also fleeing the corruption and violence of organized crime – including drug-trafficking – that have infiltrated all branches of both governments, militaries and police. This infiltration of organized crime into all branches and institutions of the States and governments makes the endless support of the U.S., Canada and the “international community” all the more complicit.

To top it all off, they are also fleeing the extreme exploitation and violence of the global economy at work in both countries, in the sectors of mining and hydro-electric dams; for-export production of bananas, pineapples, sugarcane, African palm and coffee; tourism and maquiladora “sweatshop” garment factories.

Each of these sectors of the global economy is characterized – to varying degrees - by illegal, violent evictions; violations of labor and union rights; health harms and environmental destruction; repression against community organizers and human rights defenders. This is how the global economy is operating in Honduras and Guatemala, profitable for the companies, investors and consumers, impoverishing and life-threatening for the workers and evicted.

There will be no end to this vicious, closed cycle until serious political and economic reforms and changes are brought about inside Honduras and Guatemala, and in the policies and actions of their international enablers and partners.

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Photos from the Mexico-Guatemala Border

[ALAN TAYLOR](#), The Atlantic, JUN 26, 2019

<https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2019/06/photos-from-the-mexico-guatemala-border/592633/>

(We want to hear what you think about this article. [Submit a letter](#) to the editor or write to letters@theatlantic.com.)

Mexico recently deployed 6,500 members of its newly formed National Guard to its southern states, along the border with Guatemala. Responding to pressures from Donald Trump's administration, and to stresses placed on its own citizens by the constant flow of Central American, Cuban, Haitian, and African immigrants bound for the United States, the government of Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador is [...]

Rights Action

Since 1995, Rights Action funds community human rights, environment and territory defense projects in Guatemala and Honduras; funds victims of repression, human rights violations, health harms and natural disasters; and works to hold accountable the U.S. and Canadian governments, companies and investors, international actors (World Bank, etc.) that cause, contribute to and profit from repression and human rights violations, environmental harms and forced evictions, corruption and impunity.

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